

Kent Probation Community Payback



Central and West Kent - January 2011

In the last 12 months offenders on Community Payback undertook 283,317 hours of work in Kent, 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, and can combine other punishments such as a electronic tagging with rehabilitation such as drugs and alcohol treatment.

Snow Clearances across Central and West Kent:

In December, offenders cleared ice and snow from residential homes, paths and car parks around Maidstone and Sittingbourne in response to the changing weather conditions being experienced across the County. This included:

- Removing snow and ice from pathways along Mote Road, Maidstone
- and around the Doctor's surgery on College Road, Maidstone

Local residents have expressed their thanks to Kent Probation for organising this work. One lady wrote: "Without your help my elderly mother would have been housebound for weeks and unable to go to the shops for essential supplies."



Sittingbourne: Offenders on Community Payback have been clearing litter and rubbish from Bell Road Cemetery in Sittingbourne and the Coastal Park and beach at Leysdown.

Swanley: The Convent of Mercy in Swanley, which provides refuge for trafficked women, is being treated to a makeover by teams of offenders on Kent Probation's Community Payback. Teams are carrying out painting and decorating work. The work was nominated by the local community safety partnership. Kent Probation is also working closely with Swanley Town Council to carry out weekly litter picks of the area and with Sevenoaks Community Safety Partnership to remove unsightly graffiti.

Tunbridge Wells/Tonbridge: Offenders are painting and decorating Horsmonden Village Pavilion, as well as continuing work with the warden in Hadlow Village clearing paths and alleyways.

Work has started on a major landscaping project for Tonbridge and Malling Community Safety Partnership. An area of around $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre of natural beauty surrounding the ancient historical village pump of Leybourne, will be tidied up, cleared of dense overgrowth and replanted by offenders on their Community Payback. Offenders will be tasked with raising up the eroded banks of the stream on Castle Way, creating a Nature and Play area on the wooded area adjacent to Oxley Shaw Lane and opening up the untended grounds of Castle Lake Woods. Offenders will be expected to carry out heavy clearances and tidying work as some areas on the site have remained untouched for 50 or more years.

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

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 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 or contact your local probation office.