



Kent Community Rail Partnership

Spring 2024

NEWSLETTER



Cuxton Signal Box
Courtesy of Dominic Noades



Test train on Kingsferry bridge
Courtesy of Dominic Noades



Golden Arrow Tour
Courtesy of Dominic Noades

Chairman's Report by Chris Fribbins

Spring is now on us, but although we missed the worst of the snow this winter there has been disruption due wind and rain. When the weather has not been an issue, strikes have continued to hit our rail travellers. The number one issue with passengers is a reliable and punctual service and the Community Rail Partnership cannot do much to deliver this, but does what it can to try and make it more pleasant and involve the communities in their stations and services.

Kent Community Rail Partnership holds its annual stakeholder forum at the end of April and starts a

new financial year on the 1st of April 2024. This is an ideal time to look at the successes of the CRP in 2023/2024, recognising the efforts of our Sustrans team and volunteers across all three of our lines and a look forward to 2024/2025. At the time of writing the funds available for next year are not known, although we are confident that Southeastern will do their best to continue our funding level, although this will mean a real-time cut after inflation is taken into account.

Chris Fribbins

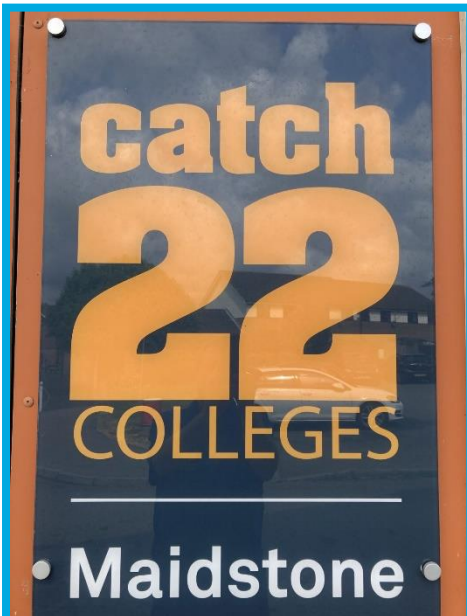
Chair Kent Community Rail Partnership

Travel Training and Rail Safety at Catch 22

In February we paid another visit to Catch 22 college in Maidstone. Supported by Matt Fraser, Community Relations Manager at Southeastern we presented anti-trespass messaging to thirty students.

Central to the learning were You vs Train videos and quizzes, setting out the grizzly facts of the life-changing impacts that can result from trespassing. Real life stories delivered by young people, explaining the impacts incidents have on other people are extremely hard-hitting and resonated with their peers in our audience.

"I found the videos helpful but also a bit shocking. It made me more aware of how dangerous the trains are." – Catch 22 Student.



Kent County Councillors show their support for Queenborough station adopters.



On Friday 9th February we paid a visit to our volunteer station adopters at Queenborough to hand over a variety of gardening hand tools to help them keeping the station gardens tidy and attractive for the local community.

The station adoption group are part of Queenborough and Rushenden in Bloom, who work tirelessly to bring colour and fragrance to the town each year and to keep the area clean and tidy. At the station they are supported by Southeastern's



Mary Jane, the local legend who's community spirit shows that running the station's ticket office is about so much more than simply selling tickets.

The tools include hand trowels and forks, brushes and brooms, secateurs, loppers and tidy bags. They were funded by Councillor Mike Whiting and Councillor Andy Booth through Kent County Council's Combined Member Grants Scheme. "These tools will make a real difference to our volunteers" – Cllr Paula

Community Rail Awards 2024



Hollingbourne station was placed third in the category "Most Enhanced Railway Spaces" for the Community Rail Awards 2024.

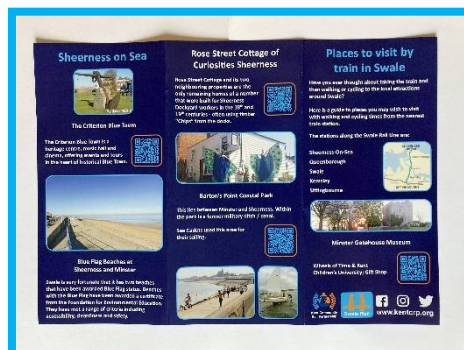
Fanastastic recognition of the commitment shown by the volunteers at The Station at Hollingbourne CIC in creating a thriving community hub in the once derelict ticket office.

Telford, Chair of Queenborough and Rushenden in Bloom.

New Promotional Materials

We put a proposal forward to Community Rail Network linked to the Community Rail Development Strategy for support from the Department for Transport's Community Rail Development Fund, to refresh the promotional materials we use to support our in person events and pop-up activities and create new materials to promote sustainable travel and inclusive volunteering.

"Thank you for sharing the flyer with us and your ongoing promotion of PlusBus." – The Traveline Team
 "They look great, and give an overview of the PlusBus ticket option. If you can get a supply of leaflets [a few hundred] we can get them distributed to libraries, and the Visitor Information Centre in Rochester." – Rob Carmen, Senior Transport Operations Officer, Medway Council.



Hop Pickers Line Heritage Trail – Paddock Wood



In July 2017, Kent CRP were invited to the launch of information boards at Paddock Wood station celebrating the Hop Pickers Line, a former branch line that ran between Hawkhurst and Paddock Wood.

The boards made mention of an ambition to create a “Hop Pickers Line Heritage Trail”, a proposed walking and cycling route inspired by the line that would link the communities that it once served. The Hop Pickers Line Heritage Group were to be the driving force, galvanising community support for the project and this year they approached us for help to move their proposals forward, we were delighted to work with them.

The Hop Pickers Line Heritage Group engaged with a variety of local partners to develop further information panels that have been placed along the route. Kent CRP helped to build connections between the Hop Pickers Line Heritage Group and Kent Highways, enabling them to secure consent to site one of the information panels on Kent Highways’ land opposite the John Brunt VC public house, marking the start of the trail.

Our request for permission to waymark a connection between Paddock Wood station and the start of the Hop Pickers Line Heritage Trail went smoothly thanks to our existing relationship through Sustrans, who assisted with production of the signage.



Annual Stakeholder Event 23 April 2024



Notice of meeting

Kent Community Rail Partnership
Annual Stakeholder Meeting - Maidstone
Tuesday 23rd April 2024

Our Stakeholder Meeting is an opportunity for stakeholders, partners, volunteers and friends of Kent Community Rail Partnership to get together and celebrate our achievements. It is a great opportunity to find out more about our work and meet the people who are helping Community Rail to flourish along our lines.

Please visit the events page on our website for further information and to book your place.

kentcrp.org/events

Faversham Festival of Transport



Our fabulous volunteers will be hosting a promotional stall at this year’s event on the 18th and 19th of May. Pop along, say hello and find out more about Community Rail.

Dates for your diary

- **18th April** Whole Group and Line Meetings
- **23rd April** Stakeholder Event
- **18th/19th May** Faversham Festival of Transport
- **4th June** Led Walk, Snodland – New Hythe



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

Therese Hammond – Project Officer: therese.hammond@sustrans.org.uk

Gary Outram – Project Officer: gary.outram@sustrans.org.uk



Facebook Kent Community Rail Partnership



@kentcommunityrailpartnership

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