

Newsletter

Term 4 - 2024





KCU Newsletter 2024

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Kent Children's University Update

Find out what is going on and what is coming up!

A Message from the Manager of Kent Children's University

It is hard to believe that we are a quarter of the way through 2024 but we hope the year is going well for you and your family. This term we have been working with lots of partners to develop Kent Children's University further. This included a session with the new CEO for the National Children's University Trust, Sonjia Peers. We will keep you updated with any changes made nationally via these newsletters and social media.

Early next term we shall be sharing details of our Graduations with schools and our family members so keep an eye out for that information.

[Should you wish to read this newsletter online, please click here.](#) We have also included .png images of the newsletter should you wish to share any content on Social Media. If you do that, don't forget to tag us in.

If you have any suggestions for future content or would like to supply material to be included, do email kcu@theeducationpeople.org.

Wishing you all a restful and rejuvenating Spring break. For those that celebrate, we also wish you a Happy Easter!

Emma Jenkins

Manager of Kent Children's University
The Education People



What is Kent Children's University?

[Kent Children's University™ \(KCU\)](#) is part of an international charity that provides 5- to 14-year-olds with access to exciting and innovative CU Learning Activities and experiences outside the normal school day. They reward children's participation in voluntary learning activities that will develop their skills and raise aspirations for the future.

The Children's University (CU) is able to recognise and reward children for all the additional learning they participate in voluntarily outside normal school hours. Once registered through a school or direct through the local CU, children can earn Learning Credits in a variety of ways including participating in activities held at "[Learning Destinations](#)." Children are provided with a Passport to Learning for them to collect Credits as evidence of their learning.

Once children achieve a fixed number of Learning Credits, they will have the opportunity to have their successes celebrated at a very special Graduation Ceremony at either Canterbury Christ Church University, The University of Greenwich (Medway Campus) or The University of Kent.

Children's University graduation ceremonies are held at real 'grown-up' universities. Children wear real caps and gowns as they step onstage to receive their awards and certificates. It is a great evening out for the children, their families, friends, and teachers.

[You can find out more about Children's University here.](#)

Missing Learning Credits

There will be times when a Learning Destination does not issue the code you need for the Passport to Learning or you leave the Passport at home, not realising a site is a CU Destination. This is not a problem. There are two ways to earn Learning Credits missed out on:

- 1) Email evidence of the experience to kcu@theeducationpeople.org
 - Evidence could be photographs or a receipt.
- 2) Log into your [CU Online account](#) and log the activity there
 - A pop-up video should appear when your child logs in so they can learn how to do this.

Kent Children's University Certificates and Graduation Update

We are working with the University of Greenwich to schedule our Summer 2024 Graduation ceremonies. If your child is a KCU member through a school, your school will send you all the information you need in Term 5. If you are a family member, KCU will email you next term. This information will contain important updates about dates, times, locations, tickets and preparations in advance of the ceremony.,

Graduation season will arrive soon but do you have children that have reached their next Children's University milestone and need a certificate before that date?

If you work in a school and would like certificates before a 2024 Graduation do let us know that your CU Online accounts are up-to-date and we will print and post certificates to you so you can present them in an assembly next term. This will not stop your children receiving invitations to future Graduations as we will simply present them with their highest award at that point.

If you have Family Membership and would like to receive certificates before the next Graduation, do ensure your child's CU Online account is up-to-date as that is where we will look to see which certificates we need to print and post. You can email us to let us know you would like the certificates sent to you. Please ensure you give us a correct postal address, as this might have changed since you joined KCU.

Learner of the Term

As always, it is very hard to pick just one Learner of the Term as we have the thrill of working with many children and families. This term we would like to commend **Elise Price** and her family.

Elise is a member of KCU through her school but participates in many activities both inside and outside school, including visiting tourist destinations and completing at home activities. Elise is in her final year at school and is squeezing in as many CU activities as possible before leaving primary school. We hope that Elise will continue beyond July 2024 so watch this space!

Well done, Elise and family!

To suggest any KCU Learners that you would like recognised please email KCU via kcu@theeducationpeople.org



Resource for Schools and Educators in Kent and Medway

The Making Space for Nature in Kent and Medway (MS4N) team works with partners and stakeholders to collaboratively establish shared priorities for the delivery of nature recovery and environmental improvements, in order to create a network of wildlife-rich places across the county.

The team has produced a learning pack for schools and educators, which has been Validated by KCU. This means that any activities completed by KCU learners will earn them Learning Credits.



The children of this county are not only our next generation of environmental ambassadors, but they also will be the ones to carry on the work of the Local Natural Recovery Strategy far into the future. So the MS4N team wanted to create some materials that appealed to their critical thinking and problem solving skills when thinking about the challenges that biodiversity faces...and that was also fun!

This pack is aimed at 7-8 year olds, but can be adapted to older or younger audiences. The MS4N team would love to see any photos of the work that your children produce from this learning pack – especially the artwork activity! Do share any photographs of you getting involved with this pack direct to makingspacefornature@kent.gov.uk

[You can find out more, and download the resource, here.](#)

Consultation on School Term Dates in Kent



Kent County Council (KCC) is consulting on school term and holiday date patterns for community and voluntary controlled schools for the years 2025 to 2028 and they would like to know people's views on the proposed dates. KCC is responsible for setting term dates for community and voluntary controlled schools, while governing bodies of foundation and voluntary aided schools are responsible for setting their own term dates. Academies (and free schools) have the freedom to change the length of their terms.

In accordance with KCC's usual practice, they are consulting on arrangements for the period covering the academic year 2025/6, 2026/7 and 2027/8. The proposed dates can be viewed in the ['Consultation documents' section](#).

KCC will consult with various groups including all Kent schools, other key stakeholders such as governors (including parent groups), the diocesan bodies, trade unions and our neighbouring authorities. The consultation process will last for 6 weeks and is open to the general public.

Feedback from this consultation will be reported to the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee for their consideration and following their recommendations the Cabinet Member will take the decision to determine the dates for 2025 to 2028.

For more information and to complete the questionnaire, visit: [School Term Dates for 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28 | Let's talk Kent](#)

Please note, the consultation ends on the 30th April 2024.



Learning Destinations

Learning Destinations are places that provide activities that have been Validated by Children's University locally or nationally

Children's University works closely with all kinds of learning providers and activity leaders to offer children the widest variety of opportunities. In order to offer a consistent quality of activities we undertake a quality assurance process to validate these opportunities to confirm they meet certain standards.

New Activities From Existing Learning Destinations

We have new Learning Destinations joining Kent Children's University in Term 5 but many existing Partners across the country have created activities specifically for this season including:

Nucleus Arts is a registered arts charity that operates from Chatham. Nucleus Arts hosts a range of free family friendly, community workshop events throughout the year which are accessible for anyone to attend. Validated activities include:



Families have the opportunity to get involved in everything and anything inspiring in these annual events. For more information, or to book onto any of these sessions please [click here](#).

[You can find out more about Nucleus Arts on the Children's University website.](#)

Animate Arts Company is a national, award-winning arts company working with people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to create high-quality participatory art. They use the arts to engage, empower and inspire. Animate Arts offers Learning Credits for any workshop a KCU learner participates in. This could be a workshop in a school, community venue or at a festival.

As well as this existing offer, your children can earn Learning Credits for taking part in one of their new Jo and the Crafty Cart sessions. [You can find out more here](#). Please note, these sessions are only taking place over the Easter holiday.



[You can find out more about Animate Arts on the Children's University website.](#)

Summer Reading Challenge Update

1 in 4 children cannot read well by the age of 11. This hugely limits their life choices and skills. We are on a mission, with lead partners The Reading Agency, Kent Libraries Registration and Archives and Medway Libraries, to change this.

The Summer Reading Challenge encourages children to keep reading during the school summer holidays, ensuring they are ready for a great start to the new term in the autumn. Children set a reading goal, choose anything they like to read, and collect rewards for their reading. Children can sign up at their [local library](#) or [online](#), and it is free to take part.

Last week The Reading Agency announced the theme for this year's [Summer Reading Challenge](#) as **Marvellous Makers!** Developed in partnership with [Create](#), a leading charity bringing the creative arts to those who need it most, this year's Challenge aims to fire up children's imaginations and unleash storytelling and creativity through the power of reading.

From June to September, children taking part in 'Marvellous Makers' can discover new stories, join in with free activities at the library, and explore their creativity – from junk modelling to music, dance to drawing and painting.

[You can find out more about the Challenge here.](#)



Wheels of Time Update

We are proud to announce that there will be 57 [Wheels of Time](#) museum and heritage sites operating from April 2024. Bob Shrubb and the small, but mighty, Wheels of Time team have issued 40,000 copies of the Wheels of Time leaflet to participating sites. These leaflets contain updated maps, so your family can plan their adventures across the country this year.

New venues include:

- [Ashford International Model Railway Education Centre](#)
- [Battle of Britain Memorial - Remembering the Few](#)
- [Faversham Charters and Magna Carta](#)
- [Sandwich Medieval Centre](#)

We will be making contact with the sites listed above to see if they would like to join Kent Children's University. [For now, you can find the full list of museum and heritage sites here.](#) For sites that are also Learning Destinations, your child will earn 2 Learning Credits for the visit.

If your child completes a [Visit Log](#) from any of the other sites, they will receive 1 Learning Credit so there is potential to earn 57 to 77 Credits this year!

Email any completed Visit Logs to KCU via kcu@theeducationpeople.org to receive the Learning Credits.





Spotlight on... Diggerland



Where children can ride, drive & operate real diggers

All [Diggerland](#) sites in England are Learning Destinations for Children's University. Fun for all ages (subject to height restrictions), Diggerland with its 20 different rides and drives and an array of additional activities is the ideal theme park for small to large groups looking for something exciting and truly unique.

Get to grips with real JCBs and Komatsu excavators! Take a head-reeling turn or two on Spindizzy... Rise to lofty heights and enjoy the views on the Skyshuttle. Enjoy an off-road ride on the Groundshuttle or have a go on the Dodgems and Go-Karts!

There are indoor and outdoor play areas, coin operated rides and much more! So the younger visitors can let off steam while their parents can just sit back, relax and watch the fun... or join in! All parks boast a Diggerland Goodie Store where visitors can mark their day with a memorable souvenir as well as buy gifts, toys and other merchandise. There are also cafeterias at each park that offer a wide selection of hot and cold snacks, meals and beverages.

The Diggerland parks have lots to offer for all the family. Parks are aimed at children between 4 and 14 years of age, however we have many visitors of all ages enjoying a great day out! [View their ride height chart here.](#)



On top of all this excitement, Diggerland has joined forces with JCB Kids and Britains Farm Toys to elevate the experience for young adventurers visiting any Diggerland park between Friday 29th March 2024 and Sunday 14th April 2024. What a fun trip to take!

Upon arrival, children can immerse themselves in a world of excitement by grabbing a specially crafted activity sheet filled with engaging challenges and entertaining tasks. As you navigate the park,

completing the activities, participants not only stand the chance to win coveted prizes such as Diggerland Tickets and Britains Farm Toys construction models but are also guaranteed to be winners with an exclusive JCB Logo Bug souvenir awaiting every participant.

Don't forget to take your Passport to Learning along to receive Learning Credits too! Don't worry if someone isn't able to add the 2 hour stamp code, simply email kcu@theeducationpeople.org with evidence of participation and the code will be sent to you!

Diggerland has four strategically placed locations throughout the UK, ensuring you are only ever a stone's throw away from visiting one of their theme parks:

- Diggerland Kent – Medway Valley Leisure Park, Roman Way, Strood, Kent, ME2 2NU
- Diggerland Devon – Verbeer Manor, Cullompton, Devon, EX15 2PE
- Diggerland Durham – Langley Park, County Durham, DH7 9TT
- Diggerland Yorkshire – Willowbridge Lane, Castleford, West Yorkshire, WF10 5NW

[You can find Children's University-related information here.](#)

Kent Big Weekend Ballot

Now in its 18th year running, the [Kent Big Weekend 2024](#) will take place on the 20th-21st April, offering Kent residents the chance to win free tickets and days out to attractions across the county.

The Big Weekend is all about giving residents in Kent the chance to discover – or rediscover – the array of fantastic things to see and do on their doorstep. There are many Learning Destinations featured in the Ballot. They include:



Ashford Borough Museum

Housed in a 17th century Grade, II listed building, the museum is located in the Church Yard, at the Heart of Ashford's Town Centre, and

3 Prizes



Battle of Britain Memorial

The Battle of Britain Memorial tells the story of the heroes of the Battle of Britain, the men of the RAF who kept the Luftwaffe at bay in 1940

50 Prizes



Canterbury Roman Museum

Canterbury Roman Museum – a fascinating and family-friendly insight into life in Roman Britain. Explore the Roman town beneath your feet

20 Prizes



Criterion Blue Town

The Criterion is one of very few authentic Music Halls in the country and it has grown in popularity by word of mouth. The Music Hall

50 Prizes



Diggerland Kent

Visit Diggerland, located in Strood, Kent this coming Big Weekend! Experience a family day out like no other as you ride on, drive and operate

20 Prizes



Dover Castle

Rising above the famous White Cliffs high above the Channel, Dover Castle is an icon of England. Explore the Secret Wartime Tunnels, experience

175 Prizes



Eagle Heights Wildlife Foundation

A 'hidden gem' in an area of outstanding beauty, Eagle Heights Wildlife Foundation is a unique and diverse Centre with Birds of Prey, Alpaca, Farm

300 Prizes



Fort Amherst

Fort Amherst is Britain's biggest and best preserved Napoleonic fort, offering daily tunnel tours.

10 Prizes



Hever Castle & Gardens

Experience over 600 years of history at the romantic double-moated castle once the childhood home of Anne Boleyn.

100 Prizes



Leeds Castle

Rising majestically from the still waters of its moat, surrounded by 500 acres of parkland and gardens, Leeds Castle is without a doubt one of the

200 Prizes

[You can find all participating attractions here.](#)

The Big Weekend Ballot is only open until the 1st April so now is the time to apply. You can apply for as many tickets as you like, and the winners will be selected at random.

What are the rules for applying for tickets?

This year the ballot is available to people living in Kent. This includes, but is not limited to, postcodes starting with CT, ME, TN, BR, DA and RH. You must be over the age of 18 to apply for tickets.

How to Recommend New Learning Destinations

If you ever visit somewhere in Kent or Medway that is not a Learning Destination there are four ways for them to potentially join Children's University:

- 1) [You could give the organisation/tourist destination this information about KCU.](#)
- 2) [Your child could complete and send us a Recommendation Form.](#) This will also earn your child 0.5 Learning Credits per recommendation.
- 3) [You could complete this Microsoft Form.](#)
- 4) You could encourage the organisation/tourist destination to sign-up directly [here.](#)

We will try to make contact with the organisations you recommend. Please note, recommending a tourist destination or organisation does not mean that they will automatically want to join KCU and Validate their provision with us but it might mean that they consider it.



At-Home Activities

Children's University offers a wide range of free and low cost activities which can be completed at any time in the home

You can find a wide range of activities for children, young people and families to participate in at home via the [Kent Children's University](#) and [National Children's University Trust](#) websites. The activities cover a variety of themes and subjects, as well as skills, and are the perfect way to engage children in learning when at home.

Each term we will share new activities for children and families to enjoy together. Please note that some activities are only available for a fixed period of time but the majority are available all-year round.

Spring #KCUCChallenge Update

Our Spring KCU Challenge launches on the 28th March 2024 and runs until early June so there is plenty of time to get involved.



Each year we produce seasonal challenges for schools and families. Our Spring #KCUCChallenge consists of 24 activities ranging in topic and complexity.

The aim is to encourage parents/carers to take part in free or low-cost opportunities with their children during the spring/Easter holiday. Young people, who are part of Children's University, can earn a varying number of Learning Credits for each activity completed outside normal school time.

Over the coming weeks Kent Children's University will publish information and idea sheets on their [Facebook page](#) to inspire families to complete as many of the challenge activities as possible!

Families can find out more about the challenges (as well as extra support materials) via the [Kent Children's University website](#) or by visiting our [Facebook page](#).

You do not need to print any of these materials if you do not have access to a printer. You can write or type the checklist separately if necessary. Should you wish to print the items, do consider using black and white. You could also go to your local library to print selected pages.

Submitting evidence

- Evidence could be photographs, videos, Social Action journals, Learning Logs, Word documents, Powerpoint presentations etc. Keep an eye out for more information on our Social Media Channels.
- Once the Challenge ends, on 7th June, please return any evidence to Kent Children's University by email (preferred) via kcu@theeducationpeople.org or post to Kent Children's University, Bewl Water Outdoor Centre, Bewlbridge Lane, Lamberhurst, Kent, TN3 8JH.
- Please only send evidence upon completion of **all** the activities you wish to submit. You could make a Powerpoint, Word file or some other collated document to evidence the completed activities. **Please make sure you also submit the Record Sheet with the evidence too.**
- Original evidence will be posted back to you along with the Learning Credits and online codes (such as red1234) to add to the child's Passport to Learning under the STAMP OF APPROVAL box.
- We would love to see what you have completed with your children so do upload any evidence to our Social Media accounts (please do not show your children in any identifiable way in the photographs)!



Events and Opportunities

Many of our Learning Destinations and Partners provide and offer additional events and opportunities, where children can earn Credits

As well as activities at home or out and about at one of the Learning Destinations around the country, many providers offer additional opportunities for children to earn Children's University Learning Credits. Here is a small sample of upcoming events.

Chemistry Workshop - My Best Friend the Earth at the University of Greenwich

This is a fantastic opportunity for children (7 - 11 years old) to inspire them and develop their passion for the fascinating world of chemistry! Our partner, the University of Greenwich, will be running 10 sessions in one of their science labs to introduce sustainability in science through highly accessible interactive experiments to the targeted ages such as making plastic from milk & string from algae, ghost bubbles and many more.

These sessions are part of a Royal Society of Chemistry Outreach project and are for children and schools in Polar 4 quintile 1 areas. To check your eligibility using your postcode please visit [Office for Students](#)

Events will be running at the University of Greenwich, Medway Campus every Friday between 19th April to 28th June from 10am until 1 pm. Places are limited to 40 people per session.

Most of these sessions take place during term time but could be booked by schools wishing to take classes to the University. [There is an event running on the 31st May, which is during half-term, so families can book for that here.](#)

These events are sponsored by the [Royal Society of Chemistry](#).



UNIVERSITY OF
GREENWICH



ROYAL SOCIETY
OF CHEMISTRY

Activities at Kent and Medway libraries

Clubs and activities held at local libraries provide young people with a chance to develop their self confidence and gain valuable skills in a fun and relaxing environment. The sessions detailed below are free to join and all materials and equipment needed will be provided. Learning Credits can be collected from the libraries for each activity attended or by emailing KCU via kcu@theeducationpeople.org with evidence of participation.

- [Details of activities in Kent Libraries can be found here](#), as well as on their [Facebook Page](#)
- [Details of activities in Medway Libraries can be found here.](#)

Easter Fun with Kent Country Parks

[Kent Country Park sites](#) are Learning Destinations so children can earn Learning Credits for participating in activities on their sites. You can keep up-to-date with all the available opportunities [here](#). You can also find out more about events at Country Parks by joining this [Facebook Group](#).

If you are unable to receive a Learning Credit code on site, do email evidence from the completed activity, such as photographs or a copy of the booking confirmation, to kcu@theeducationpeople.org and we will issue the code you need. .



Competitions

Keep an eye out for competitions that could earn your children Learning Credits. There are lots of marvellous prizes to be won

Many of our Learning Partners offer competitions to all children, young people and their families. They are usually open to all, not just Children's University members but should your child have a Passport to Learning, it is worth checking whether the entry is eligible for a code. Here are two current competitions which do offer Learning Credits. Don't forget to check the closing date for each competition as these will vary.

LEGO® competition (Closing Date: 31st March)

Our Learning Destination, [Bluewater](#), has a competition where the winner will win over £300s of LEGO® bricks. What a prize!

As the Validated activity is the Nature Trail why not take part in that, earn the Credits then enter the competition that way.

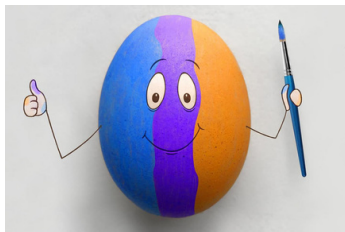
Showcase your building skills and create your own Bluewater memory using LEGO® bricks to be in with a chance of winning! Whether it's the Nature Trail, the shops, the Winter Garden or something that's special to you, if you build 'Your Bluewater' memory and share your masterpiece with us on Facebook using [#MyLEGOSToreBluewater](#) and tagging us Bluewater, you will be making memories together! You can build your creation at home using any combination of LEGO® bricks.



Competition closes end of play on Sunday 31st March 2024.

[For the full Terms and Conditions, please visit the Bluewater website.](#)

ootiboo's Easteroo Competition (Closing date: 14th April 2024)



ootiboo
Inspire Curiosity & Creativity

As part of our exciting collaboration with [ootiboo](#), we are delighted to announce their latest competition... [#Easteroo](#) 2024! Easteroo is ootiboo's annual spring creative craft competition for all ages, at home or at school, in the UK or beyond. There are two themes to choose from, Eggs and Spring. You can draw, make, bake, build or paint your creation, and you can work alone or as a group. What unusual idea can you come up with? A Kent Children's University Mum won a prize last year so will there be a winner from Kent/Medway this year?

ootiboo has lots of great prizes to give away, including craft bundles from [The Works](#), book bundles from [Farshore Books](#), a sensory dough kit from [Curiosity Corner Sensory Dough](#), a set of crayons and chalks from [The Natural Crayon Company](#) and a family prize of nut- safe chocolate eggs from [Kinnerton Confectionery](#)!

Easteroo closes at midnight on the 14th April so there is plenty of time to get involved. To enter, simply go to [ootiboo.com](#) and select this project.

ootiboo will issue your child's Learning Credits. To receive your stamp code, you will need to submit your entries direct to the ootiboo All Star page here. Just let ootiboo know that you are part of Children's University in the "How did you hear about the project?" box, and ootiboo will email your child's stamp code for taking part once they have processed the entry and added it to the Gallery.



THE EDUCATION
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