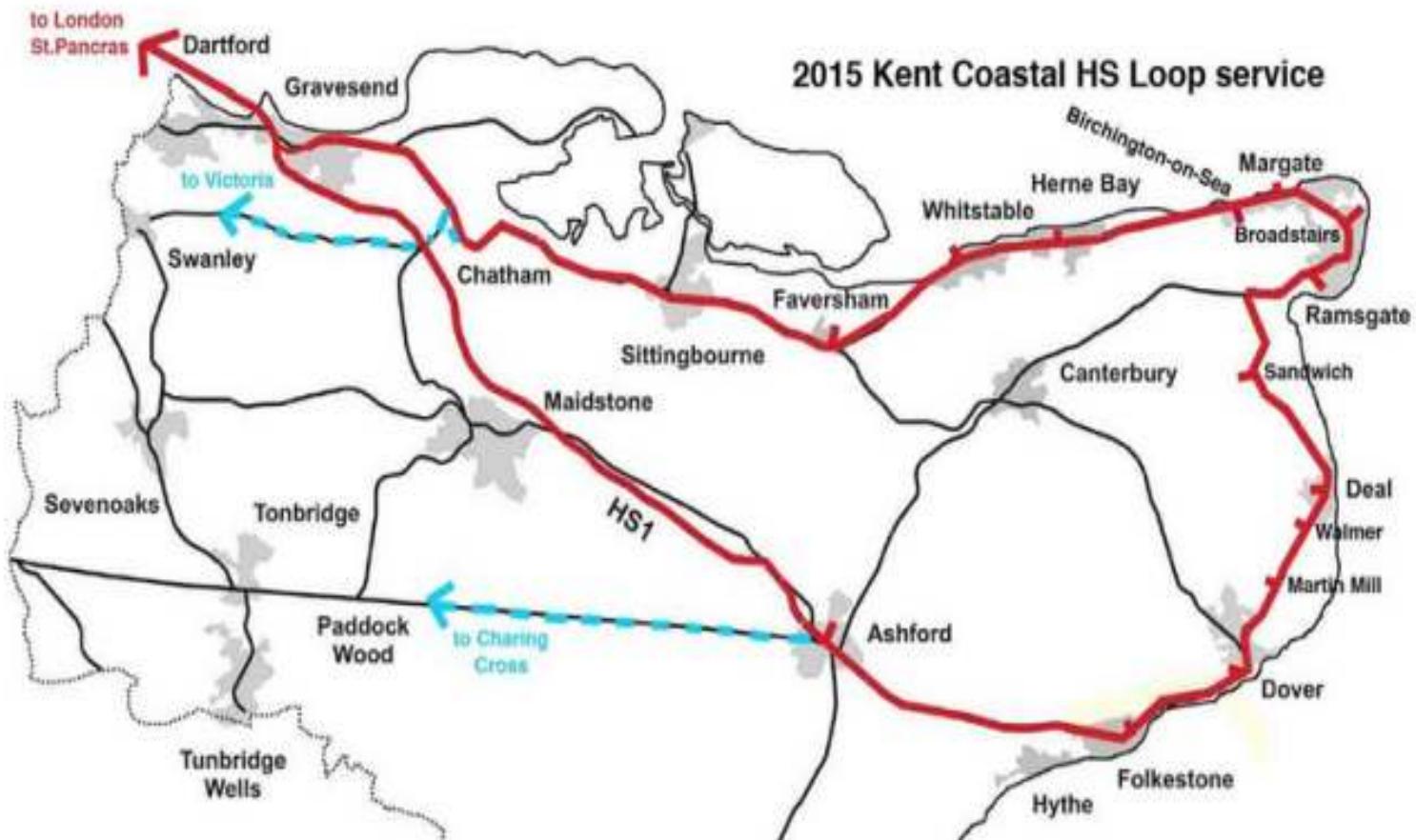


Trains4KentCoast

Promoting The New High Speed Loop Trains Between London And East Kent, Starting In 2015



www.trains4kentcoast.co.uk

Trains4KentCoast Company Limited

Aims

We aim to set up a sustainable marketing and business support structure to help East Kent's small coastal communities adapt to and capitalise from opportunities presented by the new East Kent Coastal Loop High Speed rail service, to be introduced in January 2015.

We campaigned for this for over five years and now want to ensure its success, longevity and continuous development.

Our case, that this is a huge opportunity for a hitherto isolated area, has won massive community support and now official backing.

The Project

The project will alert SMEs (small medium enterprises) to the rapid market change for Deal, Sandwich, Birchington, Whitstable and Herne Bay with the new High Speed service – pointing to the impact on Canterbury, Folkestone , Margate and Ramsgate which have had these services since 2009.

We will share our vision of a dynamic collective marketing campaign to string the small coastal towns together ; bringing the jewels into a necklace of prosperity with each coastal community helping to promote the breadth of attractions in the other towns and make the most of better connectivity with London.

The project will market the area uniquely to travellers arriving without a car, with a collective booking service, websites, leaflets, posters and PR and media exposure that will widen their reach beyond the capability of normal small local businesses, giving them regional and national awareness driven by our marketing strategy and resources.

We will set up innovative packages of attractions at competitive prices which will encourage visitors and locals to make use of the new enhanced train connections and explore the various towns and all they have to offer.

We will provide solutions to the “last mile problem” by developing a “way-marking” strategy to get visitors from rail head to destination – new information boards at station exits will link in with existing or planned local signage and use QR codes to link to mobile and online information.

We will develop rail catering services to give a warm welcome – “Kent Coast Greeters” will dispense information as well as locally sourced refreshments – using our team’s direct experience of starting, financing and operating a successful railway catering operation ‘Platform 1’ at Deal Railway Station.

Why is the project needed?

There is a history of the East Kent coast being remote, forgotten and sidelined and in 2009 the new HS1 High Speed rail service completely left out Deal and Sandwich, further threatening their economies.

Trains4Deal has a highly successful track record of campaigning for the improvement of rail services over the past four years and other key factors, such as regenerating the former Pfizer site at Sandwich to establish it as it is today into Discovery Park, have played a major role in persuading Government to give both towns eight train services a day. In January 2015 Southeastern trains has announced that it intends to introduce a full High Speed service including a coastal loop High Speed train service as part of its franchise extension for the 2015 – 2018 period.

This is a huge opportunity for the whole area but it needs focus. Kent's coastal towns have the potential to become increasingly attractive to contemporary visitors, but they have so far failed to embrace in a cohesive and co-ordinated marketing approach all the diverse things they have to offer.

Visitor attractions that should sparkle are run down, under-utilised assets need new uses, but local authorities lack the resources to realise this potential alone and often appear powerless to add the missing vital spark.

Broadly, the local economy has a desperate shortage of employment and training opportunities.

This project would help create investment and reveal hitherto untapped commercial opportunities for residents and the businesses in each of the towns and create new employment options in the area.

In the course of convincing the rail authorities, the Department for Transport and local authorities, Trains4Deal carried out widespread consultation and research into the business case for the provision of regular High Speed rail services.

This revealed that – apart from giving locals access to jobs in the capital – it would also release vast potential for local businesses to develop and create a considerable increase in local tourism and stimulate economic growth.

What difference will the project make?

Boost tourism and generate economic growth. More commercial opportunities and connectivity between the East Kent Coast Loop's dynamic, attractive and original towns.

A boost for young people currently desperately short of employment opportunities in the towns – training and skills harnessed to help job prospects and the businesses in the towns themselves, rather than having to travel out to seek employment.

We have direct experience of the successful start-up of a railway station catering service in Deal, namely 'Platform 1'. We propose to investigate the highly attainable opportunities that exist in the other newly-enfranchised town stations at Whitstable, Herne Bay, Sandwich, Broadstairs and Birchington with corresponding direct employment opportunities.

The HS Javelin trains do not have a trolley service at present, but we understand from Southeastern trains that provision through private enterprise could be a realistic possibility. We will explore these opportunities to introduce a trolley service initially on the Deal – Faversham section of East Kent Loop service and use this as a showcase for local produce and act as an on board tourist information service, promoting and highlighting the project and destinations.

The Deal Station operation will be the base for trolley staff, re-stocking, fresh food production creating further jobs for the local supply chain.

Partnerships

Trains4Deal and Trains4Kent Coast have very well established working relationships with tourism bodies such as Visit Kent and also local groups such as Deal Business Forum.

In advance of the full High Speed service commencing, the promotion of rail travel to Deal and the local area has already begun with Visit Kent to include a new Deal Card loyalty scheme via its Special Offers website. These offers are also to be featured via the Southeastern trains site.

The Deal Card (www.dealcard.co) is a free loyalty scheme for residents and visitors to Deal that gives discounts in many shops and businesses in and around Deal. To date up to 100 businesses have registered with the scheme.

Based on the foundations of working closely with local business communities, tourism bodies and the transport operator, we intend to expand these commercial opportunities by providing similar promotional resources collectively for all destinations on the new East Kent High Speed Loop service.

Project skills, experience and resources

Since 2009 our voluntary group has transformed the railway landscape in East Kent.

We developed our campaign by amassing demonstrable community and media support. We were commissioned by Kent County Council to produce a business case for expanding the initial trial High Speed services and to focus them on off-peak and weekend travel as well as peak commuting to and from London.

This was accepted in Kent County Council's Rail Action Plan and we were also commissioned to research local opinion on timing options for extra High Speed trains. Already with a limited High Speed service implemented, the impact on local economic activity is very evident.

The Deal Station 'Platform 1' café has served nearly 300,000 customers since commencing trading and now serves around 3,000 customers per month and has successfully acted as an informal information point for the Trains4Deal campaign and provides a general Tourist Visitor Information service.

The project team, who now plan to capitalise on this unique opportunity presented by a full High Speed service and the East Kent Loop in particular, has a proven track record reflecting a strong skill set and an ability to draw on community support and engagement.

We combine highly-experienced, creative media professionals with backgrounds in travel and tourism PR, print and digital journalists with social media and professional web know-how, plus a former school teacher with extensive local government experience and environmental knowledge.

We are all local business owners, campaigners and project managers who live and work in the area and who know the various strengths and weaknesses of the towns and have the contacts, local knowledge, drive and passion to make things happen.

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About the new loop service.....

- 82 minutes from London
- Starting in January 2015, the hourly High Speed Javelin trains between London and Dover extend round to Faversham (then back to London) – presenting many “firsts”
- Martin Mill and Walmer their first ever HS service
- Deal, Sandwich, Birchington, Herne Bay and Whitstable their first ever direct HS rail services weekdays off-peak and at weekends ;
- Also stopping at Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate
- **Last trains on a Saturday night** – Faversham 2130 ; Whitstable 2139 ; Herne Bay 2144 ; Margate 2158 ; Broadstairs 2205 ; Ramsgate 2212 ; Sandwich 2224 ; Deal 2230 ; Ashford 2318 ; London St.Pancras 2354
- Faversham 2230 ; Whitstable 2239 ; Herne Bay 2244 ; Margate 2258 ; Broadstairs 2305 ; Ramsgate 2312 ; Sandwich 2324 ; Deal 2330 ; Ashford 0018
- London St.Pancras 2237 ; Ashford 2316 ; Deal 2359 ; Sandwich 0006 ; Ramsgate 0018
- London St.Pancras 2337 ; Ashford 0016 ; Deal 0059 ; Sandwich 0106 ; Ramsgate 0118
- **Attracting day visitors FROM London** : Off peak day return for one adult : current price - £38.70 with most railcards - £25.55 available leaving London after 0930am
- Can bring “Kids for a quid” also three to nine adults travelling together get 34% off the £38.70 fare each
- First off-peak train down : London St.Pancras 09:37 arrive Deal 10:59 (no changes) then hourly ; Last train back to London Deal 22:30 arrive London St.Pancras 2354 and before that hourly
- Weekend trains : Off peak day return fares available all day as above ; also Weekender fare, travel off-peak Friday, Saturday or Sunday - £39.30 – with railcard £26.40
- First off-peak direct train down on Saturday : London St.Pancras 06:37 arrive Deal 07:59 – then hourly – last train back to London : Deal 22:30 arrive London St.Pancras 23:54 and before that hourly
- First off-peak direct train down on Sunday : London St.Pancras 08:37 arrive Deal 09:59 and hourly after that – last train back to London : Deal 2130 arrive London St.Pancras 22:54 and before that hourly