



Kent Community Rail Partnership

Spring 2022

NEWSLETTER



Aylesford Station
Courtesy of Andrew Hann



Sittingbourne Station 1926
Courtesy of Middleton Press



Kemsing Station 1938 –
Courtesy of Kemsing Heritage Society

Chairman's Report by Chris Fribbins

Now that pandemic restrictions are being lifted, there are now opportunities to get together and meet in person once again. I hope you are able to attend the Annual Stakeholder Forum in Maidstone on 28th April.

However, the pandemic is not over for many and Southeastern have reported two significant issues in returning to the train service we had before COVID restrictions. There are still issues with staff availability due to ongoing COVID infections and the Department for Transport are looking for cost reductions in the

running of the railway to recover some of the additional costs during the pandemic when passenger numbers were very low, but services continued to run.

The cost of running the railway is also an issue for the new Great British Railways organisation during the transition from today's railway where there already direct accountability and control by the DfT.

Please continue to take care, it is not over yet.

Hollingbourne Station

If you have caught the train from Hollingbourne recently or passed by the station you may have noticed that the site is busier than usual. The Victorian ticket office which has been closed for over 30 years is now awash with fluorescent jackets and the sound of drilling. Excitingly this is the start of the building's renovation for use as a community building. Kent CRP has been working closely with Southeastern and Network Rail to complete any structural work needed before the building can be handed over for community use in the village.

Pop up events, regular community meetings and eventually a full-time cafe and community hub are all in the works for this forgotten building. If you are a local artist or small business and are looking for a platform (no pun intended) for your work then let us know.

To follow the progress or get in touch to volunteer, visit <https://www.instagram.com/hollingbournestation/>
www.thestationathollingbourne.com/



Aylesford Goods Shed

In November 2021, the Station Adoption Group at Aylesford approached Historic England to see whether they would grant listed building status to the Aylesford Goods Shed. We are delighted to announce that this has been officially agreed.



Planting at Kemsley

The recent hot weather we had at the end of March coincided with Sheppey College's Community Week. It was an extremely busy time and an opportunity for them to complete the Kemsley project that had been planned just before Lockdown in March 2020.

The area is planted up in 4 different colours to represent the different stations along the Swale Rail Line. Blue for Sheerness, Yellow for Queenborough, Red for Kemsley and White for Sittingbourne, with the Bridge representing Swale station.

Kent CRP and Sheppey College have worked together on numerous projects over the last 3 years. Each project aims to give students the skills they need to prepare for employment and showcase their skills, as well as making a difference in the local community, while also making improvements to the stations along the Swale Line.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Mike Dendor from Swale Borough Council and Community Rail Network, for all their help in funding the plants and materials for the project.

We would also like to thank Suzanne Abbott who kindly watered the plants for us over the weekend.

Well done to all the students and staff involved and also thank you to Southeastern for supporting us as always. If you are local and would like to become involved in helping to maintain the area at Kemsley, then please get in touch with us.



Rail Enthusiast Videos

Thank you to John Jones the 'Rainham Rail Enthusiast' – who has kindly allowed us to share his videos on our site featuring some of our stations on the Swale Rail, Medway Valley and Kent Downs Line.

Yellow Lines and Defibrillators

At Maidstone East Station, Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (which are used to help visually impaired), have been installed. The yellow line is to remind all passengers, that they should be behind this line while waiting for their train. Meanwhile, Southeastern will also be installing defibrillators at all stations over the coming months.



Travel Training



Kent CRP have been working closely with Cuxton Primary Academy to help year 6 students learn how to use the railway safely.

The students caught the train from Cuxton to Maidstone West and carried out some Travel Safe Travel Smart training. Students had the opportunity to see behind the scenes at the station and carry out tannoy announcements and help to issue train tickets. They also meet with the British Transport Police to understand their role and have a look around the vehicle.

Thank you to all those involved from Southeastern, the British Transport Police and the Travel Safe Travel Smart team for making it an enjoyable visit.

Additional Funding

We are extremely grateful to Councillors Mike Dendor, Cameron Beart, Steve Davey from Swale Borough Council and John Wright from Kent County Council for providing some of their grant funding and Sheerness Town Council to help support various projects across Swale.

Thank you also to Charing Parish Council for your donation for work to be carried out at Charing. We look forward to sharing the projects in more detail over the next few months.

North Downs 10km Walk

On Saturday 26th March Kent CRP organised a 10 Km walk between Charing Station and Lenham Station. The walk was organised in partnership with Visit Maidstone as a launch event for the Heart of Kent Walking Festival.



We were joined by 37 walkers on a beautiful sunny day, some who were members of the public and others from local organisations such as, Visit Maidstone, Kent Downs AONB, Medway Countryside Partnership and Explore Kent.

Why not catch the train to our stations and join us on our future walks? We also have lots of local walks from stations listed on our website. <https://kentcrp.org/>. Just click on the drop down for each of our lines and explore the beautiful Kent countryside. Future walks will be posted on our website and through our social media channels over the coming months, so follow us to keep up to date.



Important Dates

Annual Stake Holder Event - 28^h April 2022

**Community Rail Week
23rd – 27th May 2022 - 'Give the train a try'**

Station Adoption

It has been a busy time for a number of our groups wishing to become Station Adopters. Congratulations to Ashford College who have adopted Ashford International Station. Students and tutors are preparing activities including art work to replace the dead trees in the planters at the station, replacement decals in the underpass, a pop up for Rail Safety Week, Community Rail Week youth engagement project on the train, participation in Ashford BC tree trail where they may make a tree and display it at the station as part of the Queen's Jubilee. Some students who work more easily in quieter environments enjoyed travel training to Charing station on 27th Jan where they met the Art Teacher from Heath Farm School to begin a collaboration to produce art work, posters and information boards etc. to brighten up the shelter on the London bound platform. Students will be assisting Parish Councillor Susan Easun with her station adoption plans on April 27th to plant up barrels and window boxes etc. You too can be involved on the day by contacting therese.hammond@sustrans.org.uk



In February Sheppey College received their safety briefing from Matt Fraser (Community Relations Manager at Southeastern), so that they can apply to be a Station adopter with the Community Rail Network for Sheerness-on-Sea Station. Meanwhile on the Medway Valley Line, Tom Shelley is in the process of drafting the history boards for Aylesford Station.



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

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