



Message from the Chair

As ever – busy, busy busy! Andy Place, our newest recruit, has been out and about in schools, working with a group of students at Five Acre Wood at Holmesdale School, Snodland assisting them to become confident in travelling by train. He and Therese Hammond are also working on a project involving 200+ students at Sheppey College. As you can well imagine this is a massive undertaking involving Southeastern, Network Rail, KCC, Swale BC, Queenborough TC as well as the College itself. All involved are enthusiastic about making this work for the students, giving them lifetime skills that will help them find employment.

I'm delighted to report that at the ACORP Annual Awards held in Glasgow in October we were short listed in the Community Art Schemes category for our partnership with Bradfields Academy and the British Transport Police for the BTP Text Number Poster Campaign. Over 100 students took part in the competition and four designs were chosen and displayed on MVL Stations and stations in the Medway towns. I am happy to report that this very special needs school came first in this category. Andy and I subsequently attended Bradfields achievement assembly to present the trophy to two of the students who had taken part in the competition. A very joyful occasion for all. This is our third successive win in different categories over the last three years – a terrific achievement.

Sarah Deakin, Engagement Officer, has been on a sabbatical since June and has decided not to return to work with us due to family reasons. We will miss Sarah's infectious enthusiasm enormously and thank her for her many initiatives working with both schools and on other projects.

As I write this, the Secretary of State has yet to announce who has been awarded the franchise. Originally, the announcement was to have been made in November but here we are at the end of December and yet to here. I do wonder with the late announcement of the franchisee whether or not everything will be in place in time for the new franchise to begin on April 1st. We'll just have to wait and see!

Sue Murray, Chairman, Kent Community Rail

Those Magnificent Men and Women 1 Sept

Swale Borough Councils WW1 Centenary Grant Fund provided for a community project and so the Isle of Sheppey Aspirations over 50ies group managed a day of celebration for all things aviation. Over 1000 people are estimated to have enjoyed the day visiting various stalls on the Spinney at Leysdown, enjoying the music and talks of aviation history for which the Island is famous. We enjoyed engaging with visitors who made smoothies on our smoothie bike whilst



discussing how they travel both on and off the island. This was a fun and enjoyable way to discuss sustainable travel within our work and leisure time. We discussed walking cycling and taking the train with a particular emphasis on end to end journeys - cycle, train, cycle. It was surprising to hear how many people we unaware that bikes are welcome on trains.

Annual Stakeholder meeting 25 Sept

This year's Annual Stakeholder meeting was packed with interesting presentations:

- One Local Plan by David Statham (MD, Southeastern)
- Community Rail in Local Communities by Paul Webster (Operations Manager, ACoRP)
- Cycle-Rail Connections by Martyn Brunt (Land Manager Midlands and East, Sustrans)
- New Community Rail Strategy and Accreditation by Kulvinda Bassi (Community Rail Team Leader, DfT)

The annual Kent CRP Volunteer of the Year Award was presented by our Chair Sue Murray to Matt Frazer, Maidstone Station Manager. Matt is always willing to support and volunteer for community rail, he is forever cheerful and gives generously of his time. This year his contributions have included; assisting with the family cycle ride, attending pop-ups at St. Pancras and Tonbridge stations, painting the grampus at Maidstone West, planting bulbs at Maidstone Barracks and of course standing in for Father Christmas when needed!

THANK YOU MATT



Maidstone CycleFest 2018 29 Sept

Andy and Therese were out again with the ever popular Smoothie Bike, this time in central Maidstone promoting cycle, train, cycle journeys.



Sea Folk Sing 10 and 11 Nov

Never Again by Kent composer Emily Peasgood was sung by Sea Folk Sing, 30 local singers who formed a community choir. They performed on Strood station platform and underpass on the Sat and on the Sun day they performed on the platform at Sittingbourne, on the train travelling to Queenborough, on the bridge at Queenborough station and again on the return train journey via Sheerness to Sittingbourne. The music was heard by over 400 audience members and passengers as they went about their Sat and Sun afternoon journeys. Castle Connects, the community café at Queenborough kindly offered a warm welcome and afternoon refreshments for all participants. Thank you to Karen and her helpful volunteer team. Sea Folk Sing is a 2 year project, commissioned by Ideas Test and produced by SparkedEcho which aims to involve people aged 55 and over in the arts to improve health and wellbeing.



Thank you to Jon Sandford, Station Manager and Southeastern for supplying free travel for the choir members and an additional carriage for the Swale event.

Rotary Bulb planting Maidstone Barracks station 27 Oct

Matt and Therese joined 14 members of Maidstone Dawn Patrol and Maidstone Riverside Rotary Clubs to plant 3,500 purple crocus bulbs at Maidstone Barracks station on a cold, crisp Saturday morning. The purple crocus's will not only enhance the station in the spring but will also raise awareness of the aim to eradicate polio across the world which is one of the Rotarians key objectives. Envelopes of bulbs, packed by a Maidstone women's refuge were also available to purchase on the day in order to help fund polio vaccinations (and the women's refuge is supported via the packing of the bulbs). The significance of the purple bulb is that the finger nail of those vaccinated is painted with the colour purple to distinguish them from those still to be vaccinated.



Sheppey College Project - From Sept 2018

Andy (A) and Therese (T) met with Anita, Anne and Nicole (Principal and Tutors) at Sheppey College in Sept and from the first meeting a large and wide ranging project began to grow. The project has included A and T undertaking 4 student presentations to over 200 students during Oct explaining the project and covering safety while at the stations prior to their station visits. The project will involve station adoption of the Swale Rail Line stations. In a nut shell it is envisaged that the students will learn IT and construction skills within the college, evidence these skills on the Swale stations through constructing planters, bird boxes etc. The IT students will produce short videos to promote the stations and all works will be video diarised. During Nov over 160 students travelled along the Swale line to spend time at Sittingbourne and Queenborough stations in order to plan their station improvements. During this project many of the students who lack confidence and experience of independent travel will gain these skills whilst learning to read timetables, using trains and feeling more able to travel to future employment with their newly acquired IT and construction skills and evidence of putting these skills into practice.

Santa on the Train 15 Dec

This was the first time Kent CRP had provided Santa with a ride! Over 60 people enjoyed visiting Santa, enjoying craft activities, having their faces painted and being entertained by our fabulous balloon artist and Spiderman all whilst travelling along the 2 hour round trip from Maidstone West via Tonbridge and Strood. The children coloured tree decorations for our community art tree which was kindly donated by The Potted Garden, Bearsted - take a look in the station ticket office!



Keep up to date !

Website www.kentcrp.org.uk

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Contact us

Therese Hammond - Project Officer
therese.hammond@sustrans.org.uk 07917 131248

Andy Place - Engagement Officer
andy.place@sustrans.org.uk 07920 088441

