



The Ashford Rural Trust, with over 250 subscription members in and around the Ashford area, aims to protect the villages around Ashford, the green corridors into Ashford and the town of Ashford from, for instance, too many houses, excessive development, bad design, housing estates without community facilities, inadequate public transport and traffic congestion and long commutes to work. It is the only pressure group focussing solely on Ashford, other organisations covering a much wider geographical area.

These objectives are achieved by close and constructive communication with Parish, Borough and County Councils, The Government Office for the South East, our Member of Parliament and the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. In addition we work closely with other organisations of influence including CPRE (Campaign to protect Rural England), The Weald of Kent Protection Society, and Aldington & Mersham Conservation Trust.

On the morning of 7th October 2008, a group of Ashford Rural Trust members went on the annual coach tour visiting various sites of interest and at different stages of development in the Ashford area. The programme included a specially arranged visit and guided tour of the Hitachi Train Maintenance Centre, close to Ashford International Station. Members were fascinated to learn about and to view the 145 mph trains which will operate on the high speed rail link from September 2009. These will provide a domestic service between Ashford and London St Pancras and carry passengers to the 2012 Olympics on the javelin service.

With an explanatory commentary by the Trust Chairman, Ian Grant, the coach tour also included Charter House, Ashford Barracks, the proposed sites of a new Waitrose Supermarket and Park & Ride facility and the new office buildings on Eureka Park.

Lunch was held at the Old Stacians Cricket Club. The guest speaker was Mrs Judith Armitt, who was appointed as the Managing Director of Ashford Future Limited in July 2008. Mrs Armitt spoke optimistically about her vision and objectives regarding the future of Ashford, particularly emphasising the importance of ensuring that new developments should take account of the historical heritage of Ashford as a railway, market and agricultural centre.

The Ashford Rural Trust offers a unique opportunity to members and anyone worried about developments large and small in the Ashford area and surrounding villages. If the Trust committee are made aware of individual problems or concerns, action can be taken to address these through the appropriate channel, influence planning decisions and bring about realistic and practical results.

A key objective of the Trust Committee is to increase the number of Members, particularly with so many developments taking place in the Ashford area. The more members we have the stronger we become.

The annual subscription to join the Trust is currently £6 or £10 for a couple. For more information, see below :-

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