



**TRUCKSTOP  
@ASHFORD**

# OPEN ROAD

**SPRING 2021**



## COVID-19 UPDATE

We all knew that we would be entering 2021 with uncertainty due to Brexit and the continuing Coronavirus pandemic.

You have all powered into the new year with the dedication and commitment that you showed throughout 2020 and for that, we truly thank you.

There have been many changes implemented as a result of Brexit including the new HGV checks and we hope that you have found our social media helpful in sharing useful links and guides to help you.

Our top priority continues to be the health, safety and wellbeing of our team and, of course, you and so we continue to follow the guidance issued by the Government, Public Health England and Local Authorities.

## BUSINESS UPDATE

We are continuously monitoring the guidance issued for all of you and are doing all we can to communicate this to you at the earliest opportunity.

We sincerely hope that 2021 progresses into a year that gives hope for us all and it is our wish for you and your loved ones to stay safe.

Darren

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# POST-BREXIT AND COVID-19

The first of January 2021 saw Brexit come into force and the UK leaving the European Union.

All of us in our industry prepared ourselves for the changes and here at Ashford International Truckstop we were proud to be able to share useful guides and links through our social media for all you Truck Drivers to access easily.

Keep an eye on our social media channels for links, guidance and advice and take a look through past posts for more!

We made it our mission to share with you all any information that we have to help ease, where we could, the transition period. We will continue to share information with you all for as long as it takes.



### Hauliers handbook

*Guidance for haulage companies and commercial drivers moving goods between Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) and the European Union.*

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transporting-goods-between-great-britain-and-the-eu-guidance-for-hauliers-and-commercial-drivers>

### Information and advice sites (and available Covid testing)

*Information and advice sites for hauliers. At haulier advice sites, HGV drivers can:*

- Take a COVID test, which they need to cross into France
- Find out about the rules and documents needed to move goods between the UK and EU
- Complete a free border readiness check to ensure they have the correct documentation to cross the EU border
- Get help using the [Check an HGV is ready to cross the border service](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transporting-goods-between-great-britain-and-the-eu-guidance-for-hauliers-and-commercial-drivers#information-and-advice-sites>

## COVID-19 TESTING

**HGV drivers travelling to or via France must have proof of an authorised negative COVID test, before arriving in Kent, or any UK port.**

Drivers are required to have proof of an authorised negative test, from the last 72 hours, before crossing the border.

Those using Kent ports are also legally required to have a Kent Access Permit.

Free tests and border readiness checks are available at Information and Advice sites across the UK.

- HGVs leaving England for France can only cross the Channel with evidence of an authorised negative COVID test. This measure is mandated by the UK and French governments, and will stay in place until further notice
- HGV drivers arriving in Kent with proof of a negative Covid test and a Kent Access Permit will now be 'fast tracked', with quicker access to the port or Eurotunnel terminal
- Drivers without proof of a negative test will not be able to cross the border and this will cause further delays.

**You should get tested before you arrive in Kent:**

- Hauliers can also get an authorised negative COVID test from a private testing facility and firms may have their own arrangements.
- Free testing is also available at the Information & Advice sites across the country. Testing is being offered at 34 sites, but please check gov.uk for the latest opening hours and information.

### Increased checks at the French Border

French customs authorities are operating a zero-tolerance policy to HGV drivers without the correct import and export documentation for the goods they are carrying. French authorities will be checking the following documents.

Hauliers using the Short Straits (Port of Dover or Eurotunnel) must also use the Check an HGV is Ready to Cross the Border service to:

- apply for a Kent Access Permit
- check you have the correct EU Import and Export paperwork you need to cross the border between Great Britain and the EU via the Port of Dover or Eurotunnel

You can be fined £300 if you do not use the service when travelling through Kent ports, or if you provide a fraudulent declaration. Hauliers who arrive at port without the correct Import and Export documents will be turned away.

### Get support and further information

Use our Live Chat Function (<https://transport-goods-to-and-from-eu.dft.gov.uk/>) or visit one of our Information and Advice sites <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/haulier-advice-site-locations> to conduct a free advisory border readiness check today.

# HELPING THE DRIVERS STUCK ON THE M20



When the French border closed due to a new variant of the Coronavirus being discovered in Kent, we knew we had to help.

As you will all be too aware, thousands of you were stuck in Kent, and for those of you being held on the M20 you had nowhere to go. As a truckstop our priority is you, our customers, and we knew that you were potentially missing the holidays with your families which is something that really hit us hard and so we wanted to do something to hopefully make a difference to you.

Our Senior Business/ General Manager, Darren Smith, urgently spoke with the rest of the GSE Group (GSE Building & Civil Engineering Ltd, GSE Plant Ltd, Hythe Imperial Hotel & Spa and The Marquis of Granby) to see what we could do by pulling together for all of you.

We were overwhelmed with the response we got and our teams got together and originally made 650 grab bags, this was then increased to 1,000 due to popular demand!

Local businesses very kindly and generously donated food and fresh produce to include in the grab bags for which we were incredibly grateful.

The team worked tirelessly to get this volume of grab bags made up and delivered in time to get to the drivers **and to you all we thank you very much!**





Over Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day, we made up sandwiches, cakes and drinks for our customers to take for free.

We were touched to be contacted by lots of people within the local community and also by charities, including the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day-Saints based in Ashford, who all wanted to help in any way they could to help our customers and the drivers on the M20 over the holiday period.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day-Saints very kindly dropped off food parcels on Christmas Eve and Boxing Day for our customers to take for free.

**We were honestly so inspired by our team here at the Ashford International Truckstop, the wider GSE Group team and our local community for all pulling together to help where we could and we cannot say thank you enough to you all for all that you did.**

As always, another huge thank you to all you Truck Drivers for all you have done and continue to do despite the challenges you have faced.

# COMBAT STRESS

Combat Stress is the UK's leading charity for veterans' mental health. Every quarter, we'll share news of how our support is making a difference to the lives of former servicemen and women across the UK.

This quarter Combat Stress tells us about one of the ways they're raising money to meet growing demand for their specialist services.

With thousands of former servicemen and women seeking mental health treatment each year, Combat Stress is running their popular fundraising challenge **March in March** for the fourth consecutive year.

Complete 10 miles during March, give your mental and physical health a much-needed boost, and raise funds to enable the charity to continue delivering life-changing services. Submit evidence of your achievement and you'll receive a special commemorative medal.

The event costs just £20 to register to take part. Participants are also encouraged to try to raise as much as they can in sponsorship. **To find out more and to register, visit [marchinmarch.co.uk](http://marchinmarch.co.uk).**

March in March is a virtual event – you don't have to physically turn up to a race start line. How and where (within your local area) you complete the challenge is up to you so even with COVID-19 restrictions this is a fundraising event we can all take part in. Simply register online, decide when and where you're going to walk and get started!

All participants are encouraged to adhere to all government guidelines, and share photos and videos on social media of them undertaking the challenge, using #MarchinMarch.

All money raised will enable the charity to treat veterans across the UK with severe mental health issues, like veteran, Dean, who describes how Combat Stress changed his life.

Our Senior Business/ General Manager, Darren Smith, and our Head of Marketing, Lauren Mackay have targeted themselves to run/ walk 62 miles each over the month of March - averaging at 2 miles per day!

If you would like to sponsor the team and donate to our fantastic charity partner you can do so at:

**<https://events.combatstress.org.uk/fundraisers/ashfordinternationaltruckstop>**

Any donations would be greatly appreciated, not only by us but also by Combat Stress and the many veterans that they help on a daily basis.

Stay tuned to our social media pages across Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram to follow their progress.



## Dean's Story

"I saw an ad on TV for the Army and that was it – I was hooked. I joined up when I left school aged 16. I served for seven years and did two tours to Iraq and one to Afghanistan as well as tours with UN to Kosovo and Sierra Leone.

"It was after one particular incident during my tour of Afghanistan (Herrick 7) that I began to seriously struggle. My sleep pattern was totally ruined. I came back home and didn't want to do another tour. I felt very lucky to still be here and didn't want to push my luck. But I was told I was due to go back to Iraq.

"I decided to leave the Army and so in 2008 moved back in with my parents. After a week my dad said to me 'something's not right, you're not the son I let go into the army'. He told me I was a completely different person. I used to be the type of person who filled the room but instead I was sitting in the corner and drinking beer (my own self therapy at the time).

"Even though I knew something wasn't right, I was in denial. I got married – I wanted to feel normal and I thought that's what normal people did. We quickly had two children. But when my first daughter was born, that triggered everything - all my emotions came out.

"My wife pushed me to get help and eventually in 2012 I went to the doctors, to shut her up more than anything. The doctor I saw had a lot of expertise with mental health and he told me I had the classic signs of a serious issue – post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). I had never heard of it. He referred me to an NHS programme but that was a total waste of time.

"By then I was drinking a lot at night – I didn't want to go to bed as I knew the flashbacks and nightmares would come. I also wasn't eating well. Eventually I ended up in a coma for two days due to malnutrition and dehydration. After that I started to realise that people don't usually drink to go to sleep but still it wasn't enough for me to seek help.

"My marriage broke up in 2014 and I moved in with another veteran. I did stop drinking in the week but at the weekend would regularly drink until I blacked out. I eventually realised I needed help and my doctor advised calling Combat Stress.

"Once I'd made that call, things moved quickly. I explained about my drinking habits and how I'd thought about taking my own life twice. I took part in my first treatment programme in 2015 and then in January 2016 I did the PTSD Intensive Treatment programme at Tyrwhitt House. It's a six-week course and it did wonders for me.

My issues were really hindering my day to day life but treatment from Combat Stress literally changed my life. Thanks to the support of my partner Jenny, I have the strength to get up every morning taking on new challenges like our two year old daughter, something I never thought I could do again but with her by my side I feel that anything is achievable.

"The tools I was given whilst at Combat Stress to help me with my sleep were amazing. I still have nightmares and flashbacks but probably only once a month rather than every night like I used to for the ten years after Afghanistan.

"Since I completed treatment, my mental health has still peaked and troughed over the years but life is so much better. I'm much more chilled out, my anger issues have subsided, and I'm much less fiery if things don't go my way.

"I can't praise Combat Stress enough for how they have helped me. My only regret is the time I wasted before getting the help I needed.

**If you are a veteran or a family member in need of help, please call the charity's free and confidential 24-hour Helpline for advice and support on 0800 138 1619.**

**Find out more at [combatstress.org.uk](http://combatstress.org.uk)**



# HOLDING ON LETTING GO



**FIREWALK**  
**THE HOTTEST**  
WALK OF 2021

**£25**  
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CHARITY  
TEAM

\*\*\*\*\*

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& EXCITEMENT

\*\*\*\*\*

(AIM TO RAISE  
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**HOLIDAY INN ASHFORD NORTH, TN26 1AR**

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## To find more about Holding On Letting Go

Please visit our website at  
[www.holdingonlettinggo.org.uk](http://www.holdingonlettinggo.org.uk)

To donate to support the work of Holding On Letting Go Truckstop have a Justgiving Page: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/ait>

'HOLG' Collection Cans are also sited throughout the Ashford International Truckstop.



**Holding On Letting Go**

Would you like the opportunity to support Kent's charity for grieving children whilst having the opportunity to win £50 in our monthly draw?

**ENTER TO WIN!**

Take part in the Holding On Letting Go Draw and you can do just that!

Numbers for the draw cost just **£24.00 per month** (12-month initial commitment). There's no minimum limit – you can buy just one number per month or as many as you would like.

The lucky winning numbers will be drawn on the 1st of every month, and the prizes will be:

<b>1st number drawn:</b> £50.00	<b>2nd number drawn:</b> £15.00	<b>3rd number drawn:</b> £10.00
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To join in, please email [caroline.gaskin@holg.org.uk](mailto:caroline.gaskin@holg.org.uk), stating how many numbers you wish to purchase.

You can choose to pay by standing order:  
**Annually** (£24 per number for 12 months) **Quarterly** (£6 per number for 3 months; commitment to make 4 quarterly payments) **Monthly** (£2 per number, but a minimum commitment of 5 numbers is required, so £10 per month, with a commitment to make 12 monthly payments)

03445 611 511      [www.holdingonlettinggo.org.uk](http://www.holdingonlettinggo.org.uk)      Registered Charity No 1191016

Holding On Letting Go are delighted to be a chosen Charity of the Year with Ashford International Truckstop. Corporate partnerships are a key part of the fundraising aspect for any charity and can benefit both parties - bringing valuable funding and raising the profile for both. Whilst financial donation is a key part of such associations, there is so much more to be gained in creating lasting relationships and network opportunities, plus a chance to focus and raise ambition to any team-building or challenge events that corporate partners and its staff may wish to undertake and the positivity this creates.

Since our initial connection, Truckstop and its fellow businesses on Waterbrook have sponsored Races in our Charity Race Night in November and also donated Christmas Gifts for the bereaved children we support. Prizes donations for raffles and events (when 'real' events can happen!) are also a valuable resource.

Raising awareness about our work is very important to Holding On Letting Go - as we want to be sure to reach as many children as possible throughout Kent and Medway who have suffered a significant bereavement and help support them and their families to cope with their grief. With this in mind, Lauren Mackay, Head of Marketing and Business Development - has fully engaged in learning about the work of HOLG and we are truly grateful for her astute eye on Social Media as she shares and tags HOLG as often as she can; which, in turn, builds further shares and a wider awareness of the charity and our work and aims.

In addition to supporting children and families after a bereavement, which in many cases will be a parent, grandparent, friend or sibling who has died; Holding On Letting Go has also been able to offer pre-bereavement support, too - thanks to funding from Global's Make Some Noise. This support is equally valuable in helping children understand and process the emotions of terminal illness and means a family are already familiar with HOLG when such a bereavement occurs.

We also work with Schools (both pupils and staff), Youth Groups and Hospices and help train staff to support when there has been a bereavement which may affect a whole community.

Naturally, in 'normal times' we have fundraising events throughout the year and to be able to share these with a wide and diverse audience is another key benefit. This proves even more important in these times of lockdown where we have needed to adapt not only our service delivery to be Covid-safe and compliant but also our fundraising events. Therefore we have had to be creative and hold online Race Nights and Speedquizzes and have launched a HOLG Monthly Draw. Never a substitute for seeing our wonderful supporters in person but these events do keep some funds flowing and provide lockdown fun and competition which can be enjoyed from the armchair at home!

**We sincerely hope that 2021 and the vaccination programme will bring a long-awaited return to our face to face fundraising events and we'd love to keep you posted! In the meantime, if you fancy a challenge and are keen to push yourself, then 10k and Marathon places, Cycle Rides, Firewalks and the like could beckon so do please get in touch - I'd be thrilled to hear from you!**

**If you have a business and would like to know more about Corporate Partnership than we'd love to hear from you, too! Dates for our next Speedquiz events are Friday 12th February and Tuesday 9th March and the links for tickets are below:**

**Holding On Letting Go Fundraising ([www.jumblebee.co.uk/ticket/NcwEKXcbaf](http://www.jumblebee.co.uk/ticket/NcwEKXcbaf))**



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Fundraising Officer

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# CHARITY INVOLVEMENT



## Last Chance Animal Rescue, New Romney

We were so pleased to be able to donate to our friends at Last Chance Animal Rescue in New Romney last Christmas!

Our team and customers donated food, toys and blankets to help the team at Last Chance Animal Rescue continue to provide the excellent care that they do for the animals that need them.

We were able to visit them, COVID secure, and safely deliver the donations.

## Holding On Letting Go, Virtual Race Night

We jumped at the chance to sponsor Race 1 in our partnered charities, Holding On Letting Go, virtual race night which they hosted on Facebook.

For just £5 per horse (which was really a donation to the charity) participants were in with a chance to win £40!

The night was a huge success for them and they raised an impressive £430 after the winner very kindly donated back their winnings splitting with Pilgrims Hospice.



Restaurant Open 24/7



## Holding On Letting Go

Our team and our customers donated gifts for the children, and their families, who are receiving support from our partnered charity, Holding On Letting Go.

We were delighted to be able to donate a variety of toys and presents covering all age ranges and we sincerely hope that they enjoyed them as much as we enjoyed getting them together!



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