



Kent Community Rail Partnership

Summer 2022

NEWSLETTER



Maidstone West
Courtesy of Maidstone Museum



Sheerness Station
Courtesy of Kent Photo Archive



West Malling (for Kings Hill) –
Courtesy of Snodland Museum

Chairman's Report by Chris Fribbins

Kent CRP is continuing to return to normal operations now that the main COVID restrictions have been lifted, but this does continue to affect people and the rail industry is not immune. Just as passenger numbers and rail services have shown an increase over the last few months, there has been further disruption to service with strike action. We would hope that all parties involved (Rail Unions, Train Operators and the Government can sit down and work this out, quickly - it does seem a shame that Rail Passengers are not involved as the main user and funder through the fare box.

There are major downward pressures on rail funding and this is impacting new schemes around the country. Locally we might find it difficult to get funding for our projects and we need to identify additional sources.

Kent CRP is very grateful for the funds it is able to raise and the continued funding that includes Southeastern (core funding) Medway and Kent County Council and some parish councils (who have limited funds themselves). However, increased pressure for Kent County Council to reduce its core funding for projects as things stand currently, its loss, would have a significant impact towards the end of this financial year and into the future.

Despite this, our officers and volunteers continue to deliver and we are working with a wide range of communities and community organisations to do this.

We are aware of the current cost of living issues, with fuel and basic costs rocketing, but one consistency has been rail fares that can only increase by the Retail Price Index each year!

Rail Safety Week

The week beginning the 21st of June was Rail Safety Week. Unfortunately, due to the rail strikes we were unable to run our planned pop ups at stations, however we did run a social media campaign to help remind our communities how to stay safe.



Accreditation 2022-23

In April Kent CRP met with the Community Rail Network to renew its accreditation status. "Accreditation is the formal recognition by the DfT that a CRP operates to a high standard and that its objectives and activities are supported by Government. "We are pleased to announce that the Community Rail Network have made the recommendation to DfT that we should maintain our status for 2022-23. We are just awaiting the official notification.

Looking to be involved

At Kent CRP we are always looking for new volunteers who would like to join us and help to improve our stations along the Medway Valley, Kent Downs and Swale Rail Lines. You may wish to become a member of our line meetings, suggest fresh ideas, help out at our exciting events or even become more involved with adopting your local station. Alternatively, you may wish to help fund our projects near your station. To find out more please use the contact us page on our website <https://kentcrp.org/contactus/> or email kentcrp@sustrans.org.uk.

Young People Have Their Say

As part of Community Rail Week, Kent CRP organised an event involving Students from Ashford College in order to interview students about their thoughts on rail travel.

We were extremely pleased to be joined by Jools Townsend CEO of the Community Rail Network, Catherine from Southeast CRP, Chris Fribbins Chair of Kent CRP and Sanchez from the Travel Smart Travel Safe Centre. Our facilitators lead discussions around the themes of sustainable travel, accessibility, barriers to travelling by train and rail safety.

The 19 students sat in groups on the train to share their points of view and also had chance to make some tannoy announcements at Maidstone East.

Ashford College catering students then provided us with a wonderful lunch and a tour of the college.

Thank you to all those involved in making this such an enjoyable event.



Mural Designs

Over the last couple of months Sheppey College have been coming up with ideas for our murals at Swale Halt.

There were many good ideas shared and Lacey's mural that reflects our diverse community will be one of the panels recreated by our artist over the coming months. Other murals will display places to visit along the line, onward travel destinations and a theme based on the local area around nature.

Thank you to all the students who were involved.



Meanwhile, pupils at St. Edward's Roman Catholic Primary School, have been working on designs for a mural to be displayed at Sheerness Station.

Charing Station Planting

In April a working party was organised by Kent CRP to carry out station improvements to Charing Station.

7 industrious students from Ashford College, who are refugees from Afghanistan and speak English as a second language (ESL) were joined by 4 horticultural students from Heath Farm School Nurture Class. Members of the Parish Council led by Susan Eusan and local residents from Charing also volunteered their help to bring the platform and station building to life. The Charing Stones were cleaned and repainted and 4 planters installed at the station.



Queenborough Bridge

The work to repair Queenborough Bridge has now been completed. The outside of the station building has also been painted and a defibrillator fitted.



Ashford Station

Ashford College adopted Ashford International station in March 22 and have several impressive plans to improve the passenger experience whilst using the station. The first improvement was to add Platinum Jubilee designed community artwork to the station underpass.

The College students and tutors undertook a massive community engagement project whereby they engaged 26 community groups who submitted a piece of Jubilee artwork to replace the existing tired and peeling panels. The groups included primary and secondary schools, Girl Guiding and young carers through Imago amongst the impressive list. Sixty-one panels were designed and fitted to form an exciting and interesting entrance from the station's front foyer to the platforms.



The grand unveiling took place on Friday 27 May when 140 community members lined the underpass to rip off the paper coverings to expose the impressive Jubilee bonanza!

Important Dates:

Sat 9th July – Cyclefest Maidstone

Weds 27th July- Led Walk Charing to Harrietsham

Thurs 4th August- Led Walk Halling to Cuxton

Sat 6th August – Hollingbourne Heritage Event

Fri 30th September- Led Walk Charing to Hollingbourne

Station Adoption

A site visit has been carried out by Southeastern and Aylesford Station Adopters to identify which ideas will be possible to implement at Aylesford.

Recently, we have also had interest from local residents wishing to adopt Halling Station, inspired by the wonderful work that took place at Cuxton Station last year. Halling Parish Council have offered initial funding to help kickstart the project.

Annual Stakeholder Meeting

We were delighted to hold our Annual Stakeholders Event on April 28th this year. It was an opportunity for our members and friends to meet face to face, especially after last year's event was online.

The event was held in Maidstone and gave our partnership the opportunity to share some of the exciting work that had been delivered over the last year and highlight our future plans. We were pleased to hear updates from members of our community, Kent County Council and Southeastern. Thank you to both the White Cliffs and Southeast CRPs for joining us as well as Dan from the Community Rail Network.

Certificates were handed out to our members who had been involved in projects this year and we recognised the hard work of Maria Domican on behalf of the Hollingbourne Station renovation who was awarded our Volunteer of the Year 2022.



Thank you to all those who attended and we look forward to seeing you next year.



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

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