



Kent Ramblers

Issue 9: October 2026

# Kent Footpath Volunteer

An occasional newsletter for our volunteers engaged in looking after Kent's public rights of way network

## Introduction

Another short Newsletter I'm afraid. The most important thing is to note the likely content of the forthcoming Lenham meeting to which you are all invited and the deadline for booking.

I'd love to include more articles from volunteers, particularly reports of successes or descriptions of challenges to alert others and perhaps to elicit advice from those who have seen the problem before.

RP

## Meeting for Footpath Volunteers in Lenham: 7 November 2026

Our next full-day meeting for footpath volunteers will be held as usual in Lenham Community Centre on Saturday 7 November 2026. The programme is yet to be finalised but below is a list of topics from which the final selection is likely to be made, depending on availability of speakers. These meetings are a great opportunity to meet and chat with other footpath volunteers. Everyone interested is welcome, even if not yet signed up to a volunteer role, but **booking is essential** to enable us to provide lunch. Please book by emailing [prow.seminars@kentramblers.org.uk](mailto:prow.seminars@kentramblers.org.uk) with your name and any dietary requirements by Friday 30 October.

You can ask any question you like at the Open Forum session but you are more likely to get a useful answer if you let us know beforehand what you are going to ask.

Possible topics:

- Colin Finch, new head of the KCC Public Rights of Way Team, will talk about **Rights of Way Through the Planning Process**
- Mark Robson will talk about the work of the **Trail Riders Fellowship**.
- Robert Peel and Andrea Lawrence will describe the saga of footpath obstruction by the **Camp Wildfire** event on the North Downs
- Tony Bristow will deliver an update on **Solar Array proposals across Kent**
- We hope to have an update on ProW issues in **Bromley** and there will be a

question and answer opportunity on ProW issues in **Medway**

- There will be a session of short updates on various topics including **Vegetation Clearance Teams, Volunteer Recruitment, Walking Guides, Parish Footpath Maps and Richborough Quay**
- **Open Forum** – we will listen to your concerns and attempt to answer your questions.

We open with refreshments at 9:30, start formal business at 10:00, break for a free lunch and finish at 15:00. Refreshments will not be provided at mid-morning and afternoon breaks so please bring a drink with you.

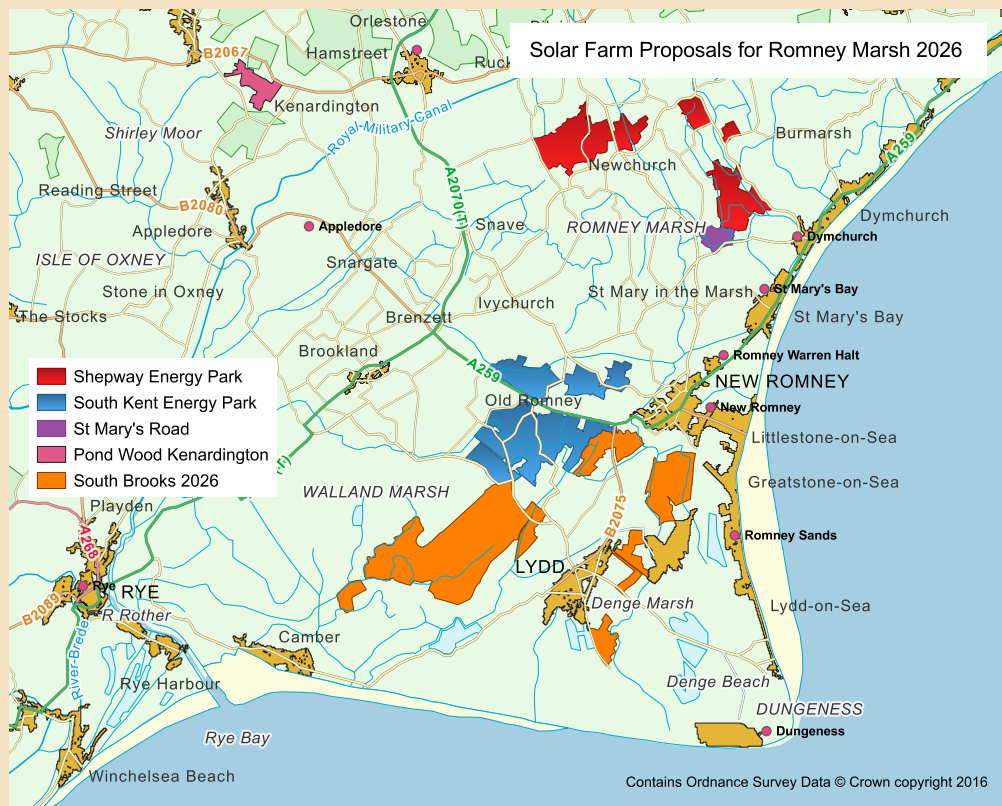
## Solar Arrays Update

Tony Bristow and Paddy Herlihy had a meeting with representatives of EDF Energy and their consultants on 27th August 2026 to discuss the South Brooks Solar proposal on Romney Marsh.

The meeting was generally constructive and helpful. The Ramblers were pleased to see that the proposal retained all public footpaths on the site, and that the solar panels had a 10 metre offset from each public footpath throughout. EDF have reduced the area containing panels from the original proposal by around 25%, including removing some to preserve views from PROWs. The Ramblers remain concerned about the impact on visual amenity from the proposals.

As is usual on these applications, we discussed the phrase “not significant” as being the key point of difference between objectors and proposers to these schemes. The application, like others, is full of comments about impact on visual amenity and ecology and a range of other matters being “not significant” and Ramblers said that the applicant would need to justify such comments in a very detailed manner. In a similar way, we asked EDF to justify in detail why some of the agricultural land had been recently downgraded in its quality standard.

The Ramblers asked EDF to give due regard to the eight walking trails in the area, and we requested that the outline Rights of Way Strategy should be prepared before the application is submitted, so that walkers have something to comment on as the application is considered.



The meeting was followed by a site visit which made clear that the area has a unique sense of place, but it also gave EDF the opportunity to explain in more detail some of the mitigations that they are proposing, some of which will be beneficial to walkers.

Overall, a positive meeting which was in stark contrast to meetings with some other developers of similar sites in Kent.

PH

## Historic Routeways

This article is repeated (with amendments) from Issue 1 of the newsletter as in recent weeks we have been consulted on a couple of proposed diversions affecting historic routeways in the High Weald. I also addressed the topic at a Lenham meeting in 2022 and there was an article about the subject in our 2020 Annual Review.

The historic routeways in question are primarily a feature of the High Weald and surrounding area. Before agricultural settlements developed in the High Weald, the area was primarily exploited by landowners as far afield as the North and South Downs. They would have their pigs herded into the High Weald in autumn to devour

the plentiful resource of beech nuts and acorns. Over the centuries the popular routes developed into the familiar sunken tracks and many of these are still in use as public footpaths, bridleways and indeed roads.

These routeways are an important part of the heritage of the High Weald and it is the policy of both the High Weald National Landscape and Kent County Council that they should be protected where possible. This means that when there is a proposal to divert a footpath away from one of these historic routeways, this should be one of the grounds of objection to the diversion. Both Sussex and Kent Ramblers are represented on the High Weald Network, a committee of amenity organisations that used to meet with the National Landscape team a couple of times a year. The committee has undertaken to make LFOs in both Areas aware of this issue. The map on the next page offers an overview of the routeway network but there are more detailed maps on the High Weald National Landscape web site:

<https://highweald.org/document-library/parish-information>

In past years some diversions have slipped through that ought to have been opposed on these (and other) grounds and the walking public are worse off as a result.

The loss of public access to a routeway near Cranbrook was one of the grounds we cited for opposing diversion of a path near Cranbrook three years ago. A member of staff from the High Weald AONB (as it then was) gave evidence to the KCC committee considering the proposed diversion. The committee declined to make the order.

RP

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# Historic Routeways

## TYPE

- Droveway
- Historic lane
- Ridgeway
- Roman road
- Historic track

