



Christmas & New Year Newsletter

December 2020

OUT WITH OLD AND IN WITH THE NEW

Earlier this year we decided it was time for a change of name to one that better reflects the counties, rail lines and communities we work with, after some discussion we became the **Southeast Communities Rail Partnership**.

Formed in 2003 SCRCP worked only on the Uckfield line with one member of staff. In those early years we were working under the umbrella of Action in Rural Sussex. Since being incorporated as a Company in 2008, SCRCP has been spread the community rail message far and wide, now working with five train companies; GTR, Southern, SWR, GWR, Cross Country on eight lines throughout a huge part of the South East ; in Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex, Surrey, Berkshire and Hampshire. We are supported by the members of the Steering Groups, countless volunteers, Station Partners, Parish, Town, District, County Councils, stakeholders, community groups, tourist organisations, visitor attractions, voluntary associations, the list is endless, and we thank each and everyone of you.

The launch of our new identity has included updating our website to www.southeastcrp.org , staff contact emails are now name@southeastcrp.org the change is also reflected on our other social media.



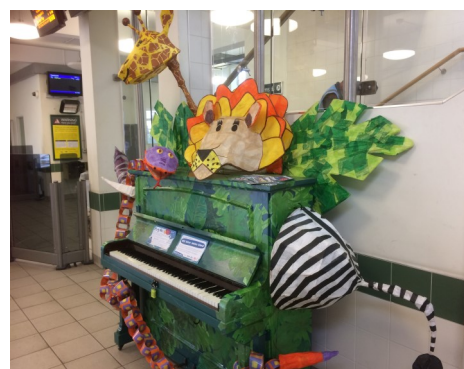
COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS

We were pleased to learn that several of our 2020 projects were recognised as deserving to be shortlisted for the annual 2020 Community Rail Network Awards:

GTR, SCRCP, County Care, Aldingbourne Trust *Good to talk – Even better to share*

**Sussex Community Rail Partnership/
Culture Shift – Get Into Trains**

Sussex CRP – Horsham Station Pianimal



We won a third place in the 'working with diverse groups' category for our joint project working with GTR and the two station partner groups. A great deal of effort went into this project, we were aware that the lockdown restrictions would hit these groups hard, as regularly meeting with their friends for group activities and socialising had been stopped. So the project was designed to keep engaging with them as much as possible, by way of quizzes, competitions and engagement on social media. The event was held 'virtually' this year. Community Rail Network put together a fantastically entertaining event which showcased the best of community rail.

SOUTHEAST COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP IS AWARDED VALUABLE ACCREDITATION

For the second year running SCRП has won recognition for its integrity from the Department of Transport

I am delighted to confirm that the Sussex Community Rail Partnership has been awarded accreditation status today by the Department for Transport (DfT).

Accreditation is formal recognition by the DfT that a community rail partnership (CRP) operates to a high standard and that its objectives and activities are supported by Government.

Accreditation should provide assurance to others, including potential funders and partners, that the CRP operates to high standards of governance and financial propriety; adopts a collaborative approach; is worthy of trust by others; and is a suitable entity for receiving public funds. Further Government considers it a good representative of the local community.

Yours sincerely,

KULVINDER BASSI MBE



A GREAT DAY OUT NEED NOT COST THE EARTH

Go green, go exploring, see more, enjoy more. Our towns, villages and countryside offer endless possibilities, sometimes keeping it local is best, leave the car at home for a great day out and there is no need to worry about finding a parking space!

The staff, with the assistance of one of our directors, Kevin Boorman, are currently working on an exciting new collection of family friendly 'days out' guides, highlighting places of interest to visit along each of the lines.

Each guide will highlight a couple of days out itineraries for a visit to a town or local attraction, walking information, cycle route suggestions and helpful bus links.

The guides will be available in the Spring in both on-line and in paper format from various outlets.



TONBRIDGE TO HASTINGS LINE

New Community Rail Partnership on track

A new 'community rail partnership (CRP) has been formed for the Hastings line. Launched appropriately during 'Hastings Week' (the Battle of Hastings took place on 14th October 1066) at Etchingham station on Friday 16th October. Tim Barkley, chair of the SCRCP hosted the socially-distanced launch. Huw Merriman MP, local member of parliament and chair of the Transport Select Committee performed the official opening ceremony, also attending; David Wornham, Southeastern's passengers services director; James Abbott, chair of the new Hastings line CRP; Catherine Simmons, CRP officer; and other guests from the Southeast Communities CRP, Southeastern, and Network Rail.



Huw Merriman said :- "I was delighted to formally launch the Hastings line CRP at Etchingham, not least because I'm a regular commuter on the line. It is also a great example of what can be done to encourage local communities to engage with their local station, as there is a fantastic bistro on the station, run by a Community Interest Company. The line has many similar redundant buildings which can also be put to great community use. I am also a huge advocate for railways, and am very keen that we continue to encourage people to use trains, within the current Covid restrictions. I know how important community rail partnerships can be, and I wish the Hastings line CRP every success.'

David Wornham added :- "We already work with a number of CRP's in Kent, and know what a vital service they provide. The Hastings line and the communities it serves will undoubtedly benefit from this partnership, and I look forward to working closely with the SCRCP."



Tim Barkley concluded :- "We were delighted to welcome Huw Merriman, David Wornham and other representatives from the rail industry to Etchingham. It is clear that they share our enthusiasm for the line, and our work. We also received a warm welcome from Paul and Julie Collins, who manage the bistro on the station, and Maggie Capps, the Southeastern colleague who works at the station.



"James Abbott, Catherine Simmons, and my colleagues and I are delighted that the launch went so well, and we now look forward to building on this by working with local communities and other partners on the line." View the event at www.southeastcrp.org

The line has since welcomed members to its first steering group meeting on the 11th December with partners from across the Kent and East Sussex. The group, representing communities served by the railway, will help to set the direction of community action with the annual Line Action Plan.

For queries regarding the new line please contact Catherine@southeastcrp.org

News from along the lines...

SEAFORD TO BRIGHTON LINE, SOUTHCOAST LINE AND MARSHLINK LINE

We welcomed a new member of staff to the team recently, **Harry Sieviewright**.

Harry is the sole officer for the Seaford to Brighton Line and is working jointly with Rowena Tyler on the Southcoast line and with Catherine Simmons on the Marshlink line. Not the easiest of times for a new member of staff to join the team but Harry has been working hard getting to know the train lines, towns, villages and communities he is now working with.

For further information contact harry@southeastcrp.org

ARUN VALLEY LINE

Rowena Tyler, Line Officer for Arun Valley and Sussex Coast



Wildlife Garden

"During 2020 I have been buoyed no end by the continuing cheerful attitude of station partners. They have responded to changing guidelines by adapting swiftly and still managed to implement projects and activities to enhance the stations.

Thanks also to station staff and station managers as well as the Stakeholder and Community Rail Officers at GTR and Network Rail. I'm looking forward to bringing even more projects to fruition during 2021.

Here are some photos of successful projects achieved between April and November this year."



For further details contact rowena@southeastcrp.org

UCKFIELD & EAST GRINSTEAD LINES

Beautiful, Eridge station hasn't seen so much activity and attention since the day it was built; The worn out footbridge and staircases have been replaced, the platform buildings have a new roof and are being repainted in heritage colours to match the Spa Valley Railway buildings. The platform has been re-surfaced, new drainage installed. The abandoned platform waiting room is about to be renovated and brought back into use providing passengers with a warm, comfortable space. This part of the project has been funded by both the Passenger Benefit Fund and a very generous grant from the Railway Heritage Trust.

So much sensitivity to the heritage of this station has shown that at first glance one would hardly notice the changes.

There is still more to do, the most exciting of which is the planned installation of a lift which will make the station fully accessible for the first time. We are also pleased to inform that Rotherfield Parish Council are joining as joint station partners and are offering a bespoke piece of artwork that celebrates the railway history of the area and a grant to add to the comfort of the new waiting space.



Uckfield station A eye catching, colourful display has been installed along the entire side of the station building. Just in time to brighten those darker winter days.

In partnership with locally based charity **International Animal Rescue** beautiful images of some of the animals that the organisation works to protect and rescue are pictured with information on the amazing work this charity carries out. The display being shared with station customers, will hopefully spread the word and help to raise their profile locally.

East Grinstead The station gardens are receiving an extensive make-over thanks the professional expertise of Andrew Morris (can anyone forget his wonderful Christmas Tree project on the platforms?). Andrew, a professional landscape gardener, was until recently our volunteer station partner, sadly he had withdraw from that role as other commitments crowded in. The project is being funded by the Passenger Benefit Fund.

Cowden station The Eden Valley Museum is continuing with its promotional plans by spreading awareness of their collection to local communities with an art installation of charming historic local photographs taken from the museum's extensive collection. This, the installation at Edenbridge Town, and a planned display for Penshurst station has been designed by one of the museum's volunteers Joan Varley.

Buxted A new station partner will be starting soon, they will be working with planters that were built by another great local organisation Uckfield's 'Men in Sheds'. Unfortunately this project has been delayed but we are looking forward to welcoming a return to bright, beautiful planters.



NORTH DOWNS LINE

Despite current circumstances, people have pulled together and work has continued, progressing a number of different projects and issues:

- Network Rail continued with their planned work at Guildford,
- the new station build at Gatwick Airport started and is ahead of schedule
- Farnborough Street Residents Association finally agreed a lease with the owners of Reg's Garden with funding in place to allow the garden to flourish
- Grants obtained to publicise rail to ramble routes in Surrey Hills AONB and Blackwater Valley
- New white picket fencing at Chilworth in collaboration with Network Rail and GWR
- Consultations – Department for Transport's De-carbonisation plan, Surrey County Council Rail Strategy



Maddy Mills began work as Community Rail Officer for the SWR stations on the North Downs Line on June 1st and has made great strides in creating a new Stakeholder group – see separate report.



Progress is captured by the transformation of Reg's Garden in a few short months.

The gates to Reg's Garden were opened in July and this is what we found ! A space measuring some 250 yds x 50yds, heavily overgrown with brambles but who knew what lay beneath ?

Given the outlook, how on earth do you envisage a formal garden, allotments, beehives, and seating areas? Mike Knott and his team of volunteers set to work, and the results can be seen here (note the stump that used to be the lone pine). The formal area is seeded and beginning to grow, all the brambles have been cut down and removed, and the bug house is in situ. This picture was taken in October.

Looking ahead

The GWR Community Rail Conference, which was set for June, had to be postponed until 2021.

Future projects include the Station House at Farnborough North, further work at Chilworth, artwork at Guildford and piloting an education project on the North Downs Line.



NORTH DOWNS LINE

Maddy is now the Officer for the South Western Railway (SWR) stations on the North Downs Line; Ash, Wanborough, Wokingham, Winnersh, Winnersh Triangle and Earley. Maddy started in post on 1st June, in the middle of lockdown! She said "It's not been easy to start a new community rail partnership during this time as it's all about building relationships and that's tricky when you cannot meet face-to-face, but thankfully Teams and Zoom have come to my rescue! I've been able to 'virtually' meet potential station partners and a wide range of organisations who are interested in working with us. I've even beamed into a group's coffee morning to explain who we are and how we can work together."

Andy Harrowell, Community Rail Manager for SWR said "At SWR we are committed to putting our stations and services at the heart of the communities they serve. As part of that we were really pleased to provide funding to three additional CRPs this year, taking our total to 11 across the network. Although starting a new role during the middle of a pandemic was never going to be an easy task, Maddy has been amazing in bringing groups closer to the railway and coordinating projects virtually. She has almost 20 stakeholders coming to the first online get-together and I'm looking forward to working with her, and new partners, during 2021 to benefit our passengers and local communities."

Current projects include working with new station adopters, an 'Art Shelters' project improving biodiversity at Wanborough station with the assistance of the friends of Normandy Wildlife group and a grant of £1,000 from SWR. Local support comes from Men's Shed, building planters and hedgehog houses and Dragon Roofing supplied materials for the bug hotel.



For further information contact Maddy@southeastcrp.org

TONBRIDGE, REDHILL & REIGATE LINE

Redhill Station Sometimes the most amazing projects appear as if from nowhere. Bruce Healey, a member of the Tonbridge, Redhill, Reigate line steering group contacted us to ask if he could design a project based on some of Redhill station's recent history namely the story of the evacuation of Allied, British and Commonwealth troops from the beaches of Dunkirk. On arrival back in the UK the displaced soldiers had to be transported around the country to be returned to their base ... This is where the railways stepped up, moving tens of thousands of men around the network in special trains run at short notice in unprecedented time.

To celebrate the role played by Redhill station, its staff, Southern, with the assistance of Southeast Communities Rail Partnership (SCRP), has installed an informative history panel in pride of place on platform 3 at the station. The timing of this installation was especially poignant as we neared Remembrance Day.

"If you happen to be at Redhill station why not spare a few minutes to learn more about this unknown story?"

Reigate Station A series of projects to enliven this station are currently in planning, negotiations currently underway with Reigate School of Art, Network Rail Staff, the Reigate Society and of course the very enthusiastic station staff.

Penshurst Station The newly refurbished waiting shelter is about to transform into an art installation extraordinaire which we hope will surprise and delight passengers. Artworks from local artists based at Jessops Farm Studios are forming part of a permanent display. This project has been jointly worked by SCRП and the Passenger Benefit Fund.



For further information contact Sharon@southeastcrp.org

MADDY MILLS, SCRP EDUCATION OFFICER

Go Learn goes virtual

What do you do when you cannot deliver your workshop in schools? You go virtual!

Maddy Mills, our Education Officer, spent the summer turning our current provision into mini workshops which she can deliver via Zoom straight into classrooms across Sussex. Maddy has already run workshops with several different schools, new and old, and the response has been very positive. Maddy said "these remote workshops will never be quite the same as me actually standing in the classroom but this is the next best thing and it means that our current Year 6s will not miss out on learning about how to stay safe and feel confident when travelling on our railways." Teachers comments have included:

"Brilliant, having had this in person before and now over Zoom due to the current situation, it was amazing that the quality of the session did not change in anyway. I highly recommend this. The children loved it!"

Teacher - Georgian Gardens School, Littlehampton



"Despite it being virtual, Maddy was able to deliver the same relevant and helpful information to the children as last year's cohort received. Thank you for still allowing this workshop to go ahead. The children really benefit from it for both the outside world and in their SATs tests!"

Teacher Arunside School, Horsham

To view the full list of free Go Learn workshop(s) please go to the Education menu on our website at www.southeastcrp.org and click on 'Go Learn online workshops (Y6)'. Then contact Maddy at maddy@southeastcrp.org to book your workshop(s).

Trevor Field our Finance and Fundraising Officer

Do you have a project at your station that needs funding? SCRP may be able to help with sourcing funds and applying for grants. New station partnerships on Southern operated lines are eligible for a start-up grant. For new projects requiring small funding amounts, there are community grants available from town councils, and county community foundations.

If you have a project that may benefit from some funding please contact trevor@sussexcrp.org

For further information contact maddy@sussexcrp.org

Responding to COVID-19

I am very proud of the way our line officers, staff and many volunteers responded to this health emergency.

Our line officers kept busy keeping in touch with volunteers, steering group members and making new contacts. We have learnt a lot about how to use IT to its maximum potential, whilst being as inclusive as possible. We put a lot of educational materials on our website, commissioned a piece of music to capture of feelings about missing trains and organised virtual games and events. We focussed on signposting people to accurate and trusted sources of information and help.

Two new line groups have been formed and a new officer has joined us. SCRP has been working on some exciting new projects both large and small.

As we learn to live with COVID-19 we need to demonstrate the value of rail and public transport more than ever.

We look forward to hearing your ideas and working together to promote safe and sustainable transport.

On behalf of all at SCRP, thank you for your support during this difficult time.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year.

(On behalf of) Fiona Morton, SCRP Development Manager



Do you want to know more about the work we do?

www.southeastcrp.org Email: Sharon@southeastcrp.org Twitter: [@southeastcrp](https://twitter.com/southeastcrp)