

Kent Community Rail Partnership



Annual Report 2017 - 2018



Chairman's Report 2018

We enjoyed another highly successful year with a full programme of events and meetings of varying intensity and sensitivity. Last autumn and into the winter months we met with the three bidders for the new South Eastern Franchise (Abellio, Govia and Stagecoach). These proved to be searching and in depth meetings and we all look forward to the Secretary of State's November Statement when the new franchisee will be announced.

Funding is very important to Kent Community Rail Partnership (KCRP) and we did make our financial requirements very plain as we wish to move away from the somewhat hand to mouth existence that has been the case lately, however, the Department for Transport (DFT) advised the bidders not to put a sum in their bids for community rail, further reason for us to look forward to the November Statement.

Southeasterns contract has been extended to March next year which happens to coincide with the date that Sustrans, contract (who host KCRP) is due to end. It was decided to request agreement from our three main funding partners – Southeastern, Kent County Council and Medway Unitary Authority – to extend our contract with Sustrans for a further twelve months to 31 March 2020 and this was agreed by all parties also with confirmation of continued funding to March 2019.

At the ACORP Annual Awards in Derby last November, KCRP lifted the trophy for first place for our Ambulance Train Event on Swale Rail for best Community Engagement event 2017. Not to be outdone, Snodland Station gained second place for the Most Enhanced Station of 2017 and also second place in the National Transport Awards 2017.

KCRP was further recognized in the Pride of Medway Awards with a nomination for Community Services. Our schools programme continues to go from strength to strength.

We now have 10 primary schools engaged in our Smarter Journeys programme including two new schools. The Smarter Travel Challenge provides travel planning workshops for Year 6 pupils on their secondary school induction days. We have a new Travel to School Guide, web pages for teachers on the Kent Connected website and training for officers and teachers.

A special mention goes to three primary schools: Aylesford Primary School took part in the Kent Messenger Green Schools Award 2018 and won Best Cycling Award and Overall Best Eco Travel Champion.

Hot on their heels of this challenge came Sustrans nationwide Big Pedal Competition where two more of our schools scored successes: Queenborough Primary School on Swale Rail Line won first place in the Large Primary School class, One Day Challenge with 43.64% journeys by bike or scooter.

In the Small Primary School class, Holborough Lakes Primary School on the Medway Valley Line (MVL) took fourth place scoring 73.33% journeys by bike or scooter. All pupils taking part in these challenges and their teachers, should be very proud of themselves, I know we are. Over the past year, KCRP has continued to engage with planning/regeneration officers and developers in the Districts that our lines travel through.

Wherever and whenever possible we have responded to planning applications for major housing development on or near to our lines in order to secure better access for pedestrians and cyclists to stations and schools. We have also suggested improvements to stations, funded by S.106 monies, to better attract passengers.

We have held seven pop-up hubs in a variety of locations, including a return visit to St Pancras Station for Community Rail in the City and engaged with 185 passengers at this event alone. This year we logged where passengers were travelling to/from and discovered that 30% were leisure journeys, 42% for work, 21% visiting friends and family and 7% for either hospital visits or to an airport.

A significant number of passengers were travelling from the Canterbury and Maidstone areas, 32% of 100 passengers who provided a postcode. We have begun to work more closely with Visit Kent and perhaps a more in depth survey would assist in learning how to encourage more people to visit Kent. Where we have been involved in station improvements, cost savings have been made in the reduction of vandalism and antisocial behaviour.

At Snodland Station, Holmesdale School pupils created a mosaic to commemorate 160 years of the MVL and Snodland Station. New posters designed by pupils of Bradfields Academy to raise awareness of the British Transport Police text number are now displayed at stations across the Medway Valley and Swale Rail lines.

Queenborough and Halfway House Primary Schools helped Community Artist Julie Bradshaw in the design of a new mural at Queenborough Station to celebrate 650 years of the Queenborough Royal Charter. Station improvements to Watlington and Queenborough are works in progress.

Our community involvement continues to grow with our Annual Champions Action Day attended by station adopters which this year included two new adopters. We have also recruited two new travel champions who have enabled pupils to undertake station surveys in order to make further improvements at stations.

To promote volunteer involvement, Mike Fitzgerald the first Chairman of KCRP, presented a shield to be awarded to the Volunteer of the Year which went to Linda Brinklow for her considerable efforts with the Ambulance Train event.

In our support for social and economic development, we held monthly KCRP events promoting awareness and tourism along the lines with the addition of two new events, The Ghost Train and Teddy Bears Picnic. With the Ghost Train we worked with BeeZoo, the coffee shop on Maidstone West Station and to widen our reach for the Teddy Bears Picnic, we worked with Medway Valley Countryside Partnership. We continue our efforts in the workplace to engage with staff to consider changing the way they travel to work.

As I write this review KCRP does face a rather challenging few months in terms of personnel. Whilst not quite down to one man and his dog (or should I say one woman and her dog?), we are not far off!

Louise Skipton-Carter, Sustrans Line Manager responsible for budget/accounting, as well as line managing, has left us for pastures new, her successor has been appointed and will begin mid Aug. I wish Louise well, she will be missed especially for her clear thinking and straightforward manner.

Sarah Deakin, Schools Engagement Officer, is taking a six month career break and will, I trust, be back with us in January.

She has been the mainstay of our schools programme with many innovations. Linda Bell, Project Support Officer, is in the throes of relocating to Spain and her eye for detail in planning applications and teasing out reports will be missed.

Which leaves Therese Hammond, Project Officer, wearing any number of hats as she endeavours to cover several roles at once. Sarah has handed over her role as Schools Engagement Officer to Therese until new recruit Andy Place starts at the end of August, he is a welcome addition to our team. Guy Schofield who had been our Project Officer until his secondment by Sustrans to be Project Director of National Cycle Network (NCN) last autumn, may be returning to us but not until April at the earliest.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Louise, Sarah and Linda for all they have done for Medway Valley Line and SwaleRail and wish them well for the future and to say "Thank You Therese" for further stepping up to the plate! My thanks also go to the many volunteers we have who so willingly give up their time to make our events the success they undoubtedly are – we would be lost without you.

All in all and despite staffing changes, it has been a fantastic twelve months.

Sue Murray - Chairman
Kent Community Rail Partnership



What is Kent Community Rail Partnership?

Community Rail Partnerships (CRP's) encourage local communities to support their local railway lines and stations. There are approximately 60 CRP's across the country and the number is continuously growing. CRP's are comprised of railway operators, local authorities including; county, district, borough and parish councils, schools, businesses, rail user groups, many community organisations and volunteers.

CRP's deliver a wide variety of projects to fulfil the needs of the local community whilst recognising the need to increase growth, reduce costs, increase community involvement and support social and economic development.

Kent Community Rail Partnership (KCRP) was established in 2003 and works within a 5 mile radius of each of its 19 stations along the Medway Valley Line (MVL) and Swale Rail Line (SRL) (see map on front cover). Both Line activities are overseen by a Steering Group which is chaired by Sue Murray and meets quarterly at County Hall.

Each line has its own partnership meeting, the MVL meeting is chaired by Sue Murray and the SRL is chaired by Mike Baldock, meetings take place 4 times a year and 3 times a year respectively. The Partnership could not operate without the collaboration of the members, who dedicate many hours to support our work for which we are extremely grateful. The Kent CRP has been hosted by Sustrans since April 2014.

Kent Community Rail Partnership supports 2 railway lines;

1. The Medway Valley Line (MVL) which runs alongside the beautiful river Medway connecting Tonbridge and Strood via Maidstone, the County Town of Kent.
2. The Swale Rail Line (MVL) which runs from Sittingbourne to Sheerness connecting the Isle of Sheppey with the rest of Kent.

Train services on both lines run trains directly to London and are operated by Southeastern Railway Ltd, part of the Govia consortium.

Financial Report and Funding

We suffered a further loss in income this year from a number of local authority funders due to central government funding cuts, however, we are grateful to be financially supported by some authorities including some of the parish councils along our two lines. We also received grants from Kent County Council, Medway Council and Southeastern Railway.

We have been successful in attracting grants and match funding from others including Railway Heritage Trust and ACoRP for specific projects and events enabling us to complete a comprehensive programme of projects and events. £15,255 has been carried over to the 18/19 budget.

	ACTUAL	Budget	Balance
Core Funding & other income			
Kent County Council	£16,000	£16,000	
South Eastern Railway income	£43,509	£43,507	
Parish Council & other local grant income	£2,450	£0	
Medway Borough Council Income	£6,000	£6,000	
Abellio & ACORP grants	£4,880	£4,000	
Carry forward from 2016-17	£7,533	£7,533	
Total income	£80,372	£77,040	£3,332
Expenditure			
Staff costs & overheads	£58,235	£64,005	
Events & Marketing	£6,507	£11,933	
Volunteer Expenses	£21	£300	
Office Admin	£354	£802	
Total expenditure	£65,117	£77,040	-£11,924
Deferred into 2018/19	£15,255		

Review of the 2017 - 18 Action Plan

The 2017 - 18 Action Plan was developed to embrace the Department of Transport's 4 objectives for Community Rail:

1. Deliver Growth

Another successful year of passenger growth on the MVL and SRLs, this growth has been achieved by:

- Holding 7 pop up hubs at businesses, schools and community events promoting train and active travel (cycling and walking).
- Engaging 10 primary schools in the Smarter Journeys programme including 2 new schools this year.
- Facilitating group travel training sessions for students of Bradfields Academy who have mild to moderate learning difficulties. Some pupils undertook their first ever unassisted journeys this year.
- Running the Smarter Travel Challenge with 5 schools and the addition of travel information at parents evenings, a new Travel to School Guide, teachers web pages on the Kent Connected website and training for officers and teachers.
- Facilitating Safety in Action Maidstone and West Kent, this is rail safety advice provided to nearly 3,000 pupils.
- The introduction this year of 4 seasonal newsletters to encourage train travel and share the work of the KCRP.
- Expansion of social media via; Facebook now has 246 likes, Twitter has 373 followers, new website with updated schools pages and a growing data base of over 300.



Pop up at St Pancras Station



Smarter Journey Programme



Pop up at Tonbridge Station



Safety in Action

2. Contribute to Cost Savings

Cost savings due to a reduction in vandalism and anti-social behaviour at stations where there have been station improvements:

- New mosaic created by pupils from Holmesdale School at Snodland Station celebrating 160 years of Snodland Station and the Medway Valley Line.
- Four new posters designed by pupils from Bradfields Academy raising awareness of the British Transport Police (BTP) text number now displayed at stations across the MVL and SRL.
- New mural at Queenborough Station celebrated 650 years of the Queenborough Royal Charter and was designed by Community artist Julie Bradshaw, with help from pupils at Queenborough and Halfway Houses Primary Schools.
- Facilitating station adopters planting and painting works e.g. at Wateringbury and Maidstone West stations.



The unveiling of the Queensborough station mural



Bradfield Academy BTP poster campaign at Snodland station



Garden adopted by the Ian and Margaret Paterson at Maidstone West Station

Review of the 2017 - 18 Action Plan

3. Increase Community Involvement

KCRP continues to increase community involvement by:

- Facilitating the 2 active community rail partnership groups - The Medway Valley Line Partnership and The Swale Rail Line Partnership who meet 4 times a year and 3 times a respectively.
- Holding the annual Champion Action Day which is attended by our volunteers, this year it included two new station adopters.
- Facilitating the Junctions Arts Projects at Watlington station, the development of a Victorian goods shed into artists hubs - after successfully raising funds from ACoRP and The Railway Heritage Fund a Condition Survey was undertaken to progress the project.
- Recruiting 2 new school travel champions who have enabled pupils to undertake station surveys in order to make further improvements at stations.
- Enabling some secondary schools to undertake their own travel planning advice at parents evenings e.g. Mascalls Academy.
- Introducing the prestigious Volunteer of the Year Award at the Stakeholder meeting this year. It was introduced and presented by Mike FitzGerald to Linda Brinklow for her considerable efforts with the Ambulance Train event.



Junction Arts Community Project - Watlington Station



Volunteer of the year Linda Brinklow receiving her award from Ex KCRP Chair Mike FitzGerald

4. Support Social and Economic Development

The social and economic development of the areas within 5 miles of our station was supported by:

- Arranging monthly events which promote awareness and tourism along the lines including two new events: The Halloween Train and Teddy Bears Picnic. During the former, we worked with local business BeeZoo to promote the new coffee shop at Maidstone West Station and the latter we worked in partnership with Medway Valley Countryside Partnership to widen our reach.
- Collaboratively working with Visit Kent, Produced in Kent, Locate in Kent, and Explore Kent which has resulted in the formation of a new joint working Group called Promote Kent.
- Continuation of good working relationships with planning officers to allow for timely knowledge of consultation processes and development plans where we are able to positively impact on transport plans e.g. comprehensive response to Medways consultation paper on their Local Plan and influence on the transport plan for the Kemsley development.



Medway Valley 7.5km walk from Strood station



Halloween Train



Medway tow path E-Bike ride



Santa at Maidstone West Station

KCRP Key Successes 2017 - 18

National Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) Awards 2017

1st place for Ambulance Train for Best Community Engagement Event 2017

2nd place for Snodland Station for Most Enhanced Station 2017

National Transport Awards 2017

2nd place for Snodland Station - Best Station

Pride of Medway Awards 2017

Nominated for Community Services

Public Health England Conference 2017

Abstract accepted and e-poster created for Smarter Travel Challenge Project

KM Green Schools Award 2018

Aylesford Primary, Best Cycling Award and Overall Best Eco Travel Champion

Big Pedal Competition 2018

1st place in large primary classes, 1 day challenge for Queensborough Primary School with 43.64% journeys by bike or scooter

4th place in large primary classes, 1 day challenge for Holborough Lakes Primary School with 73.33% journeys by bike or scooter.



ACoRP award for Best Community Engagement Event
The Ambulance



Aylesford Primary School Big Pedal Group



The new and improved Snodland Railway Station



Ambulance Train at Queensborough Station

Increased Passenger Numbers on our Lines

Passenger usage figures for the Medway Valley Line

southeastern						
Station	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	Growth 2017 vs 2016
Strood	1,132,056	1,197,602	1,182,148	1,098,676	1,110,912	(5.5)%
Cuxton	42,512	40,808	41,578	39,854	45,140	4.2%
Halling	68,100	58,710	55,240	48,070	45,124	16.0%
Snodland	249,698	217,306	194,954	192,934	185,384	14.9%
New Hythe	124,612	107,954	108,684	90,614	89,712	15.4%
Aylesford	122,554	115,314	115,906	112,666	107,356	6.3%
Maidstone Barracks	271,710	266,522	270,645	266,938	267,765	1.9%
Maidstone West	846,586	830,421	843,268	831,718	834,293	1.9%
East Farleigh	33,162	31,604	29,312	27,580	29,794	4.9%
Wateringbury	48,084	47,302	47,976	49,796	50,472	1.7%
Yalding	25,544	23,600	21,604	22,542	24,086	8.2%
Beltring	11,314	11,418	13,502	11,890	13,152	(0.9)%
Paddock Wood	1,174,732	1,152,514	1,147,648	1,103,546	1,129,994	1.9%
Tonbridge	4,414,394	4,337,310	4,207,328	4,052,722	4,100,552	1.8%

Data Source: ORR Station Data

Passenger usage figures for the Swale Line

southeastern						
Station	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	Growth 2017 vs 2016
Sheerness-On-Sea	432,798	403,538	395,970	390,136	411,480	7.3%
Queenborough	153,166	123,064	118,204	119,210	120,008	24.5%
Swale	4,458	3,916	5,026	3,792	3,372	13.8%
Kemsley	148,188	145,748	140,950	129,438	124,688	1.7%
Sittingbourne	2,164,064	2,111,046	2,063,382	1,965,579	1,949,484	2.5%

Data Source: ORR Station Data

The MVL passenger numbers have increased by 5.19% and the SRL passenger numbers have increased by 9.96% this is an average of 7.58% across our two lines.

Funders & Partners

The Kent Community Rail Partnership is very grateful to its Funders and Partners, without their continued support we would be unable to bring new life to our secondary lines on Kent's Rail Network and thus secure their future.

Funders

Yalding and Beltring Parish Council

Barming Parish Council

Councillor Fay Gooch (Maidstone Borough)

East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council

RailFuture

Queensborough Town Council

Wateringbury Parish Council

Snodland Town Council

southeastern



Partners

Aylesford Parish Council

Barming Parish Council

British Transport Police

East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council

Cuxton Parish Council

Queensborough Town Council

East Farleigh Parish Council

Snodland Town Council

Halling Parish Council

Minster-on-Sea Parish Council



Station Adoption

Station adoption has been one of the many successes of the community rail movement. More than 1,000 adoption groups have been formed nationwide. As well as engaging thousands of people in volunteering, bringing people together and creating pride in station and community, these groups play a critical role in making their stations welcoming, pleasant and attractive places. Often their work extends beyond basic upkeep, incorporating community gardening and food growing, local arts projects and workshops and visits with children and young people.

Benefits of Station Adoption

Adding value to communities, making their stations welcoming and attractive. This can have added benefits, such as encouraging use of the railway and breaking down barriers to sustainable travel, and helping to reduce vandalism.

Creating a sense of community inclusion, where people of all ages and backgrounds can come together to make a positive difference to their community and forge lasting friendships. Volunteering is evidenced to benefit both individuals taking part and wider communities.

Creating partnerships with local schools, community groups, charities and businesses to foster a sense of community spirit and promote access to and understanding of the railway across diverse groups.

Other benefits are often achieved through specific projects, such as promoting awareness of sustainable travel or environmental issues, improving station access such as walking and cycling paths, or bringing disused station property back into community use.

Maidstone West Station Adoption - From Grampus to Garden!

Thanks to our dedicated volunteers led by Maidstone West's station adopter Ian Patterson we now have a newly painted grampus and flower borders to be proud of. Thank you Ian, Margaret and Matt for all your hard work the station really is looking smart and colourful.

If you are interested in being part of a station adoption team please contact us at kentcrp@sustrans.org.uk. You could be an individual or member of group, training will be provided and all project costs will be covered.



Contact Us



Therese.hammond@sustrans.org.uk
Therese Hammond : 07917 131248

The Kent Community Rail Partnership is hosted by the registered charity, Sustrans. The Kent Community Rail Partnership gratefully acknowledges financial support received from Southeastern Rail towards the production of this Annual Report. By working together we aim to encourage greater use of the Medway Valley and SwaleRail lines by local people and visitors and to improve station environments and facilities on offer.

Whether you're an individual, a group, an institution or a business, we can offer a range of opportunities with which to become involved e.g. we recently hosted a sixth former from a local secondary on work experience, she assisted in a passenger engagement exercise at Tonbridge station.

Perhaps you'd like to adopt a station, help plan an event, create a piece of artwork to be displayed at one of our stations or maybe you're a social media whiz, whatever your favourite activities we'd love to hear from you.

Email: kent.crp@sustrans.org.uk

Steering Group

Chair : Sue Murray
Vice - Chair : Chris Fribbins

Medway Valley Line

Chair : Sue Murray
Vice - Chair : Chris Fribbins

Swaleraill Line

Chair : Mike Baldock
Vice - Chair : Jonathan Fryer



Website: www.kentcrp.org.uk



Kent Community Rail Partnership



Twitter : [@kentcrp1](https://twitter.com/kentcrp1)



c/o Kent CRP , Maidstone West Station, Station Approach, The Broadway, Maidstone
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