

The meeting took place at The Robertsbridge Club as it is a central point of the line and the majority of members came by train. All trains were on time.

Attendees represented a wide selection of organisations:

High Weald AONB, HBC/ SCRP, Southeastern Railways, Cllr HBC, Sussex Outreach Support, Robertsbridge PC, East Sussex Site Loss Council, Kent and East Sussex Railway, Southborough TC. RVA, ESCC, Battle TC, CRN, Railway Futures, Etchingham PC.

Sarah Jacques from Rother Voluntary Action gave an update on proposed Partnership, using available station space. The Sussex Outreach project proposes to work with RVA to deliver outreach services to local communities at Etchingham, Robertsbridge and Battle on the 1066 line then Rye on the Marshlink.

The project proposes to be a referral point for all public services but specifically will bring the Citizen's Advice, Mental Health Services, men's support services amongst many others.

It is proposed that the project will start at Etchingham by using the upstairs Bistro space. Then progress to Battle (once the development is completed) and Robertsbridge when they have a vehicle to park at the station.

Southeastern Railways Community update, including accessibility and the latest on the changes to Ticket office sales. The ticket offices will be re-shaped and there is a consultation running this month for the major stations on the line. Then a further consultation in the Autumn for the smaller stations, including Robertsbridge. It is said that if a small station already has staff, they will not be reduced but there rolls re-shaped, whatever that means.

Comment:

The Robertsbridge Station Master House is earmarked for Network Rail to use as a regional office so the building is no longer available. That leaves the Engine Shed that remains empty. It was occupied by the Garden Machinery Company. The lease is held by RVR who are actively looking for some one to take on the building.

Daniel Wright from Community Rail Network, spoke about the challenges to Funding from the DFT so local funding will be required for any new projects whatever they are.

Next meeting: 1st December 2023