

Welcome

Welcome to our latest newsletter with updates on what we have been doing and some of our plans for the coming months. We have been an independent charity just since August 2020, and we are delighted at the way we have been able to develop our small charity. We are grateful to everyone who continues to support us, in any way. We hope you find this update of interest, but do, please, ask if you have any questions.

A Decade.....!

It seems almost unbelievable that our wonderful and unique Ashford Baby Memorial Garden is now ten years old - we remember the opening event like it was yesterday! We created the Garden in 2013 after raising £30,000 and opened the Garden under the umbrella of the Sands charity.

Those same volunteers went on to create our new, independent charity in 2020 and we are delighted that most of the original volunteers are still involved, along with some welcome new faces!

The Ashford Baby Memorial Garden remains the only one of its kind in the UK, in a town centre, open to everyone and completely accessible. We now have almost 400 nametiles in the Ashford Garden ranging from the 1940's to the current year. The Garden continues to flourish and we are grateful to Aspire who maintain it for us, and to everyone who visits and helps remove litter etc. as well.



NHS Support

In addition to our direct activities, we try to support the NHS where we can and have recently offered to fund a bereavement training day for midwives and other staff, as well as donating a pram to the WHH for bereaved families to use within the Hospital. In the past we have run or supported other training events and workshops and continue to be willing to consider any support we can to the East Kent maternity and NICU/SCBU departments. Recently, we were delighted to meet the former Chaplain at Canterbury Hospital who had instigated the Hospital's baby cemetery where up to 300 babies were buried, and were able to show her the improvements made in the baby cemetery following our intervention.



Canterbury

We are delighted to announce that with support from Canterbury City Council, we are creating a small area alongside the river in Westgate Park in Canterbury with wall mounted boards where local families can have nametiles for their special babies – we already have ten orders for nametiles in this area. We are hoping to hold a small 'unveiling' on Sunday 23 July at 1pm, to which everyone is invited. Feel free to bring a picnic.

Ashford Community Draw

Just a reminder that you can support us, while also standing a chance of winning some great prizes, through the Ashford Community Lottery. The draw takes place at 8pm on Saturdays and for each £1 ticket, we receive 65p with the rest going towards prizes, VAT and running costs. If you would like to support us this way, just go to <https://www.ashfordcommunitylottery.co.uk/> Thanks.



Faversham

We already have a nameboard in the garden at the West Faversham Community Centre in Bysing Wood Road (opposite Sainsbury's). We are grateful to the Community Centre for supporting this important initiative, giving local bereaved families somewhere local to remember their special babies.

Sittingbourne and Sheerness

We are also exploring the possibility of creating a small baby memorial area in both Sittingbourne (in the King George V Park) and in Sheerness (in Beachfields Park). These plans are at an early stage but we have had positive feedback from the appropriate councils. Watch this space!

Ordering Nametiles



We offer nametiles in our Ashford, Faversham or Canterbury areas at a one-off cost of £40. These have one line for the baby's name and a second for a date or dates. On each line we are limited to 21 characters (including spaces) and families can choose 'Baby Surname', or 'The Surname Babies', or may have just a month or a year instead of a full date. The tiles can be ordered via our website

<https://www.eastkentbabymemorialgardens.org.uk/ashford-baby-memorial-garden>. Orders are usually sent off on the 15th of February, May August and November and usually take up to a month after that to be put up on the boards. Families can, of course, choose to have nametiles in more than one area.

Thankyou.

Thankyou to everyone who has supported us recently with fundraising events etc. including Adrian and family who arranged a really great quiz night, the Bingo group at the Tenterden Club who raised cash through donations, Ashford and Folkestone Freemasons who made donations to us, Donny from Dover who raised £70 through a card evening, the Rock Rose in Dover who filled a collection tin for us, Rebecca and family who arranged a concert for us (and who also climbed Snowdon for another baby loss charity), and many more people. Thankyou to them all!

Calendar for 2023

We have already taken part in events this year in Ashford, Dover, Gravesend, Margate, Canterbury, Tenterden, Headcorn, Sandwich and Sittingbourne, and we have another busy few months year ahead of us with lots more Smiley Face Tombola fundraisers planned, including:

- Sat 17 June Great Chart Big Lunch
- Sat 24 Jun Kennington Fair
- Sun 25 Jun Folkestone Armed Forces
- Sat 29 July New Romney Country Fair
- Sun 30 July Herne Bay Baytastic
- Sat 12 Aug Folkestone Donkey Derby
- 19 & 20 Aug Biddenden Tractorfest
- Sat 2 Sep Ashford Town Centre
- Sat 23 Sep Dover Pencester Fair
- Sat 11 Nov Highworth Craft Fair,
- Sun 12 Nov Leas Cliff Hall Autumn Fair



Last year we raised well over £5,000 through our Smiley Face Tombolas, and these remain our main fundraising tool. Do come and say hello at any of our events! If you would like to help or know of other events we could attend, please get in touch. More details at

<https://www.eastkentbabymemorialgardens.org.uk/fundraising-and-awareness>



As well as our tombolas, we have other events planned, including:

- Sun 16 July Teddy Bears Picnic, Ashford
- Sat 22 Jul Collection at ASDA, Ashford
- 9 - 15 Oct Baby Loss Awareness Week
- Sat 14 Oct BLAW stand, County Square?
- Sun 17 Dec Christmas event?

Details about these events will be on our website and Facebook pages.

Volunteers

During 2022 we welcomed a number of new volunteers, including Adrian, Jacalyn, Beverley, Mariette and Daisy, to various roles within the Charity. It's great to have them on board, helping share some of the workload and helping raise awareness of baby loss.



We are a small charity with no staff and rely entirely on a small team of volunteers. While the maintenance of the Ashford Garden is covered by our contract with Aspire, we really would love to have a few more people involved in helping us plan events, arrange fundraising and so on. It would be particularly good to have a few people who have had more recent losses, so that we can make sure what we do is relevant to everyone. Maybe you would like to help us with some of our fundraising and awareness events, or simply by putting leaflets in local cafes and community buildings? We always offer travel expenses as well as meeting any other costs involved in volunteering with us. **If you would like to find out a little more, please contact Emma or Chris for an informal chat.**

Teddy Bears Picnic.



This year's Picnic will be on Sunday 16 July from 12pm to 4pm and will be an extra special event as it marks ten years of the Ashford Baby Memorial Garden. Further details will be sent out and will be on our website and Facebook pages, but for now, please note the date.

Christmas

Although it is a long way off, we are looking at the possibility of holding a short event at Christmas at the Ashford Baby Memorial Garden. Our initial thoughts are having something on Sunday 17 December 2023 from 2-3pm, with carols, and a chance to create stars to go on our memory tree. Do let us know what you think, please.

Thank you (again!)

Thank you to the Lawson Endowment Fund for their kind donation of £1,500 towards the cost of our lovely new trailer. This is a great help when we attend events and activities!

Always Loved, Never Forgotten

Don't forget, on our website we have listed the names of each of our 400+ special babies and we are now able to add a limited amount of wording from families, in addition to the name and date we have already. Details on the website. <https://www.eastkentbabymemorialgardens.org.uk/our-special-babies>

Ashford Lions Over the years we have worked alongside Ashford Lions on a number of fundraising events, not least the Santa Collections. We just wanted to say thanks to them – great working alongside you! For more information, visit <https://ashfordlions.org.uk/>



Baby Loss Connection Meetings

We are delighted to help publicise the Baby Loss Connection Meetings being arranged and hosted by Willow and Green in Ashford. Free, and open to everyone, no matter when you lost your baby, whether during pregnancy, around birth or as an infant. No commitment to talk at the meetings, nor to attend regularly. Further details and dates for future meetings are available from Willow and Green, and we will also share dates on our Facebook pages.



Willow & Green

Baby loss connection meetings

For parents who have experienced the loss of a child during pregnancy, at birth or early infancy.

We offer a compassionate space for parents to explore, share and connect. The group is held by Katy Weston bereavement therapist and support practitioners of Willow and Green.

Our gatherings are currently held at Willow and Green Funerals, 2 Middle Row in Ashford town. Which is opposite boots.

Contact us via the email info@willowandgreen.co.uk or the phone [01233 534444](tel:01233 534444) for more information and see below for our upcoming dates:

Monday 24th April	Monday 19th June
Monday 22nd May	Monday 17th July
Time: 10:00 - 11:30 AM	



We have tried to answer some questions you might have about this group:

- Does it matter if my loss is historical or recent?**
No - everyone is welcome;
- Is there a cost?**
No - there is no charge for coming along;
- Will I have to talk about my experience?**
No - you may just want to sit and not talk - this is ok;
- Do I have to keep coming along?**
No - you might just want to drop in one time - this is ok.

We do hope to see you at the meetings, but please pop in to meet the staff at Willow and Green or email to get more of a feel for us and our support.

Other support is available from organisations such as Sands, the Miscarriage Association and Tommy's.

Our Independent Charity

Just a reminder that since 2020 we have been a separate charity and are no longer part of Sands. We are completely independent, although we support and publicise Sands as well as other baby loss charities. The Ashford Baby Memorial Gardens, and all our activities, are now run and organised entirely by local volunteers for all babies who have been taken from us, no matter what the circumstances, nor their age. This included miscarriages, stillbirths, neonatal deaths and toddlers. It is important that if you want money to come to us, you specify the East Kent Baby Memorial Gardens Charity (or the Ashford Baby Memorial Gardens charity). Our charity registration number is 1180090. Thanks!



Volunteers at the Kent Charity Awards

Our Web Site

We hope you have been able to visit our web site. We will continue to use this, as well as our Facebook page to keep everyone up to date. While we print this newsletter just occasionally, we do send out monthly short updates to anyone with an interest. If you would like to receive these, please contact us via our website, or by email.



How you can contact us

Post [c/o Flat 36 Loudon Court, Ashford TN23 3NE](#)
Phone [01233 329 934](tel:01233 329 934)
Email ekbmgg@gmail.com
Website www.eastkentbabymemorialgardens.org.uk
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REMEMBERING OUR SPECIAL BABIES