

Building materials – local, recycled, natural and toxin-free

- Recycled sharp sand and tyres have been used underneath the roads and paths. The roof is made from recycled aluminium drinks cans.
- The workshops and boiler room have been made from second-hand shipping containers. The containers have been clad in untreated oak.
- Reclaimed bricks were used in the outside walls.



Heating, Insulation & Lighting

- There is good natural ventilation to all principal spaces particularly to cool the building in summer. The 'Windcatcher' ventilation system enables cool air to be drawn through the building 'passively' in the summer, avoiding the need for mechanical ventilation.
- The spine wall is made from 'Sumatec' blocks, which are compressed earth bricks and, unlike traditional bricks, do not need to be fired.
- The centre uses a wood chip boiler for heating, with the coppiced wood fuel sourced locally. Water is heated by solar panels.
- All lights are fitted with highly efficient low energy bulbs.

Water Systems

- A grey water recycling system collects rainwater from the roof and is directed into an outside tank. It's filtered and pumped back into an indoor storage tank and used for flushing toilets.
- The urinals in the mens toilets feature a sensor to only flush after people use them. Biodegradable urinal treatment features harmless bacteria which breakdown scale and smells whilst using no nasty chemicals.
- Our drainage system deals with surface water naturally absorbing into the water course, not the sewers.

Landscaping

- All the soil that was excavated from the site has been retained and formed into mounds which will create natural habitats and areas for children's play.
- Kentish rag stone from the site has been used to create the seating in the amphitheatre.
- All plants are made up of native English species and are managed by our staff and volunteer teams.



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

- All waste is segregated and recycled wherever possible, including office paper, newspaper, cardboard, cans, glass and plastic bottles.
- Food waste, grass cuttings, garden waste and even paper towels from the centre are composted on site and re-used on the grounds.
- Wherever possible all products used at the Centre contain recycled material, are made from natural ingredients and have zero or minimal effect on our environment.

A more comprehensive list of architectural features may be found at www.singletonenvironmentcentre.org.uk/about/about-the-sec/

Ashford Community Woodland

Ashford Community Woodland, next to Singleton Environment Centre, is managed by a volunteer group. It was established in 2000 as a Millennium Project. Each month the group carries out a practical task day on the first Saturday of the month at 10am in the woodland. There is a free informative leaflet available at the Centre.

See also <https://ashfordcommunitywoodland.org>

Footprints Cafe and Bistro

Located within Singleton Environment Centre the Cafe is open to the public as well as catering for Centre events, meetings and functions.

Footprints follows the theme of sustainability by serving local and seasonal produce with ethically farmed meats and fish set in an unpretentious and relaxing location. Vegan and vegetarian choices are always available.

We are aiming toward a plastic free environment and have already reduced the number of single-use plastic wrappers on many items used in the cafe and Centre. Check the website for menus and opening details.

www.singletonenvironmentcentre.org.uk/eat-drink-feel-good/cafe-bistro/



Aerial photo
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About the buildings and grounds



The Centre is an award-winning construction designed to blend into the local environment, it's a shining example of community engagement, and a truly integrated architectural, environmental, and landscaped experience.

Opened in 2008, the Centre is primarily a community and educational resource for learning about nature, conservation and biodiversity. It is seeking to be a truly sustainable venue and aims to operate with reduced effects on the environment and increased sustainability in mind..

The Centre and grounds are owned by Ashford Borough Council, leased by Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council and they are managed by Singleton Spaces which has a board of local volunteers.

An environmental approach to the building included a low-energy design, with orientation of the building enabling passive solar heating in winter and good solar protection against overheating in summer. Natural ventilation is provided to all spaces, natural materials are specified throughout, along with a wood-pellet fuel boiler, rainwater collection, and a sustainable drainage system (SuDS).

The building structure is timber frame from sustainable sources, with stripped larch tree trunks used for columns, and timber cladding to the outside. There is a heavyweight spine wall, which divides key spaces but also acts as a thermal mass which retains heat in winter and reduces cooling requirements in summer.

There is a café with indoor and outdoor seating, and two seminar rooms which have proved immensely popular, with regular school visits and frequent hiring-out for events. There are also offices and workshop space. It provides a base for Ashford Community Woodland volunteers, Repair Cafe Ashford and other local community groups.