



Kent Community
Rail Partnership

Summer 2023

NEWSLETTER



Green Progressor at Strood
Courtesy of Dominic Noades



Swale Station
Kent CRP



Mayflower at Charing
Courtesy of Steve Beck

Chairman's Report by Chris Fribbins

The consultation on the future of Southeastern's ticket offices at our stations will be coming soon and will mirror that already taking place for their London stations.

We've had a first read of the proposals and see hopeful words on staffing, support and in-person ticketing, but we need to see the detail and they need explicit Government support, to be binding, and subject to formal consultation if to be changed in the future.

On improving the alternatives we need more detail - and a promise enough of them will be delivered before there is wholesale closure of ticket offices.

There are hints of a lot of reliance on staff supporting purchase from Ticket Vending Machines, which doesn't sound that appealing. We don't want a 'jam tomorrow' outcome - promises of future improvements that haven't happened yet and may never happen.

Now that such a high portion of rail travel is for leisure, it is essential to remember that passengers have a choice as to whether they use the train or not. Support at the station and easy ways to buy tickets are essential to encourage travel and increase revenue.

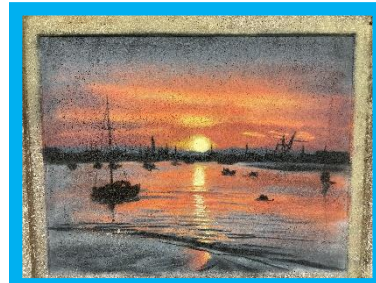
Expect to hear more from us when the local consultation opens.



Faversham Festival of Transport

The Faversham Transport Festival saw vintage bus rides around the town on Saturday and a classic car show on Sunday.

We had a prime location in the historic Guildhall alongside Rail Future and the Faversham Model Railway Club. It was a very busy two days. Bags, pens, stickers, colouring in pages and puzzle sheets flew off the shelves, spreading our branding around the town. Lots of conversations around places to visit in Swale supplemented with walking and cycling maps, brochures for attractions and Railcard information helping people to "Go Green By Train."



Swale Mural

The final panels were completed in May, showcasing attractions along the Swale Rail Line.

Annual Stakeholder Event



Our Annual Stakeholder Event returned to Maidstone Town Hall, celebrating the work we have done with communities along our lines, brightening local stations, promoting sustainable travel and tourism, and supporting social connections. None of this would be possible without the support of our volunteers.

Steve White, Managing Director of Southeastern presented our Volunteer of the Year award to Jonathan Fryer.

Chris Fribbins said, "Jonathan has shown his dedication to our partnership and his local



community in Swale since our early days, deserving of our thanks and recognition as we move into our 20th anniversary year."

Chris also presented certificates of appreciation to many of the volunteers present.

Officers showcased our award-winning work and future plans. John Jones, aka Rainham Rail Enthusiast, delivered a fascinating session on videography at stations. Mark Welch gave insights from KCC on the role rail plays in supporting the local economy and tourism.

Our keynote speaker was



Steve White. In a presentation covering Southeastern's determination to deliver a thriving future for the railway and the communities it serves, his enthusiasm for Community Rail's "sprinkling of fairy dust" shone through as did his pride in Southeastern's people.

It was a great afternoon, sharing our achievements, made possible by our stakeholders, partners and volunteers, and looking to the future.

Thank you all for your dedication.

Rail Ramble, Halling to Cuxton

Gary led a small group on a Rail Ramble from Halling station to Cuxton, supporting sustainable travel and tourism.

After a brief history of the Medway Valley Line, we set off to explore the Kent Downs AONB and the ancient North Downs Way, calling at the picture postcard hamlet of Upper Bush.



The White Hart provided a refreshment break for most before our journeys home.

At the station the work of the Friends of Cuxton Station was on display, with a map showing further places to explore and welcoming planters on the platforms. A thoroughly enjoyable Sunday.



Community Rail Week - Ashford College



Special education needs (SEN) students and their tutors from Ashford College were guided around Ashford International station to help familiarise them with the station. The students have high anxiety and it was felt they would benefit from an orientation event prior to travelling by train the following week. During the orientation event the students were shown the electronic screens and taught how to work out which trains go where, at what time and from which platform.

Their orientation morning helped them feel reassured and safe to move around the station and they said they looked forward to travelling by train the following week.

A week later the SEN students (12 in total, 1 blind, 1 deaf and all with ADHD and speech and language difficulties) undertook a train travel training journey to Maidstone East.

Kent CRP would like to thank Southeastern staff for supporting and funding these travel training sessions.



World Cup of Stations



Not only was there an enjoyable heritage event at Hollingbourne station on 8th May, it was shortlisted for the World Cup of Stations during Community Rail Week.

The hard work of the local community getting behind Southeastern's renovation of the building secured them a place in the competition.

Hollingbourne finished a commendable 2nd in the Southeast group.

You can find more news on our website

- Stunning Artwork at Buckland Hill in Maidstone
- Maidstone CycleFest
- Journey Planning and Rail Safety Presentations
- Upcoming Events

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

20th Anniversary Celebrations
Thursday 14th September

Whole Group and Line Meetings

Thursday 5th October 2023
Thursday 11th January 2024



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

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Facebook Kent Community Rail Partnership



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Kent Community Rail Partnership encourages greater use of the Medway Valley, Kent Downs and Swale Rail lines by local people and visitors and aims to improve station environments and facilities on offer. Kent Community Rail Partnership is hosted by Sustrans. Sustrans is a registered charity in England and Wales (326550) and Scotland (SC039263) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England (1797726) at 2 Cathedral Square, Bristol, BS1 5DD