

Message from the Chair—Chris Fribbins

There is a lot that can be said about the virus issue and its impacts. On the railway, it has led to a large reduction in services and has made it difficult for the Kent Community Rail Partnership to carry out planned activities and our involvement with colleagues as well as the rail industry itself. Our (Sustrans) management have stepped up with a contingency plan and are looking forward to the relaxation of the social distancing rules and being able to get out and meet with others face to face instead of online meetings.

When the 'lockdown' started we already had a lot of issues to resolve. The new franchise to operate our railways was only confirmed in the last days before the previous one was due to expire on the 31st March. No sooner was the award announced that the situation changed due to the COVID19 situation and the franchise control was handed to the Department of Transport (DfT) - but with Southeastern carrying out the day to day operation.

Before the previous franchise bidding process was cancelled, we had talked to all the potential bidders and there was a great deal of support for the extension of funding for Community Rail activities across the new franchise. This has been carried into the new direct-award franchise and Southeastern announced a £400,000 fund to support activities over two years, with proposals to be submitted by mid-June. This also included the current KCRP activities (although £40,000 had been underwritten by the DfT for the current year).

There had been previous suggestions that an additional line could be added, with Tonbridge/Hastings being investigated and some interest from the Dover/Faversham line. As Tonbridge/Hastings crosses the border with East Sussex, it looks like the Sussex CRP will be taking that forward. So after discussions with interested parties, it has been agreed to propose CRPs for both the Dover/Faversham line and the Maidstone East line from Ashford to join up with fellow CRP, the Darent Valley Line (Swanley to Sevenoaks). Additional KCRP staff will be recruited. The result of our bid will be known before the end of July - all part of exciting time for the partnership. More details will be announced when we know the result of our bid. In the meantime please keep safe and well, we hope to see you out on our railways as soon as it is safe to do so.

Thank You Southeastern

Kent Community Rail Partnership and all its members would like to show their appreciation for the Southeastern staff. Over a very difficult period during the Covid 19 Pandemic, Southeastern staff have ensured that all key workers have been able to get to work safely, who provide essential services for the county and save lives. This has involved a lot of behind the scenes work as well as frontline staff to revise timetables, communicate information to our passengers and cover other people's roles due to reduced staffing.

At the time of writing the government has said, **“social distancing means there will be space for as few as 1 in 10 of the usual number of passengers on the railway. The safety of the public and our employees remains our top priority and people should help protect everyone on the railway by only using trains if they have no alternative. Those who can work from home should continue to do so. Please help us keep the railway free for those who need it most.”**

Please respect this guidance and work from home when you can and only make essential journeys in the meantime.

Face Coverings

Please remember that as from June 15th face coverings must be worn on trains and public transport until further notice.

As soon as it is safe to do so Kent Community Rail Partnership will be working closely with Southeastern to carry out our action plan and deliver a number of events on the train.



Train Times

Train services will still be restricted during Covid19 and over the coming months as the country starts to return to normal, so please continue to keep an eye on the [Southeastern](#) website for the latest updates regarding train times and services.

Using Technology

Over the past 3 months I am delighted to say that our partnership members have been fantastic in adapting to using online technology to attend our partnership meetings and to join in with our online activities.

Kent CRP Quiz

We launched our first online quiz event on May 7th and had 42 people take part forming ten teams. This included teams from Brighton and Huddersfield. The event was hosted on Zoom and consisted of 6 rounds. The categories were, Sport, History, Music, Geography, General Knowledge and Food and Drink. Thank you to Matthew Fraser from Southeastern for being our wonderful quiz master.



The event was very successful and as a result we will be hosting our second online quiz on Friday July 3rd at 7pm.

Kent CRP Book Club

Kent CRP also launched their first virtual book club. Only 4 people took part to read the first book and join in with an online meeting to share their thoughts about “The Mystery of the Blue Train” by Agatha Christie. However once word got round, the second book “On the Slow Train” by Michael Williams has attracted 12 bookworms to take part. If you would like to join in and receive weekly emails and meet up online with our next book please contact therese.hammond@sustrans.org to sign up.

Upcoming Events

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 our planned up and coming events have all been postponed for the foreseeable near future. We will continue to run smaller online events such as the Book Club and Quiz.

Kent CRP Online Quiz— 3rd July 2020 7-8:30 pm

Book Club — 9th July 2020 Zoom Meeting

Kent CRP Logo Competition

During the lock down period we decided to launch a Logo Competition to design a logo for Kent CRP. Our 2 existing line logos will still be used. We had a wonderful range of fantastic entries from all different walks of life, including primary school children, university students and graphic designers. We would like to thank all those who entered for sharing their wonderful ideas and giving up their time to be involved.

A panel of ten judges struggled to separate some of the imaginative designs we received. However, two entries tied for first place with 41 votes each. Well done to both Matthew Crowley and Hannah Legg. Their ideas will be combined to become our new logo. They were also both rewarded with an Amazon Voucher for £100.



We would also like to congratulate our runner-up Isabella who wins a £50 Amazon Voucher

Old Train Station Photos

Kent CRP are putting together a new page for our website about the history of our stations. If you have any old photographs of any of our stations on the SwaleRail or Medway Valley Line, we would be delighted to share these. We will need permission from the owner to allow us to share them on our site. If have any interesting facts about your local stations, we would also love to hear from you. Please contact andy.place@sustrans.org.uk for more information or to send in any photos.

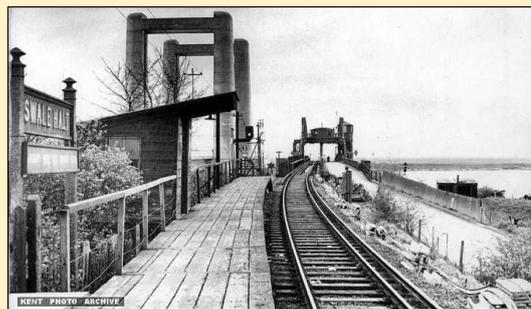


Photo of Swale Halt courtesy of Ray Moore from the [Kent Photo Archive](#).

Keep up to date! visit our website www.kentcrp.org.uk

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