



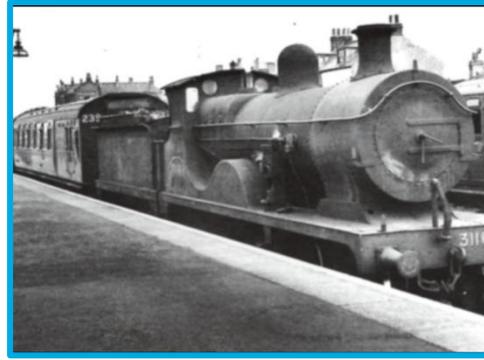
Kent Community Rail Partnership

Summer 2021

NEWSLETTER



Halling Station -
Courtesy of Kent Photo Archives



Sheerness Station -
Courtesy of Middleton Press



East Malling Station -
Courtesy of East Malling Conservation Group

Chairman's Report by Chris Fribbins

We have now started to see a relaxation in the Covid19 rules/restrictions, but the anticipated removal of restrictions has been delayed by at least a month to mid/late July. This has seen a significant return to our railways in recent weeks, but not yet the full return of train services. This has allowed our team to plan and carry out some outside activities and, with the support of Southeastern, our new noticeboards are appearing at our stations.

Travelling by train continues to be safe, with extended and more frequent cleaning of trains. Road traffic congestion has returned and perhaps increased, so the benefits of rail travel are clear.

The future support for Community Rail will depend on the community links that have been established and continue to grow. Nationally the importance of Community Rail was a key part of the Williams-Shapps

review of the rail industry with 11 mentions in the report. Although the rail industry may start to see some changes in response to the report, there is a need for some changes in legislation and organisational changes to deliver most of the suggested items. The report documents changes in the priorities for the rail industry and looks at everything from the delivery of rail, longer term planning, environmental impact of rail and how the rail industry staff are engaged. The key priorities are the passenger and simplifying accountability.

The review covers a lot of issues raised from within the rail industry and other key stakeholders. It will take some time to implement and while promising a lot, will still need to keep an eye on the total costs of the railway. So, the main message is "watch this space" and the devil will be in the detail, it is the start of the changes and there is much to do to deliver the benefits to all.

Replanting at Snodland

In November, Snodland Station had the footbridge upgraded and repainted. However, in doing so it was necessary to remove part of the garden to allow the bridge repairs and painting to take place. In May, a team from Bam Nutall and 5 groups of students, replanted the area throughout the day. Thank you to Network Rail and Bam Nuttall for funding the plants and helping the students to replant the area.



Volunteer of the Year 20-21

We are delighted to announce that at our Annual Stakeholders Meeting, Norman Kemp was announced as our Volunteer of the Year.

Norman has been involved in the partnership for many years and provided many hours of his time to help improve transport services in Kent. During lockdown, Norman campaigned to improve services between Maidstone West and Tonbridge.

Tonbridge Station Cycle Hub

A new cycle hub has just opened at Tonbridge Station to provide, a safe, secure and dry place for passengers to store their cycles.

We hope this will encourage more passengers to consider the benefits of cycling to and from work.

Strood, Maidstone East and Ashford International also have secure cycle hubs that are available for use.

To obtain access enquire at the station ticket office to acquire a key fob. There is a small charge for this.



The Cycle Hub at Tonbridge Station

More information regarding the cycle hub and the options you have to take your bike on the train can be found here.

www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/cyclehub

Travel Training

Once the lockdown restrictions are lifted, Kent CRP are hoping to be working with a number of schools to deliver some travel training. These include St. Edwards Primary School in Sheerness and Heath Farm School at Charing.

If you are a primary school close to the Medway Valley Line and would be interested in being involved, please get in touch with us.

Action Plan 2021-2022

This year's action plan has been agreed by the partnership and there are many exciting plans for the year ahead. Hopefully, lockdown restrictions are behind us and we will be able to return to some form of normality to deliver our plans. Here are just some of the projects that are being planned.

On the Swale Rail Line, we are looking to run a project to support our communities who struggle to use technology to become more confident with using various technologies at our stations, as well as continuing our work with Sheppey College.

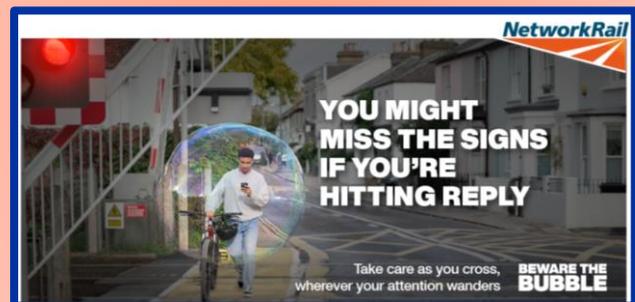
On the Kent Downs Line plans are underway to transform the old Coal shed at Bearsted into a community space. However, this will be a long-term project. There are plans to work with Ashford College to develop some Art work for some of our stations, as well as, five other station projects and three events along the line.

On the Medway Valley Line, a new mural in the tunnel at Strood funded by GTR (Thameslink) is being discussed as well as some improvements to Yalding Station following some funding made available through the Syngenta development.

Rail Safety Week

During the last week in June (21st -27th), as we were unable to hand out information at our stations, we decided to launch a social media campaign to help raise awareness about Rail Safety. Topics during the week covered:

- Information about the third rail
- Staying behind the yellow line
- BTP text 61016 number to report concerns
- Dangers of texting near the line
- Not retrieving dropped items on to the track.
- For every life lost on the railway, 6 are saved by those around them.



Network Rail have produced some excellent free resources to support schools and colleges to raise awareness about rail safety. For more information visit.

www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/safety-in-the-community/safety-education/

Rail safety awareness shouldn't only just happen during Rail Safety Week. Rail Safety matters every day. So please keep on reinforcing the key messages.

New Planters on the Medway Valley Line

In May Grow 19 were very busy helping us to design and construct planters for Cuxton Station.

The Cuxton project, funded by the Community Rail Network, began during lockdown. Kent CRP planned and organised the project via video conference and Grow 19 pre-cut the materials to size.

In May once lockdown restrictions were lifted, 4 new planters were installed at Cuxton Station.



Meanwhile, it was finally possible to plant up the planters at Watlingbury Station, which had been constructed the day before lockdown restrictions came into force.



Thank You

Following recent local elections, we would like to thank all our Councillors for their support and dedication to our partnership over the last few years. We hope they will continue to work with us and look forward to welcoming new members, who have just taken up their term of office.

Congratulations to Fay Gooch (an avid supporter and funder) as she takes on her new exciting role as Mayor of Maidstone.

Sittingbourne Station



On May 19th, students from Sheppey College landscaping department were on hand to add the finishing touches to the two planters that the construction team had built in March. Their hard work to brighten up Sittingbourne Station can be seen by all.

While you are visiting Sittingbourne Station, look out for the positive mental health quotes that the business and IT students instigated which are now displayed on the steps of the footbridge and also on the benches at Queenborough Station.



Train Services

7-15 August. There will be no train service between Maidstone East and Ashford due to engineering works. Instead, a replacement bus service will be operating.



Keep up to date! Visit our website: kentcrp.org.uk

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