



THE KENT CONNECTS NEWSLETTER

Winter 2025

Who are Kent Connects?

Kent Connects is a collaborative partnership of public sector organisations across Kent and Medway, including all 12 district and borough councils, Medway Council, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Kent Police and GOETEC (a consortium of universities and colleges in the Southeast working to advance digital connectivity and technology adoption in education).

Our members pay an annual subscription to be part of Kent Connects, which enables us to deliver joint projects, strategic initiatives and shared learning opportunities. The partnership also hosts specialist groups where partners send representatives to collaborate on key topics such as cyber security, digital transformation and emerging technologies

Together, we aim to strengthen resilience, embrace innovation and respond to the evolving challenges facing local government and the wider public sector.

Merry Christmas from Kent Connects



As we wrap up 2025, we want to take a moment to thank all our partners and colleagues for your continued support and collaboration throughout the year. This year marked an exciting milestone with the arrival of our new Partnership Manager, Emily Jones, whose leadership has brought renewed energy and engagement across the network.

Together, we've seen increased involvement from partners and begun shaping proposals to develop the partnership in response to the evolving needs of our members and the wider political and contextual shifts impacting the public sector.

Your time, effort and commitment have been invaluable in making this progress possible. Thank you for being part of this journey.

Looking ahead, 2026 promises to be both exciting and challenging as we continue to adapt and innovate. We can't wait to work with you to build on this momentum and deliver even greater impact.

From all of us at Kent Connects, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Annual Conference 2026



Kent Connects and KPSN are excited to announce a joint conference on Thursday, 4th June 2026 at the Ashford International Hotel.

This event will bring together tech talks, public sector panel discussions and opportunities to share experiences and learn from partners across the country. It's a fantastic chance to connect, collaborate and explore innovative ideas shaping the future of digital and public services

Register your interest now by emailing kpsn@kent.gov.uk. Full booking details will be released in the New Year.

Join the conversation: Kent DigiFest Returns

Kent DigiFest is back for two weeks of innovation and collaboration, focused on using technology to improve resident services and make everyday work smarter and faster.

Join our remote sessions running from **19th-30th January**. 2 weeks of interactive, hands-on sessions tailored to all confidence levels. There's something for everyone.

Highlights include:

- **Accessibility in Digital Design:** make services more inclusive
- **Promptathon Challenges:** sharpen your AI prompting skills
- **Build you own AI Agent:** practical, step-by-step guidance
- **Live Q&As and Demos:** connect with experts and ask questions
- **Tool Showcases & Tutorials:** discover new ways to work smarter



A Collective Effort

Proudly supported by Kent Connects, DigiFest brings together councils across Kent to share lessons, spark new projects, and celebrate innovation.

Why Attend?

Whether you're leading a digital project, exploring new tools, or simply curious about how tech can support your team, DigiFest is the perfect opportunity to connect and learn.

Register Here to secure your place and stay updated.

Let's shape a future where technology works for everyone!

Kent Connects Partnership Event - 13 November 2025

Kent Connects brought partners together for an inspiring event focused on collaboration, innovation, and resilience in the digital age.

Highlights included insightful discussions, practical workshops, and networking, all helping shape the next phase of Kent Connects.

What's Next

A new subgroup structure will launch in April 2026, introducing specialist groups on:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Customer Experience & Digital Accessibility
- Technology Infrastructure

These will join our established groups on GIS and Cyber Security & Compliance.

Shared Ambition

The event reaffirmed our collective goal: building a resilient, digitally empowered region that delivers better outcomes for residents and businesses.

Partners will be kept updated on how the new structure will support representation and collaboration.



Shared Workspace Initiative – Get Involved!

Kent Connects offers a Shared Workspace Initiative designed to give partner organisations across the region access to flexible, collaborative spaces. These workspaces provide an opportunity to connect with peers, share ideas, or simply work closer to home in a convenient professional environment.

We use Matrix Booking, a simple and secure platform that makes it easy to reserve desks and meeting rooms at participating locations—supporting agile and collaborative working.

If you're not yet signed up but would like to be part of this initiative, please contact Kent Connects Enquire.KentConnects@kent.gov.uk. We have an onboarding meeting in January for organisations interested in joining and learning how to make the most of this shared resource.

The new Matrix Booking web app is now available for early access, offering a refreshed interface and basic booking functionality ahead of the full rollout on 12 December 2025.

The screenshot displays the Matrix Booking web app interface. At the top, the Kent Connects logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'New Booking', 'My Bookings', 'All Bookings', and 'Visitors' are on the right. Below the header, a search bar shows 'Friday, 5 Dec 2025' and filters for 'Any' location, 'Any' time, and 'Any' user. A 'Refresh' button is also present. The main content area is divided into a left sidebar and a central workspace layout. The sidebar includes sections for 'Location' (with 'Second Floor' selected), 'Facilities' (with checkboxes for 'Orthopaedic Chair', 'Second monitor', and 'Telephone'), and 'Desks' (with checkboxes for 'Desk 9', 'Desk 10', and 'Desk 11'). The central workspace layout shows a floor plan with various areas: a 'Meeting Cellpod' with a circular table, a 'Breakout area' with a fork and knife icon, a 'Collaboration Area' with a large open space, and 'Meeting Room 1' with a rectangular table. Desks are represented by numbered grids. A legend in the bottom right corner indicates that a blue circle with a plus sign means 'Available' and a grey circle with a person icon means 'Already booked'. A blue circle with the number '6' is highlighted in the center of the workspace layout.