



The Ashbourne Partnership

The Ashbourne Partnership is a not-for-profit membership organisation representing public, private and voluntary sectors based in Ashbourne and its surroundings. Becoming a member presents a great opportunity for Ashbourne's community to take an active part in determining its future and unlocking Ashbourne's true potential.

The Partnership's aim is to provide a **coordinated approach to creating sustainable improvements for Ashbourne**. Through its' members, the Partnership will provide the forum, coordination and support to a wide range of businesses, organisations and community groups. It will encourage partnership working so that everyone may benefit from working together.

The Partnership has established some common aims to address the key issues facing the town. These are to:

- Promote economic development and diversification
- Improve local employment opportunities
- Support development of sustainable tourism
- Enhance community life for all
- Create financial sustainability for Ashbourne Partnership Activity

Background to the Ashbourne Partnership

The 'Ashbourne Initiative Group' was formed in March 2002 by a group of key business and community people from Ashbourne. They wanted to create a plan of sustainable improvement for Ashbourne and its surroundings. During its review and health check of Ashbourne, the group considered five key areas:

1. Tourism and leisure
2. Education, youth and the arts
3. Community and quality of life
4. Environment and business infrastructure
5. History and culture of Ashbourne

The group went to great lengths to involve the residents, businesses and community organisations of Ashbourne and engage in considerable discussion with representatives from Derbyshire Dales District Council and the East Midland Development Agency. Questionnaires were distributed through the local newspaper and other locations. 7,000 residents were asked their views and opinions of Ashbourne. Over 20% of the Ashbourne population across all age groups responded.

One of the overriding sentiments was that there is an extremely strong sense of 'community' in Ashbourne but also that it is a community that is struggling to adapt to some dramatic challenges and changes, and in need of support to enable it to take full advantage of new opportunities in the future.

The Ashbourne Initiative Group stimulated a considerable amount of drive and enthusiasm to work together and provided a platform from which to devise a plan to take Ashbourne forward into the future. This review and 'Health Check' was undertaken on a voluntary basis without any financial support from external or public bodies and reflects the commitment, which exists within the town to help itself and create a better future.

The survey identified five key issues

- Fragile local economy largely dependent upon a few major international companies (closure of the Nestle serves to underline this)
- A shift in the traditional economic bases (emphasised by the ending of weekly livestock markets)

- A lack of opportunities for young people (jobs, affordable housing, recreational needs)
- A lack of facilities for community activities
- A deteriorating condition of Ashbourne town centre environment

Following meetings at Ashbourne Town Hall in 2004, it was agreed to appoint a small group of people to help re-vitalise a coordinated approach to creating sustainable improvements in Ashbourne. This group was named The Ashbourne Partnership. The Partnership wanted to make sure it represented all sectors of the community including commerce, industry, education, the arts and culture, tourism, health, policing and transport.

The Partnership agreed that to drive forward identified improvements, someone needed to be employed. Through a combination of a Rural Action Zone (RAZ) grant, Ashbourne Town Council and Derbyshire Dales Council support, the Partnership have been able to employ a Manager and an Administrator. The RAZ grant is managed by the University of Derby

The Ashbourne Partnership Manager

The current Ashbourne Partnership Manager, Andrea Cross, was appointed in August 2006 for a post funded until March 2008. She is based at the Partnership Office in Town Hall Yard, Ashbourne.

The Manager's key role is to foster and encourage closer relationships between different organisations, agencies and businesses, from the public, private and voluntary sectors, in and around Ashbourne and encourage partnership working.

The Partnership Manager's work is guided by a Board who represent the key areas of Ashbourne's community. The Board have developed an action plan based upon the key issues identified from the Ashbourne Initiative "Health Check" document. This will help stimulate and improve the local economy and social well being across the Ashbourne community.

Annual Subscription

Membership year normally runs from 1 Jan to 31 December. If you join after 30 June, the cost will be 50% of the amount below.

Individuals/charities/voluntary organisations	£20
Business less than 10 employees	£30
Business between 10 & 50 employees	£50
Business with over 50 employees	£200

Contributions in excess of this annual fee are welcome.

Becoming a member of the Partnership gives you the opportunity to influence change. The partnership aims to be formally used as a consultative group to represent Ashbourne on local issues and to steer the work and priorities of the Ashbourne Partnership.

It provides an opportunity to network, to promote your business through the www.visitashbourne.co.uk website, and to benefit from links with other town and county wide strategies, policies and marketing initiatives.

For further details contact

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