

# Kent Probation Community Payback



## Central and West Kent - May 2011

In the last 12 months offenders on Community Payback undertook 272,136 hours of work in Kent. Work by Community Payback teams included making vast improvements to community facilities, the environment, public buildings, open spaces and local neighbourhoods. Community Payback is one of the 12 requirements of a community order which can include other punishments such as a Curfew with rehabilitation such as drugs and alcohol treatment.

### **Maidstone:**

Community Payback teams have been working across Maidstone at the weekend to make improvements to the Borough.

At the end of April offenders worked outside Maidstone East Train Station, donning their high-vis jackets, sandpaper and brushes, they repainted the railings on a public walk way.

The work was identified by Maidstone Borough Council.

Offenders also continue to work at Trinity Foyer, an establishment for young adults between the ages of 16-24 at risk of being made homeless. They redecorated bedrooms and replastered walls.

Between April 2010 - March 2011, offenders completed 29,500 hours of work in and around Maidstone. The work was worth around £171,000 to the local community in labour alone.



### **Sittingbourne:**

Offenders have been paying their dues to society by clearing land in Minster ahead of a summer fair.

For the past few months, offenders on the Community Payback have been working at the back of Minster Abbey, clearing rubbish, debris and overgrown brambles to make it ready for a summer fair on July 9. The fair is a joint venture between Minster Abbey and the Gatehouse Museum, backed by Minster Parish Council. The clearing work was arranged by Peter MacDonald from Minster Parish Council and Kent Probation.

Mr MacDonald said: "They have been doing some really sterling work."

### **Tunbridge Wells/Tonbridge:**

Bedgebury Pinetum: Teams of offenders are working with the Forestry Commission to keep this natural woodland and outdoor space tidy and maintained. Work will include cutting back invasive rhododendron from pathways as well as refurbishing community facilities.

**Suggest Further Community Payback Work at [www.kentprobation.org](http://www.kentprobation.org)**

# How Community Payback works

**Kent Probation provides free labour for projects that fulfil the following criteria:**

- The work would not normally be done by people in paid employment
- Outdoor projects must be on land in public ownership, or to which the public have regular access
- Projects must satisfy a risk assessment, including health and safety requirements
- Projects should not require specialist or heavy equipment
- There must be an identifiable beneficiary such as the local community or a charitable organisation.

Organisations benefiting from the work must provide and pay for any materials to be used, such as paint and brushes, cement, cleaning products, dust sheets etc.

## How do we select projects?

Kent Probation works with a wide range of partners including community groups, charities, local authorities, schools, churches, mosques and care homes, who suggest projects which would be suitable.

More importantly, any member of the public can suggest a project. You can nominate a project online at [www.kentprobation.org](http://www.kentprobation.org) This is something we very much encourage.

## What type of offenders work in the community?

In general Unpaid Work is given to low and medium risk offenders. It is not a suitable sentence for high risk offenders. Typical crimes are motoring offences, public order offences, theft and other dishonesty.

## How do people know offenders are safe to work in their community?

All offenders are carefully assessed before they are allocated to work projects to ensure the safety of the public. Groups of offenders are also supervised by trained probation staff.

## Does it cut crime?

As well as a punishment Community Payback is proven to reduce re-offending in many cases. Work carried out such as gardening, forestry, painting and decorating and carpentry can be accredited by education providers, giving offenders a recognised certificate. For many this is the first educational qualification they have ever achieved and is an incentive to carry on with further education or apply for jobs.

Research indicates that if offenders can gain stable employment they are 30 per cent less likely to re-offend. Offenders sentenced to Community Payback are half as likely to re-offend as those sentenced to short prison sentences.

## How to find out more about Community Payback in your area

We welcome suggestions for work projects for offenders from people living in the local community, community organisations and local charities. If you or your organisation would like to propose a work site, please visit [www.kentprobation.org](http://www.kentprobation.org) or contact your local probation office.