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## **SEARCH IS ON FOR SHEPPEY GREETERS TO WELCOME VISITORS**

Sheppey people who really value their island are being invited to join the growing band of Kent Greeters – local volunteers prepared to meet visitors to the county and talk about the sights and services they can enjoy during their short break or holiday in the area.

Visit Kent and Swale Borough Council are holding a free information event for local residents interested in signing up as a Greeter at Sheppey Little Theatre, Meyrick Road, Sheerness, on Thursday, May 12.

There will be an introduction to the volunteer network by Kent Greeter chairman Peter Shaw and the opportunity to experience a “greet” before a “question and answer” session and a light lunch.

Kerstin Andrews, of Visit Kent, the county’s tourism champions, is organising the Kent Greeters’ event for Sheppey.

She said: “We launched our first Greeter project in Thanet four years ago, based on the New York Big Apple Greeter programme, and it was the first of its kind in Europe.

“We are now recruiting Greeters right across Kent to welcome visitors to our county. Visitors planning a trip to Kent can book a meeting with a local volunteer Greeter who shares their interests and can offer advice on what is available in their area.

“Visitors may want to find out about suitable places to go with young children and activities they will enjoy, or they may want to discover more about local history, art, cycling, walking or shopping.

“Our aim is always to match the interests of the visitor with the interests of the Greeter so that they will have plenty to talk about. The more volunteers we have covering a wide range of ages and interests, the easier it will be to make the right matches.

“Kent is expecting lots of visitors in the run-up to the 2012 Games and beyond. We want to ensure that our guests enjoy a great welcome which will encourage them to return to the county and recommend Kent to all their friends and family as a superb destination.”

Kent Greeters are active members of the Global Greeter Network and have helped set up Greeter projects in London and Brighton as well as in France and Belgium.

The Kent Greeter event for Sheppey at Sheppey Little Theatre on Thursday, May 12, will start at 10.45 am. To book a place, call Visit Kent on 01622 696935. To find out more about volunteering as a Kent Greeter visit [www.kentgreeters.co.uk](http://www.kentgreeters.co.uk).