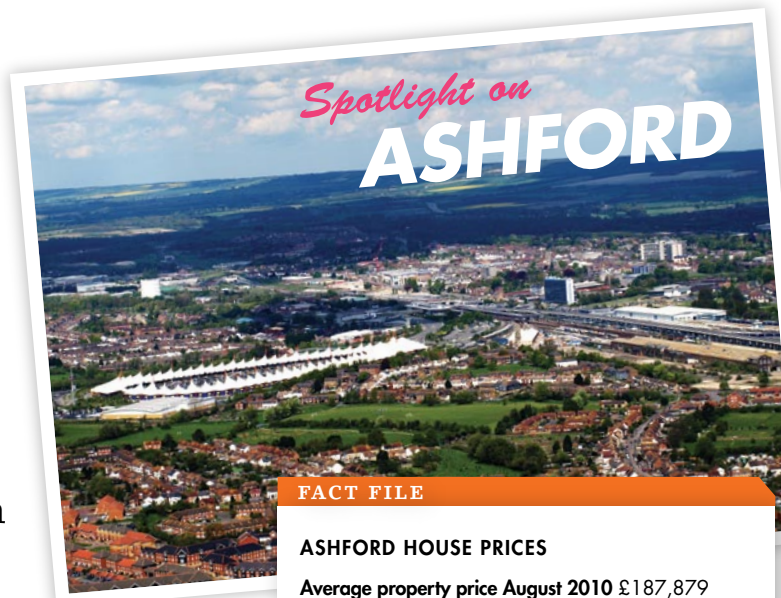


# Man of Kent or Kentish Man?

If you live in the county of Kent, you're known either as a Man of Kent or a Kentish Man (for the ladies, it's Maid of Kent or Kentish Maiden) – it all depends whether you live to the east or west of the river Medway. So, if you move to Ashford, which is to the east of the Medway, you would be a Man (or Maid) of Kent



## FACT FILE

### ASHFORD HOUSE PRICES

Average property price August 2010 £187,879

#### Property breakdown\*

Detached £327,974

Semi-detached £191,173

Terraced £147,731

Flats £111,509

\*According to the Land Registry House Price Index August 2010

Voted the **fourth** best place to live in Britain by Channel 4 in 2005, Ashford – for centuries, the local communication centre for its surrounding villages – which has five railway lines passing through it, is still a major communications hub, and, since the opening of Ashford International rail station, could rightly lay claim to the title of Gateway to Europe.

Ashford has a long history, and its probable origins go as far back as 893AD, with a mention in the Domesday Book in 1086 as having a church and two mills. There have been several variations on its Saxon name, ranging from Essetesford to Asshatisforde. But the town's importance as a stopping place between London and the Kent coast has cemented its importance throughout time.

The original town of Ashford has outgrown its village confines and has encompassed other smaller communities such as Bockhanger and Stanhope, and a few half-timbered buildings around Middle Row and the Churchyard are all that remain of the original village. Having said that, there are over 3,000 listed buildings in Ashford, and a wander through its centre can still convey the essence of a bygone era.

## WHY ASHFORD?

The major pointers for anyone considering a move to Ashford would be its location and the cost of its affordable housing (28% cheaper than London and 14% cheaper than the south east average). With 31,000 new homes planned by 2031, the town is set to double in size over the next 25 years. Over £55m of government money is being spent on the town's major redevelopment plans to create a town centre that will combine modern shopping malls with



TOP An aerial view of Ashford; MIDDLE Ashford International station at night; LEFT The pretty Kent countryside surrounding Ashford

RIGHT County Square shopping mall; BELOW A Eurostar train leaving Ashford International station

pedestrianised streets, while private sector investment continues despite the recession.

It rates high in education facilities and employment and has a low crime rate.

Top that with easy access to the countryside via the Ashford green corridor and a linear park through the centre of the town, plus several planned parks (Stour Riverside Park and Discovery Park), which makes it perfect for anyone who hungers for a more rural location.

## LEISURE

Retail areas at Park Mall and the recently extended County Square shopping centre, combined with a new 90,000 square foot Debenhams, will keep the most ardent shoppers satisfied. And for sports enthusiasts there is a multi-million pound leisure centre redevelopment and an international athletics stadium. Ashford also boasts the usual multiplex cinema at the Eureka Entertainment Centre. There are also plans to redevelop Ashford Library to house a new Gateway Plus centre with improved library, community and educational facilities, which is due to open in the summer of 2011. Added to this are many tourist attractions, too, such as the Ashford Borough Museum, Godinton House and Gardens and the Willesborough Windmill.

## KEY FACTS ASHFORD

- » Plans to create 31,000 homes and 28,000 jobs by 2031
- » 37 minutes to London via the high speed rail link
- » Excellent shopping facilities in the extended County Square shopping centre and the Designer Outlet
- » Expanding educational facilities including a multi-million pound Ashford Learning campus for further education
- » Easy access to beautiful countryside and to Europe from Ashford International station
- » House prices 28% cheaper than in London and 14% cheaper than the south east average



## TRANSPORT

New access roads, including changes to Junction 9 off the M20, are improving Ashford's road accessibility. Couple that with a breathtaking journey time of 37 minutes to London St Pancras make Ashford a very attractive proposition to anyone considering buying in the area. Folkestone to the south east and Canterbury to the north west are easy to get to by both rail and road, as is the county town of Maidstone.

## MOVING TO ASHFORD

With masses of new developments, Ashford is one of the fastest growing boroughs in the UK. If you are struggling to take your first step on the ladder, there are a number of shared ownership schemes available at one of these locations.

## THE UPSIDE

Good road and rail communications and easy access to green belt affordable housing.

## THE DOWNSIDE

Some would say that the construction of the controversial ring road in the early 1970s and the removal of several old buildings that lay in its path have knocked the character out of a once historic town.

The 37-minute high speed train journey to London may be fast but it will cost you, and the times of the conventional 80-minute train commute, which is far cheaper, may be more realistic for the first time buyer.

[www.ashfordbestplaced.co.uk](http://www.ashfordbestplaced.co.uk)

## BRIDGEFIELD

### CHEESEMANS GREEN LANE

From £152,495



The Bridgefield development is close to Ashford's high street shops, bars and leisure facilities, with excellent rail connections to London. Bridgefield offers a selection of two, three, four and five bedroom homes. There are a range of incentives to help with deposits and legal fees for first time buyers. A typical two bedroom house features a spacious living room, kitchen, two bedrooms, cloakroom and garden.

01732 836 000

[www.taylorwimpey.co.uk](http://www.taylorwimpey.co.uk)

## HUNTER AVENUE

### EVOLUTION

From £99,950



Evolution is just a 15-minute walk from Ashford International station from where the high speed train takes just 37 minutes to London St Pancras. Fairview New Homes is offering a year's season ticket for travel from Ashford to London to every purchaser. There are two bedroom apartments and four bedroom houses available all set around landscaped gardens. The properties feature open plan living areas and fully-fitted kitchens.

0800 883 8149

[www.fairview.co.uk](http://www.fairview.co.uk)

## GREEN FIELDS LANE

### HIGHLAND PARK

From £145,000



Highland Park offers two bedroom apartments, three bedroom semi-detached houses, plus three bedroom end of terrace homes. Hillreed Homes is offering many incentives including a 10% equity share scheme, 5% deposit paid initiative and discounts for a quick exchange. Ashford town centre and the International station, with fast connections to London, is a ten-minute drive away.

01233 610 660

[www.hillreedhomes.co.uk](http://www.hillreedhomes.co.uk)