

New-look station officially opens its doors

December 3, 2021



The newly-upgraded Maidstone East Station has now opened.

A total of £5.2 million of work was carried out which delivered a brand-new waiting room, café and ticket office amongst other improvements.

It was opened by the Mayor of Maidstone, Cllr Fay Gooch, who was joined by representatives from Network Rail, Southeastern, Maidstone Borough Council, Kent County Council and main contractor Geoffrey Osborne Ltd.

Network Rail says the improved station now provides an attractive, modern, welcoming gateway to Maidstone town centre, with flowers and shrubs planted on the forecourt to provide a landscaped, bright and cheerful environment for passengers.

An impressive 3.5m by 2m high sculpture of 'Iggy' the dinosaur was also unveiled at the opening event, as a nod to the 125 million-year-old dinosaur fossils discovered in the town in the Victorian era. The Iguanodon even features on Maidstone Borough's coat of arms.

Further work is underway to increase parking and pedestrian access at the side of the station. It will

include better lighting and CCTV, more accessible parking and drop off spaces along with improved connectivity to Maidstone East Barracks station.

The station redevelopment is part of Kent County and Maidstone Borough Councils' plans to regenerate the town centre area around the station.

Fiona Taylor, route managing director for Network Rail's Kent route, said: "The station upgrade is now complete and looks fantastic. I'm confident passengers will love the new-look Maidstone East - it's something everyone can really be proud of.

'I'd like to thank our passengers and residents for their patience while the project has progressed through some very tough times and in a challenging working environment. We're delighted the station is now fully open, providing an impressive welcome for regular rail users as well as visitors to the town."

The Mayor of Maidstone, Cllr Fay Gooch, said: "The station upgrade at Maidstone East has already made a huge difference to the town. It's bright and airy which staff and passengers have wanted for some time. The facilities are all first class and the landscaped forecourt will look splendid next year when spring is in bloom."

Southeastern's passenger services director, David Wornham, said: "The train station is often at the heart of the community, and as part of our drive to win back customers, we want to make them as welcoming as possible.

"These improvements do just that, offering a much safer and more enjoyable travel experience.

"I'd like to say thank you to all the partners involved, including the station manager Caroline Wallis and her team, for looking after passengers during the work."

Southeastern is focusing on winning back customers post-pandemic, and has introduced flexible season tickets, more advance fares and is rolling out new City Beam trains onto the Dartford, Hayes and Sevenoaks routes.

Extra train services are also being added to the timetable from 12 December and in February 2022, six additional City services per day will be running between Maidstone East and Blackfriars via Denmark Hill.