

Highways and Transportation Newsletter - May 2026



1 - Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

Welcome to the Highways and Transportation newsletter in advance of the May Growth Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee meeting. This newsletter shares key highlights of work and projects from my portfolio both within Kent County Council business and with external partners. I hope you will find it of interest and share it with your communities.

Best wishes

Peter Osborne, Kent County Councillor, Hythe West

Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

peter.osborne@kent.gov.uk

Business Services

Customer Demand

Highways and Transportation receive customer enquiries through our online reporting tool www.kent.gov.uk/highwayfaults , around 70% of all enquiries raised come directly from the public and 30% from our contact centre.

The recent month was mild overall having started slightly warmer than average, with less persistent rainfall than the prior month. Strong winds later in the month caused disruption, however, mid-month for many was a week of fine weather, above average temperatures, and limited rainfall. Temperatures dropped again at the end of the month with some wet weather, until the final day which had much sunshine.

The customer enquiry graphs below show the enquiry demands received over the past few months across the service areas of potholes, drainage, tree, streetlighting, streetworks permits and soft landscapes.

Potholes: 4166, enquiries have started to return to expected level of demand with a drop of 62% over recent months reaching an average level of demand.

Streetlighting: 318, a slight decrease in enquiries of 26%. Previous results indicate that enquiries are expected to fall by a further 36% over the next month with daylight saving time.

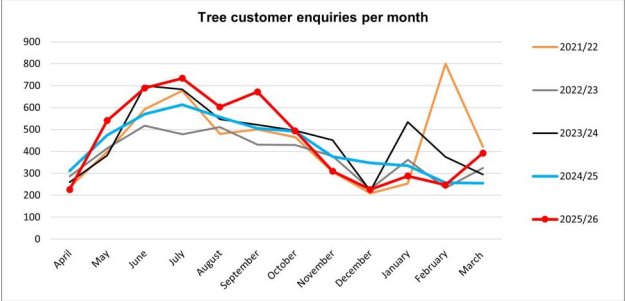
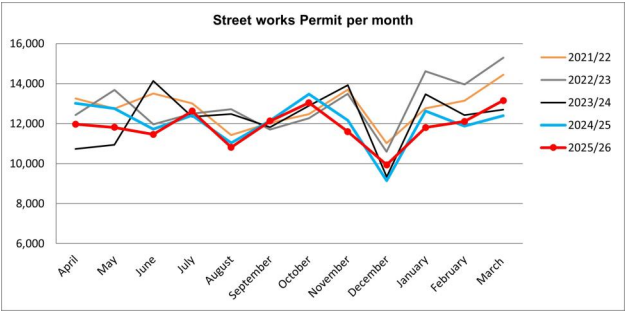
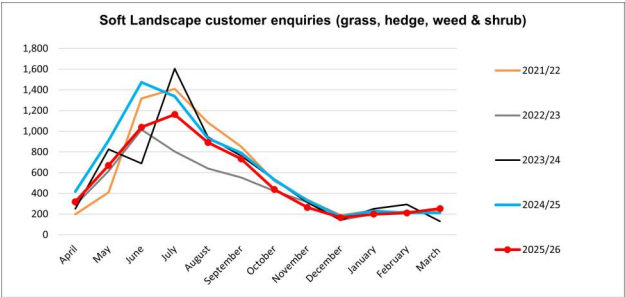
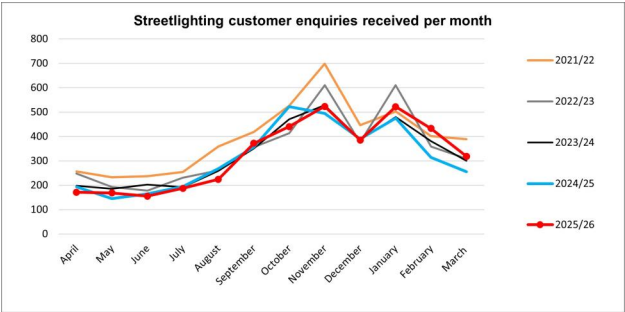
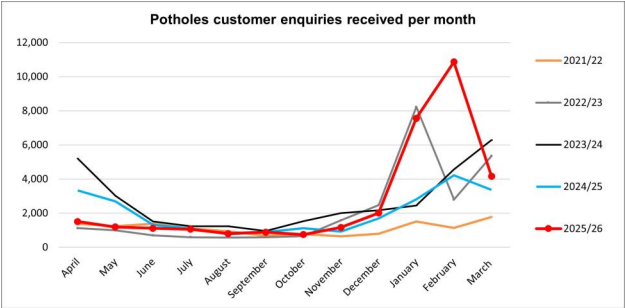
Soft Landscape: 254, an unexpected increase in enquiries of 20% demand across recent months, resulting in the highest level of soft landscape enquiries comparably in the previous five years.

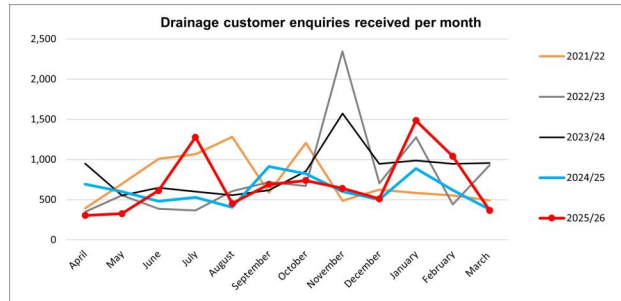
Streetworks Permits: 13153, an expected increase of 8% in permits across March.

Tree: 393, an unexpected increase in these enquiries of 59%, potentially attributed to lower rainfall and high sunshine hours over recent months.

Drainage: 368, a particularly large decrease in enquiries of 65% resulting in the lowest number of incoming enquiries seen in March over the last five years.

Click on the graphs below to enlarge





Contact Centre Update

After a very busy January and February in which Highways and Transportation (H&T) experienced an average of 15,000 enquiries being raised each month, volumes began to return to normal levels in March with 8,775 enquiries coming through.

Nearly 73% of these enquiries were raised directly by our customers using the online reporting tool [Report or track a problem on the road or pavement - Kent County Council](#).

Drainage enquiries switched to our new reporting tool (My Kent Highways) at the end of March and are working well.

H&T received 16,429 total contacts during March which included phone calls, online enquiries and emails to all our services (including Highways, Kent Driver Education, Concessionary Fares and Travel Saver).

The KCC Contact Centre provider changed from Agilisys to Capita on the 1st of April, the transfer went well with no significant impact to any highway services.

Highways



Highway Term Maintenance Contract (HTMC) with Ringway - a new era for Kent's Roads

Kent County Council has signed a new long-term contract with Ringway to maintain and improve our roads, marking the start of a new era for highways services across Kent.

Ringway is an experienced highways contractor with a strong track record of working with local authorities across the UK, delivering day-to-day road maintenance alongside long-term

improvements. Their focus on safety, efficiency, innovation and self-delivery will play a key role in modernising how Kent's roads are looked after, with a strong emphasis on reliability, transparency and working closely with local communities.

From 1 May 2026, the new 21-year Highways Term Maintenance Contract, worth around £50 million a year, will cover everything from winter gritting and pothole repairs to maintaining bridges and tunnels, supported by a 24-hour emergency response. The contract is focused on keeping Kent's roads safe, reliable and ready for the future.

For residents, this means quicker and more efficient repairs, with streamlined processes helping to address potholes and drainage issues faster and reduce disruption. Clear performance targets will ensure high standards and strong accountability, while transparent pricing will provide value for money and confidence that council tax is being spent wisely. This long-term partnership with Ringway represents a strong commitment to improving Kent's roads and improving everyday journeys for residents, businesses and visitors across the county.



“This new contract marks the start of a strong and trusted partnership built on collaboration, integrity and mutual respect. Significant dedication and hard work have gone into mobilising the contract efficiently, and we are grateful for the commitment shown by all teams involved. As we move forward, it is important to allow time for the new arrangements and processes to embed, and for everyone to remain resilient and open to new ways of working aligned to the contract.

This is a positive step and a real opportunity for our residents and our teams to work together to build and maintain the Kent County Council network safely, reliably and with excellence at its core.”

Earl Bournier, Senior Operational Commissioning Manager, Highways, Kent County Council

Strategic Resilience

Galley Hill Road

Work on Galley Hill Road is now progressing at pace. Funding has now been secured to continue developing the business case for the scheme and also to allow our consultants to move forward with a full options study with contractor input to inform our selection of a preferred solution. Ecological surveys, planning screening and both preliminary and detailed design will also be completed this financial year.

Funding has also been secured to design and deliver highway improvements in Stanhope Road to help mitigate congestion caused here by drivers not using the official signed diversion route for Galley Hill Road.

A formal letter of claim has now been issued to those deemed responsible for the collapse and whilst the time period for response is short, it is unlikely that matters will conclude quickly.

Read more about Galley Hill here: [Kent County Council to explore submitting funding bid to reopen Galley Hill Road - News & Features - Kent County Council](#)



Brock Easter Getaway



Operation Brock was deployed overnight on the 1st April in readiness for the busy Easter getaway period at Kent's cross channel ports.

Whilst Easter is not traditionally as busy as other holiday periods, with the increase in Entry Exit System (EES) registration to 50% there was an increased risk of disruption and so the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF) took the decision to deploy Brock for the Easter bank holiday weekend.

Due to the increased processing times for passenger traffic at the border we saw extensive queues on the M20 on the approach to Eurotunnel on Good Friday. The queues for the Port of Dover were smaller but, due to the congestion on the road network, freight for both Eurotunnel and the Port of Dover was held in the Brock footprint for much of the day with in excess of 1,000 lorries being held at times.

As we look ahead to the May half term and the summer getaway, KMRF are in continued discussions with partner agencies and the ports to plan for the additional delay and disruption full EES registration might have and what can be done to mitigate that.

Road of Remembrance, Folkestone

The Road of Remembrance has been closed since January 2024 following a landslide.

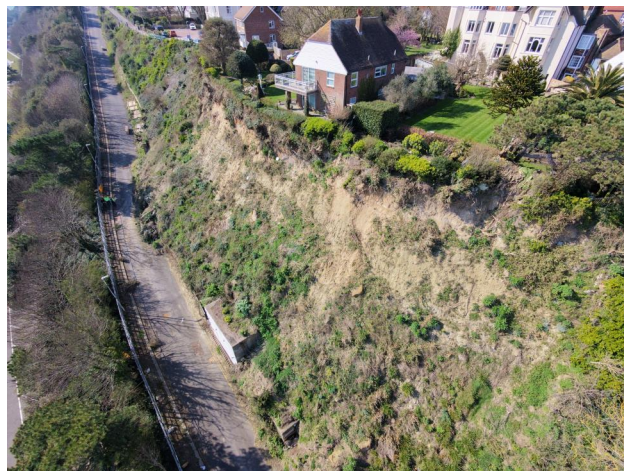
Over the past two years, the design team has undertaken extensive investigation works, carefully collecting and analysing data to inform the development of a robust solution to stabilise the embankment.

The final design is now complete and proposes the installation of 974 soil nails, together with an erosion control mat and mesh facing to reinforce the failed slope. Sub-horizontal drainage will be installed to divert groundwater safely from the slope face to the base of the cutting. At the crest of the slope, a sub-vertical section up to 4 metres high will be stabilised using soil nails and a shotcrete facing, ensuring that neighbouring properties can retain their garden areas.

The works will be delivered by GWH Highways in partnership with CAN Geotechnical. Mobilisation is scheduled to commence on 5th May 2026, with project completion anticipated in March 2027.



Further information can be found here: [Road of Remembrance, Folkestone - Kent County Council](#)



Public Transport

Fastrack 20 years old



fastrack20



Kent's Fastrack bus network is marking a major milestone by celebrating 20 years since the buses first began rolling through Dartford and Gravesham.

Over the past 20 years Fastrack has served the people of Thameside. The service has expanded and improved over the years. Today's network of seven routes, including a service in Dover, Fastrack has come a long way. Electric vehicles have recently been introduced as modernisation plans continue to improve the service.

Over its 20 year history, Fastrack services have been operated by four bus companies including Arriva, Go-Ahead, Go Coach and Stagecoach, each contributing to meeting the evolving needs of growing communities in the areas which they serve.

There will be events taking place across the year celebrating Fastrack's 20 year milestone.

Read here to find out more about Fastrack: [Celebrating 20 years of Fastrack in Kent - News & Features - Kent County Council](#)



2 - The Fastrack team celebrating 20 years. From left to right - Michael Sawyer , Fastrack Project Support Officer, Shane Hymers , Fastrack Development Manager, Helene Bataille, Senior Network Development Planner, Daniel Gillen , Principal Fastrack Development Planner, Arjun Sandhu , Fastrack Development Officer and Peter Nicholls, Consultant.





Staff Profile

Robin Hadley, Highway Soft Landscape Asset Manager

I am the Highway Soft Landscape Asset Manager in the Highway and Transportation team. The team and I are responsible for looking after all the green assets within the highway boundary across the County. This includes weeds, grass verges, rural verges, shrubs, hedges, conservation verges, off road cycle routes, trees and really anything that is growing on highway land. Our team is divided into a Tree Team, a Landscape team and a Compliance team.

Our priority in managing our asset is to maintain the highway as safe as we can. To do this we have Contractors to carry out planned work such as mowing grass, flailing verges, cutting hedges and shrubs and to look after our trees. We mow close to 3million m² of urban grass verge at each cut alone and are responsible for around 550,000 highway trees. When this is grouped with our other operations it is quite an undertaking to keep the greenery under control.



Our tree and landscape works are carried out by Contractors, and a large part of the team's time is spent managing these contractors and auditing the completed works against our performance indicators. The aim of our auditing is to ensure that we are getting value for money and that work is carried out safely and to a good standard.



If we are successful with the monitoring and maintain our quality specification, then this results in less customer enquiries. We generally receive around 8 thousand enquires a year split equally between trees and landscape and monitoring plays a part in keeping these at manageable levels.

A large part of the tree teams time is spent carrying out the Tree Safety Audits of our highway trees making sure that we comply with our duty of care to inspect and to address safety concerns. The team are responsible for planting around 850 street trees a year and managing their establishment for three years.

The Landscape team also work with Kent Wildlife Trust on our Roadside Nature Reserve (RNR) management to improve our highway biodiversity. We have over a hundred RNR's and around 770,000m² of conservation verge for biodiversity.

As a team we work with many colleagues and teams across Highways, much of this work will be directly with Highway Operations and other Highway Asset teams like Structures, Roads and Footways, Streetlighting and Drainage but we also work with Development Agreements, Major Capital Programmes, Planning, Public Rights of Way and Public Transport as well as many others.





I joined the Highway Soft Landscape Team in 2013 after being transferred over from Jacobs, an external environmental consultancy, where I had been involved with Highways since 2006. In 2018 I became the Soft Landscape Asset Manager.

It may not be a great surprise to learn that I am from a farming background which is how I ended up in the green sector. When I left school though I initially trained and worked in electrical engineering but realised that my passion for the natural world was where I wanted to be and so I subsequently retrained.



One of the most challenging elements for me and the team is managing the peaks of the workload. During the summer months we have pretty much all of our tree and landscape contractors working at the same time. This means that the teams time is spent monitoring works and managing customer enquiries with very little time to do anything else. Our tree team inspect our trees all year round but during the growing season it is easier to identify issues because trees are in leaf so we have a lot more tree enquiries. During the Autumn and Winter, we then can become busy with trees following weather events.

The nature of the asset means that the weather can be a real challenge. A lot of our decision on timings are influenced by the weather and there definitely appears to be a change in weather patterns and its predictability. A cold, dry spring is good for us as this reduces green growth and limits weeds. Unfortunately, we don't always have this, and we haven't had a prolonged cold winter for a while which means things grow earlier and quicker, making timing tricky.

As an Asset Manager, I am incredibly proud to work with a team that genuinely cares about the landscapes they manage.

The team regularly goes above and beyond to support key stakeholders, whether that is adapting maintenance approaches to improve biodiversity, finding sustainable solutions to site constraints, or openly sharing knowledge and best practice to achieve the best possible results.



Good News Stories

Local Government Chronicle Awards



Whitney Gee , Tunnels, Barriers and Data Programme Manager in the Highway Structures and Tunnels team has been shortlisted for the prestigious Local Government Chronicle (LGC) 'Rising

Star Award', recognising her exceptional talent, leadership potential, and growing influence within the sector [LGC Awards 2026](#)



This nomination highlights not only Whitney's impressive achievements to date, but also her commitment to driving innovation and positive change in local government.

This recognition of our staff in a national award competition is testament to how Highways and Transportation develops and encourages our teams and tells others that we continue to be a great employer.

Results will be announced on 10 June 2026 and we wish Whitney the very best of luck as she awaits the results!

Successful Familiarisation Visit to Ramsgate Harbour Tunnel 10 March 2026



On Tuesday 10 March 2026, the KCC Structures team hosted a highly successful familiarisation and engagement visit to the Ramsgate Harbour Tunnel. The event brought together a strong mix of partners and internal colleagues, with attendance from London Bridge Associates, Aecom, Jacobs, Ringway, and our very own local Highways and Transportation team.

KCC colleagues in attendance included: Whitney Gee, Tunnels, Barriers and Data Programme Manager, Brian McKay, Tunnels Engineer, Sebastian Bures, Structures Programme Manager, Tudor Row, Senior Structures Inspector, Katherine Porter, Technical Support Officer, Talha Ghaffar, Structures Engineer and Matt Bentley, Placement Structures Engineer.

The visit provided a valuable opportunity for all participants to gain first-hand understanding of this important highway asset. By experiencing the tunnel environment directly, the teams strengthened collaboration and built a shared knowledge base to support more effective ongoing management and maintenance. Supporting Contractors to Deliver Better Outcomes Professional services contractors from London Bridge Associates, Aecom and Jacobs joined the tour to develop a deeper practical understanding of the tunnel's layout, key systems, physical constraints, and operational requirements. Seeing the asset up close — rather than relying solely on drawings or desktop studies — enables them to deliver more accurate, realistic, and efficient designs, assessments, and recommendations. This hands-on approach will improve the quality and value of the services provided to KCC.

With the new Highways Term Maintenance Contract going live in May 2026, the visit formed an important part of the mobilisation process. Representatives from Ringway were able to familiarise themselves with critical aspects of the tunnel, including its configuration, access arrangements, specific maintenance requirements, operational interfaces with the wider road network, potential risks as well as emergency response considerations, the on-site Control Room and the Tunnel Operators.

Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice

Whitney Gee, Tunnels, Barriers and Data Programme Manager in the Highway Structures and Tunnels team has successfully persuaded the Department for Transport (DfT) to add a new section to the 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice' dedicated to managing tunnels .

This is an exceptional achievement that demonstrates both her technical expertise and her national influence. This addition fills a long-standing gap in guidance, ensuring that tunnels receive the same strategic focus, risk-based oversight, and asset management rigour as other critical highway structures.

The updated Code of Practice is expected to be released in November 2026.

Young Driver & Passenger Course



The Safer Road Users Team is pleased to announce some exciting news about the award winning Young Driver & Passenger course. The course, recognised with the 2024 Prince Michael International Road Safety Award for its outstanding achievement and innovation, is offered to Year 12 and 13 students across the county. Currently, the course consists of four virtual sessions followed by a live Q&A presentation. The four virtual sessions cover 1) driving and seeing, 2) impairment, 3) speed and force and 4) impulse and control. These sessions are designed to

influence the attitudes and behaviours of both young drivers and passengers who are over-represented in crash data.

This project has developed and strengthened our partnership working with other organisations in the road safety sector and will be formally evaluated to assess the impact on Year 12 and 13 students.

We are now enhancing the course by replacing the live Q&A with a brand new fifth session – post collision, to help increase survivability, in line with our Vision Zero Kent Strategy. The aim of the session is to give clear strategies to aid young drivers and passengers when faced with a crash situation. This will be achieved by supporting them with an overview of post collision actions as well as an understanding of how best to support emergency responders attending the scene, which will assist in developing safer behaviours at the scene of a crash.

The new face-to-face session will be delivered by a Road Safety Officer after sessions one to four. Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, South East Coast Ambulance Service and National Highways have all contributed to and appear in the accompanying film to share their experience and knowledge around safer strategies, best practice and legal requirements.

This new fifth session will be rolled out imminently to all secondary schools and colleges who have signed up to receive the course.

Read more about the young driver courses here: [Young Driver Courses](#) | [KCC Road Safety](#) | [Safer roads in Kent](#)



*Recognising achievement and innovations
which will improve road safety*

Road Crossing Patrol



3 - Photo of Louise Morgan, Road Crossing Patrol

Louise Morgan, Road Crossing Patrol for Headcorn Primary School has truly gone above and beyond in her role, taking proactive steps to strengthen relationships with young children and improve safety in the community. Recognising that younger children can be wary of engaging with the School Crossing Patrol, Louise saw a valuable opportunity to break down barriers early, helping children feel comfortable and confident.

Louise's continued commitment demonstrates a genuine passion for supporting families, enhancing communication, and keeping children safe. Her willingness to step forward, connect with the youngest learners, and make a real difference is truly commendable. Well done Louise - what an asset to the Road Crossing Patrol team!

Read more about our Road Crossing Patrol Officers here: [School crossing patrols - Kent County Council](#)

Small Steps - Road Safety



Small Steps provides Key Stage 1 children with an opportunity to learn how to walk safely as a pedestrian, cross roads and use a range of pedestrian crossings safely with an adult. This helps keep the local community safe, reducing the risk of an incident to both pedestrians and road users. The training is free to schools, involving teaching staff or parent volunteers accompanying small groups of children one afternoon a week. Feedback has shown that the adults gain just as much knowledge as the children about how to cross a road correctly, refreshing their own knowledge on using a pedestrian crossing safely.

During the last school term, the Small Steps team delivered pedestrian training courses to Year 2 and Year 3 pupils within several primary schools and received great feedback.

Read more about the Small Steps training here: [Small Steps - KCC Road Safety](#)

‘...Really fun and informative, Sue is amazing - the children love it...’ **Greenlands Primary School, Dartford**

‘...Excellent course that really captured the children's attention. They enjoyed taking part and looked forward to the session each week. Sue was an excellent trainer who gave us very

valuable information that the children remembered. We will all miss Sue and wish her a very happy retirement, and it's been a pleasure having her come to the school every year. Thank you very much...' **The Gateway Primary Academy, Dartford**

'...Kevin was really patient and kind to our Year 2 children. He was excellent at his role. Well done to all involved. Much appreciated. Thank you Small Steps...' **Wateringbury CoE Primary School, Maidstone**

Traffic Operations Centre

Kent Traffic Information can be viewed via the [Kent Traffic Information \(1\)](#) map to find traffic incidents, congestion, road closures and view CCTV cameras.

Daily updates are posted on our social media [KCC Highways \(@KentHighways\) / X](#)

February and March 2026

TOC Twitter

Tweets sent	2,633
Total followers	78,153
Followers date	06.04.2026

KTT website

Unique visits by customers	120,969
Device registrations	1,216

Incidents created

Crashes	95
Events	6
Incidents	436
Roadworks	1,495

Actions taken

VMS interventions	45
Traffic signal faults	287
Availability of signals	99.44%

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter



NEXT ISSUE: the next Highways and Transportation newsletter will be circulated one week in advance of the July 2026 GETCC meeting. If you have any project updates or good news stories which you would like to be included in the next issue, please contact

kendra.perrott@kent.gov.uk



Growth, Environment & Transport
Where People Thrive, Places Flourish and Potential Grows