



ACHIEVEMENTS 2020

“More than a shop”

Craftship Enterprise (CSE) CIC manages Made in Ashford: we are a social enterprise which believes creativity is at the heart of a happy community.



It has been such a strange year with our shop shut for much of it. This really reflected to us our values, what we are actually about as a social enterprise; sharing creativity within the community. That same community really shone through this year. People stood out, going above and beyond for our shop, for Ashford, for our NHS and for each other.

Reviewing this year has been a beautiful and heart warming process, we have done so much being apart but always together!

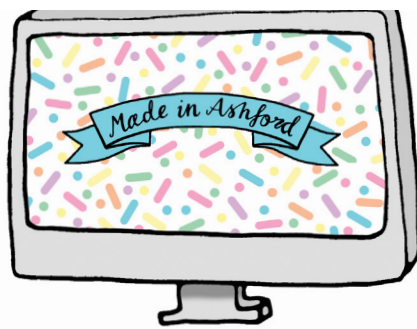
madeinashford.com

Our website really took off this year. We received a grant from from Ashford Borough Council in Lockdown no.1 to help our bricks & mortar business survive being closed.

We decided one of the best ways to support our members regain some lost income was to improve & grow our existing website. We purchased equipment to help us take and edit professional looking product images and created a paid opportunity for one of our members to manage webs sales, listings and web stock. We also have a Blog section which is filled with news, ideas, opportunities and offers. There is also a dedicated craft activities section where all of our free content (and there is alot of it!) is available to download, print & create.

All of this increased effort into our online sales meant that in 2020 we packaged and posted

385 parcels and we now have 373 listings on our website and counting! Craftship enterprise CIC continues to subsidise free craft activities for the community and selling handmade items on behalf of our members on our website.

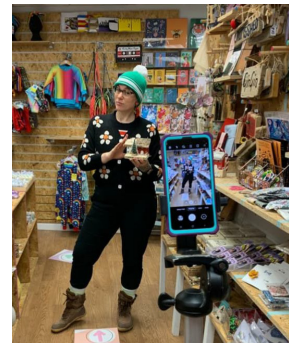


59 local, creative businesses

were supported to sell their products, grow their businesses, skill share and become part of our community of creatives.



We held loads of live selling evenings as another way to help our members sell in a lockdown world. This too was totally subsidised by CSE.



Birthday Celebrations!

Made in Ashford first opened it's doors in 2015 as a pop up shop and never popped off! Our shop in Park Mall has become a permanent home to many handmade in Kent businesses and creatives. We continue to be an Ashford Borough Council supported project as part of the Ashford town centre regeneration. To celebrate our 5th birthday we created a birthday activity pack which we sold in store and gave away on line as a free digital download. We also gave away £140 worth of vouchers to spend with us, did 2 online merchandise giveaways, gave our store customers free party bags and held a special birthday online makers market.

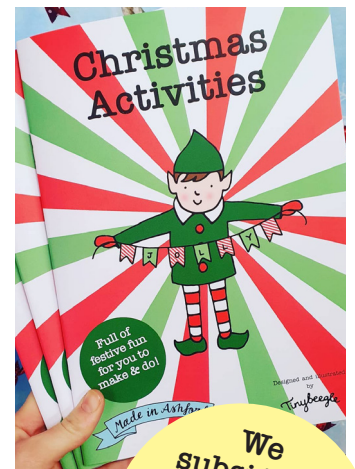


Free Creativity

Our strong social media presence has had an unexpected surge during lockdown as we shared free creative activities created by our members and commissioned by our social enterprise. This saw our social media following increase by 20%. With our shop being shut we had to think of ways to keep engaging with the public and sharing some of the craft activities and workshops that we could no longer offer in store. The free creative content we produced included colouring sheets, activity packs and video tutorials and at our peak we gained a reach on facebook of over 700k.

31,000 craft activity packs were downloaded including VE day, Easter, Halloween, our Birthday party and Christmas - 2,300 colouring in sheets were downloaded and printed out.

We gave away 293 printed activity booklets to food banks. We received a grant from Ashford Borough Council to help with this, Print Junction subsidised some printing costs and Craftship Enterprise CIC subsidised design & print costs. We created 17 free craft tutorials on our youtube channel, subsidised 35 craft workshops (pre covid) for the community, gave 68 free mini workshops to kids in Park Mall (pre covid) and had 2 community art exhibitions (pre covid).



We subsidised 35 craft workshop places (pre covid)



Makers Markets

In October we had what was to be our first of many regular makers markets in Park Mall. The market was a huge success, we followed all of the Covid 19 safety guidelines and met with very positive feedback from visitors and stall holders alike. Sadly our subsequent outdoor markets had to be postponed but we are looking forward to starting them again once it is safe to do so.



Our first online market was on Facebook back in July and was very well received. We had planned to do more and as our shop was closed again in November (during what is usually our peak sales period) we ended up doing a further 4 markets. These featured exclusive and discounted products by 37 makers - both from our pool of existing tenants and from members of our United Makers of Kent online community. Most business came back to participate in further markets multiple times, we had 72 spaces filled at our online markets through 2020.

Paid Roles

This year we commissioned 17 different artists/creatives to make content and hold workshops that we gave to the local community. In addition to this there were other paid opportunities on community projects, markets and events and 4 shop members have become regular paid monthly workers, focusing on our website, social media, branding, free craft activities, markets, window design and so much more..



Funding

During the year we received funding from Ashford Borough Council, The Arts Council & The National Lottery Community Fund for specific projects. We self-funded lots of other projects using the profits we gained from the commission made on shop sales.

In It Together!

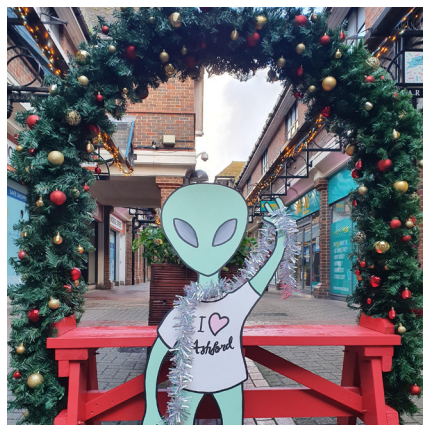
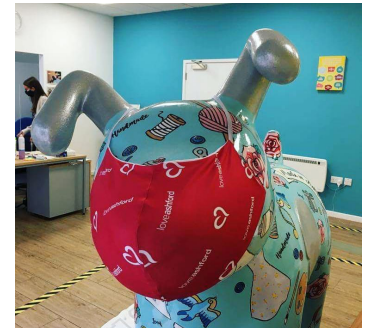
We raised £200 for our hardship fund which we used to support our members when they needed it most.



I ❤️ ASHFORD

Opportunities for our Members

Through our close links with Ashford Borough Council, Park Mall and Emergency Exit Arts our members were paid to create and be part of lots of projects. We made snow dog face coverings in Love Ashford branded fabric which were put on Snowdogs around the town. Five Made in Ashford Artists designed and decorated 10 windows of town centre businesses with positive & safe shopping messages after lockdown 1. This was the window wanderland trail funded by Love Ashford & ABC. Park Mall commissioned us to decorate an Xmas bench for photo opportunities. We worked with Emergency Exit arts and Love Ashford to be part of the carnival of the baubles and bannerz projects. Love Ashford also commissioned one of our members to take photographs of town center businesses products for a Christmas magazine feature and online campaign. All of these opportunities have really helped our members this year and encouraged us to grow further.



Sew at home - The National Lottery Community Fund

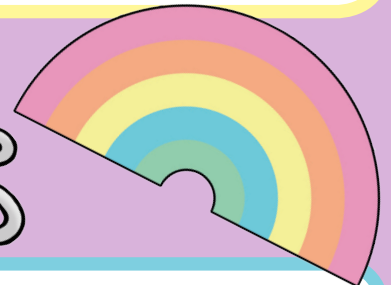
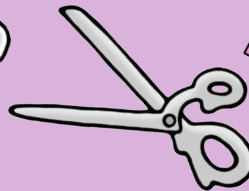
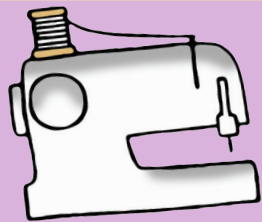
A course to learn sewing and businesses skills Sew at Home was funded by Ashford Borough Council & The National Lottery Community Fund. It benefitted 25 start up sewing businesses and 21 of our members. Beneficiaries were taken through basic sewing skills (depending on their skill level) through to product development of their idea as a group building a wonderful community.



These sewing sessions were interspersed with business course sessions which were led by our members who are highly knowledgeable in the field they were commissioned to teach. These business development sessions were also open to any of our members to come to for free to gain support in the areas they wished.



We completed our Sew at Home project with the new businesses official launch at our outdoor Makers Market.



Ashford, Dover & Folkestone Scrubbers (WHH)



We are very proud to have been part of this amazing group set up by Megan McKay and our very own Sarah Mabb and Melissa Dawkins to provide much needed PPE to hospitals and surgeries during the first lockdown. Many of our members & community joined the group as sewists and delivery drivers. Craftship Enterprise CIC helped with the fundraising which raised £15,611.95 for the group, which was used to buy 9881m (almost 10KM!) of fabric. This fabric was cut and packaged and then distributed by incredible volunteer drivers who made 1,554 deliveries & collections. The wonderful sewists in the group made 4,089 sets of scrubs, 6,499 scrub hats, 4,691 wash bags, 3,708 fabric masks and 450 PPE surgical gowns. They fulfilled 95 orders across South East Kent from as far out as Tenterden, Lydd and Sandwich. They also resized 280 sets of scrubs for the William Harvey Hospital. In the summer our window display was dedicated to this fantastic group of volunteers and showcased their amazing achievements.



Media Coverage - #Ashfame



Made in Ashford was featured in an article from the London School of Economics by Power to Change as a case study of how communities like our shop are the future of the High Street. We also featured in Drapers in the article "The post Covid future of the High Street", appeared on BBC South East TV 3 times, BBC radio Kent twice, BBC radio 5 and our good friends radio Ashford 3 times this year! We were thrilled to end the year on a high when our shopfront made the front cover of Ashford 4 You magazine.



UNITED
Makers
OF
KENT

Our online community for Kentish makers was launched and has grown to 441 members.

Collaboration

Throughout the year we worked on projects with 14 other local businesses!

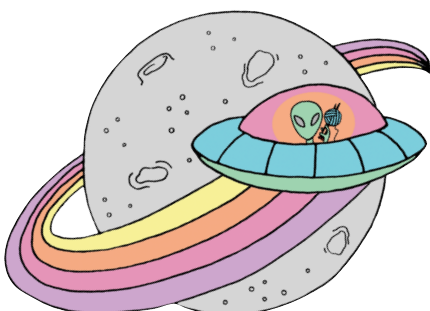
Sales

Selling beautiful handcrafted items is the backbone of what we do. Supporting local makers get sales is our first goal then the profits we make from the commission on sales can filter down to all of this extra awesome community work that we do. This year was tricky to get these sales and we finished the year on our first ever minus which was -32% on our previous year. We see this as quite a positive financial ending to the year because the shop was closed for 34% of the year and much of the year we were open people were not using the town center, we also missed out on the last week before Xmas which normally sees us take 8% of our annual income! If we compare the days of 2020 we were open against the same days of 2019 we were plus 6% on these days of the previous year. So we think we still did pretty well.



2021

If we can do all of this in a year of crazy covid we know 2021 is going to be something awesome too. Our large focus will be on getting more products on our website including new local businesses and opening our community up for more people to get involved! Workshops online are a high feature too and getting these going regularly. We have some great plans & goals in place already but who knows what else a new year will bring!





Made in Ashford shop is run by Craftship Enterprise CIC and is so much more than a shop it is a community and you are part of it!

You do not have to sell, make or even buy to be a part of what we do. If you would like to get involved join our online community, pop in store for a chat to our team (when we are open again) or drop us an email - info@craftshipenterprise.com

We crammed so much into the strangest year, learnt so much, got so much creativity out there to so many and now we cannot wait to see what 2021 involves, we hope you can be a part of it too.

Thanks & Mentions

A huge thank you to all of the Made in Ashford members who have come through such a tough year with positivity, enthusiasm, love and trust. You are all incredible people with gorgeous businesses who have become our dear friends.

Hannah Clayton-Peck (Ashford Borough Council Town Centre Regeneration Manager) - I am not sure we would have got through this year without your guidance, regular check ins, help at every turn, understanding and being a wonderful friend.

Danielle Williamson (Co-Director Craftship Enterprise CIC & Tinybeegle) - You have worked so hard this year at the drop of a hat, designing & creating the content that has propelled us forward exponentially and made this crazy year our year.

Charlotte North (E-commerce manager & Charlotte's Photography) - Thank you for working so hard, your role went from 5 to 100 very quickly this year and you have stepped up, gone the extra mile and done a superb job!

Sue Jones (Co-Director Craftship Enterprise CIC & Mulberry Glass Art) - For all the hard work & love you always put into our shop and all of the collectives you are involved in with such passion.

Carla Richardson (Co-Director Craftship Enterprise CIC & Ellabee) - You have been an invaluable sounding board all year & drawing on your incredible business knowledge then calmly creating clarity for our CIC behind the scenes.

Tina Allen (Keep it in a Frame) - For all your hard work on our website listings.

Katy Morrison (Katy & The Bear) - For taking Made in Ashford on the road and representing us at all those (pre Covid) craft markets.

Sarah Mabb (Droplette Designs) - Without doubt one of the standout grafters of the year. A true community spirited person who is always on hand to help whatever it is. Her contribution to our local community this year through making scrubs for the NHS and her community face covering tree have been outstanding. She is a wonderful asset to our team and Ashford.

Kim Dawkins (Melissa's mum) - A mega thank you for being an ear to crazy shop ideas, proof reading everything, being the childcare extraordinaire, sewing scrubs, getting stuck in with community projects, sharing your management experience and for eternally being a craft guru!

Paula & Platti (A Little Pot of) - coming to our rescue covering the shop at short notice, doing earlies in the shop and supporting everything we do. It does not go unnoticed. Thank you.

Thomas Green - A special mention for your enthusiasm and willingness to help with anything.



Thank you for reading our report. I am looking forward to the start of creating our next one!

Learn
Create
Share

Melissa Dawkins Co-Director Craftship Enterprise CIC

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www.madeinashford.com find us on Facebook/Instagram/Twitter