



Kent Community Rail Partnership

Spring 2023

NEWSLETTER



Cuxton Station

Courtesy of Dominic Noades



Swale Station

Courtesy of Dominic Noades



Maidstone East Station

Courtesy of Dominic Noades

Chairman's Report by Chris Fribbins

The beginning of the year saw Andy Place leave his Officer role at the Partnership, we thank him for all he delivered while he was with us. Once the finances are confirmed for 2023/24 we will be able to recruit a replacement, our thanks go to Therese and Gary for covering some of his hours in the meantime.

At the Southeastern Stakeholder Forum, Steve White and the senior management team set out their action plan to deliver a Southeastern to build a sustainable railway for the future. Steve's pride in Southeastern's staff shone through.

New working from home habits created during lockdowns have reduced Southeastern's fare income permanently. Meanwhile, customers continue to seek pre-Covid frequencies of services and Government demands value for money on its investment of tax-payer funding. Against this background Southeastern, Network Rail and the Great British Railways Transition Team aim to deliver better trains, more reliable timetabling, better ticketing options, increased accessibility and greater levels of information to passengers.

Once again Southeastern recognised of the value of Community Rail Partnerships, we sprinkle some fairy dust along the railway.



Queenborough

We're delighted to announce that Queenborough in Bloom have agreed to come on board to care for the platform bench planters, welly garden and boat planters around the station.

The adopters met with Matt Fraser, Southeastern Community Relations Manager to complete an essential safety briefing and register their application, the first step forward. Once the formalities are complete, Queenborough in Bloom will apply for membership of [Community Rail Network](#) to unlock additional support and potential funding for their plans.



Sittingbourne

A new local heritage information board has been installed in the waiting room at Sittingbourne.

Hollingbourne Community Hub



We were delighted to help out at the open day for the Hollingbourne Station Community Hub.

The Station Adopters had been creating a buzz throughout the village about the day and had everything ready to open the doors and invite the local community to come and see the rooms and begin imagining how they could be put to use.

Everybody who came along, had the opportunity to complete surveys, share their ideas and pledge support. The station adopters kept the teas, coffees and squashes coming and the plates of biscuits topped up.



The Station Adopters reaped the rewards of their door-to-door leafleting, social media posts and generally spreading the word around the village over the previous weeks, with over 100 surveys completed and easily in excess of 250 people through the doors. Despite the cold, the drizzle and the rain there was not a single quiet moment, the people of Hollingbourne kept coming, chatting and sharing their thoughts.

The Hollingbourne Station Community Hub clearly has a bright future ahead.



Ashford International

The very talented Art and Photography students at Ashford College had their artwork unveiled at the end of March, ready for the launch of Unframed: Ashford Mural Festival!

Entitled "A Fish Out of Ashford", the planter art and willow weaved "Welcome" letters have transformed the planters outside the station, creating a fantastic greeting to the town for everyone who arrives by Train.

Heart of Kent Walking Festival

Therese led a fabulous Rail Ramble from Hollingbourne station to Lenham, marking the start of the Heart of Kent Walking Festival.

After hearing about the Hollingbourne Community Station Hub, seventeen of us set off to explore the Kent Downs AONB along the ancient and rather slippery North Downs Way.



Percy the Pilgrim offered a great photo opportunity on our way to Lenham, outside the village we discovered a new gateway board, illustrating the adjoining sections of the North Downs Way, with all the nearby stations marked clearly.

The cafes in Lenham village welcomed us as we sought refreshment before our journeys home.



Snodland Allotment Garden



Network Rail have completed work to clear the overgrown allotment gardens at Snodland station.

At the end of March, we met on site with Network Rail, Five Acre Wood and Grow 19 to discuss a new community lease for the site.

The aim will be to create a safe, relaxing outdoor learning area, where young learners can help to grow produce for use in the Grow 19 kitchens, or simply sit and watch the passing trains

and visiting wildlife.

At our visit to the site we discovered a fallen wall, and hearts sank momentarily.

Network Rail's response of "we'll soon have that fixed" lifted spirits rapidly.

We could not have got to this stage without the enthusiastic support of Network Rail. Once the legal formalities are complete for the community lease it'll be time for Five Acre Wood to draw up their plans for the space.

We'll be reaching out soon for volunteer help with additional tidying up and preparation.

Watch this space.

Cuxton & Wateringbury



The Friends of Cuxton Station have been working hard to add some Spring colour.



The platform planters at Wateringbury have been weeded and sowed with wild-flower seeds, fingers crossed for some beautiful flowers.

Website updates

- A link to the Southeastern Live Disruption Map.
- PlusBus ticketing information for onward journeys.
- Links to Explore Kent, Kent Downs AONB, Heart of Kent Walking Festival, and Kent Medway tourist information.
- News, events, and how to get involved with Kent CRP.

Social Media posts

- PlusBus services, cost saving ticket options, British Transport police 61016 service, the Railway Guardian app, and life saving defibrillators at stations.

Dates for your diary

- **Annual Stakeholder Event**
Thursday 27th April
- **Faversham Festival of Transport**
20th & 21st May
- **Community Rail Week**
22nd – 28th May
- **Rail Safety Week**
26th June – 2nd July



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

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