

Stations connected with the help of electric taxi bus service

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Railway stations are being connected with the help of an eco-friendly electric bus, which has recently extended its service.

The Katch electric taxi bus service started in May. Originally connecting Wickham Market rail station to Framlingham Castle, it has now extended to include arts, heritage and retail centre Snape Maltings.

Snape Maltings is home to independent shops and galleries and several performance venues, including the Snape Maltings Concert Hall.

Katch is led by Suffolk County Council in partnership with CarsSmart, and with support from East Suffolk Council, Framlingham Town Council, Wickham Market Parish Council, Community Rail Network, East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership and Greater Anglia.

It uses electric vehicles operating as shared taxi buses serving Framlingham, Wickham Market, Wickham Market Railway Station (at Campsea Ashe), Tunstall, Snape Maltings and Snape.

It serves fixed bus stops and journeys can be booked on-demand by telephone or via the Katch app, charging fares in line with a bus service. Payment can be made by contactless card or cash.

The East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership and Community Rail Network Development Fund from the Department of Transport provided a £7,700 grant to fund the installation of electric vehicle charging points for Katch buses to use at Wickham Market train station at Campsea Ashe.

Aaron Taffera, chair of the East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership, said, “We were very keen to support the expansion of this service to make it easier for people to access train travel in a rural area; at the same time tourists will now be able to easily visit Snape Maltings in addition to Framlingham Castle using the rail network.

“With rail travel being the third most sustainable form of transport after walking and cycling, a combined journey using the train and Katch will help to cut down on emissions and pollution from car use in our countryside and encourage people back to rail.”

Katch launched on a 12-month trial in May 2021. It is available seven days a week, Monday to Friday 7.50am to 8pm, Saturday 8am to 8pm, Sundays and Bank Holidays 10am to 6pm.

For further information about Katch visit www.katchalift.com