

Report on Medway Valley Line Kent Community Rail Partnership Meeting on January 28th 2021. 021  
Therese Hammond Convening, Chris Fribbins in the chair

There were 17 participants

KCC has published the results of the rail consultation.

<https://kccconsultations.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/kentrailstrategy2021/consultationHome> . The final strategy is to be published on the above page by February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021. However, it has already been decided that the through service to Gatwick is not likely to happen. To be viable, it would need to go via the Medway Towns, and the link to join the Victoria line to the Southbound Medway Valley line, would be too expensive to build because of the height differences between the two lines.

In the Community Network Rail Awards, the Kent Community Rail Partnership achieved first place for their 'A Chance to Shine Project' with Sheppey College. The project aimed to empower students to showcase their talents, boosting self-esteem, providing real-life experiences, and helping build portfolios to enhance employment prospects. They also achieved third place in the 'Most Enhanced Station' category for their 'Chance to Grow Project' with Five Acre Wood School, Snodland and Grow19. This project aimed at transforming the front of Snodland station and providing art work for the ticket office. <https://kentcrp.org/newsletter2021>

Chris Fribbins said that key funders are South Eastern Railway. He said they are always looking for projects. Funds for particular projects, "Can often be found", he said. Proposed activity forms for 2021/2022 have to be filled in and submitted by February 15th 2021.

South Eastern will be taking over management of the Ashford High Speed Depot from Hitachi.

Land slips are still a problem e.g at Newington. The railway will have to be closed for 2 weeks between Sittingbourne and Gillingham to put in piles.

The Maidstone East station revamp should be completed by Summer 2021

Ideas are sought to bring people back to the trains, e.g flexible season tickets.

There will be elections of a chair and deputy chair. Applicants are sought. Each member organisation will have one vote. Community projects will also be voted on.

It is possible to adopt a station.

It was suggested that developers proposing housing developments near stations should contribute to enhancing the stations and their access.

Future meetings will combine sections on the Medway Valley Line (Strood to Tonbridge) and the Kent Downs Line (Oxford to Ashford via Maidstone East)

Tom Shelley