

## **Chair's Remarks, May 2018**

I'm pleased to report the recent activities and successes of the Friends of Rose Hill Station and to let you know about our exciting plans for the future.

Some of this will be familiar to you if you have been following us on Twitter and Facebook and keeping up with our website - I do hope you enjoy doing this.

### **Activities over the Past 12 months**

Tasks completed:

- New art work in the waiting room by pupils of Rose Hill Primary School, theme: 'How I would like to travel to school' (no trains in evidence but a few magic carpets!)
- Successful charity coffee morning, raising over £300 for Marie Curie - and what a good venue the platform makes, with chairs, tables and a gazebo
- Additional planting barrels on the platform
- Roll up banners designed and produced to publicise the station and our activities
- Photograph competition, jointly with the Friends of Marple Station - see prints of the winning pictures in the waiting room
- Poetry station maintained in the noticeboard near the waiting room. Thank you if you have contributed and all of you are encouraged to have a go.
- Another very popular arrival for Santa, by train and then into his Grotto - numbers were a little down this year, possibly related to the cold, wet weather on the day
- Our twice yearly passenger count - this snapshot of the number of passengers using our station provides solid evidence for our campaign to improve the train service
- We have now completed a slide show and talk which is available for presentation to local groups - please let us know if you would like a couple of us to come along to speak at one of your meetings
- Submissions made to consultations by our local community rail partnership, the Greater Manchester transport plan and the Department for Transport.

### **Successes and Achievements**

- Increased passenger footfall - the count in November 2017 showed the highest ever numbers in the current era and the numbers travelling into Manchester. The count in May 2018 showed the numbers travelling into Manchester maintained with a fall back to the 2016 level of arrivals to Rose Hill. Important to note there were train diversions and a cancellation on the count day
- Another award from the Cheshire Best Kept Stations team - the 'Station in Bloom' award. This means we have achieved an award in every one of the past 7 years.
- Increased community involvement with the station - this is an important way to increase awareness of the railway and to build the passenger base for the future as well as providing a resource for local events
- Funds raised to support our mural project (see below), £10,000 from the Big Lottery Fund and additional funding from within the railway industry
- Hot off the press - ADDITIONAL TRAINS - in the early evening from May 2018

## **Urgent Issue - Now Resolved**

We discovered, belatedly, just as the timetable for May 2018 was finalised, that a peak time gap of one hour had appeared in the Monday to Friday evening service. We are very pleased that our prompt action to challenge this quickly gathered support from passengers, with 472 people signing the on-line petition we organised. We are very grateful to those people within Northern and Network Rail who worked hard to address the problem. The 'missing' train is now restored and the regular half hourly peak time service from Piccadilly to Rose Hill is now largely in place through until the December 2018 timetable. During the leaf clearing season, there will be some changes to the timing of the 17.34 departure; this should occur on a few days only.

## **Current Projects**

- An ambitious inter-generational community art project, led by local artist, Tracy McGuinness-Kelly, to produce a mural to be placed on the concrete wall to the rear of the station carpark. This is to involve groups from across our community. The schools have already begun to prepare their contributions. The themes include the history and environment of our area and of our railway and rail safety. Anyone can contribute. Events have started to provide information, guidance and encouragement.
- The South East Manchester community rail partnership (SEMCRP) is sponsoring art for display at stations along the line, focussing on local attractions and a local artist has begun to produce work for our station. (By the way, SEMCRP is trying to think of a catchier title for itself - do YOU have a good suggestion?)
- As ever, our work to maintain, extend and improve the gardens and planting at the station continues. We are constantly heartened by feedback about how the appearance of the station brightens your day.
- Our ongoing efforts to support wild life at the station, with the provision of several bird boxes and a home for bees, were rewarded last year with nuthatches and tits raising broods in at least two of the boxes. We will be looking out for their return this year.
- The Book Swap in the waiting room shows ongoing rapid turnover. Particular thanks to Margaret for maintaining and managing this.

## **Focus of our Campaigning**

- Most of all, we want a full evening and weekend service to Rose Hill. We take every opportunity to emphasise the need for a service throughout the evening and on Sundays. We are the ONLY rail line into central Manchester without a Sunday service. Not only should people have a service to travel to, and home from, the centre for evening and Sunday entertainments, we know that working shifts are no longer confined to day time, Mondays to Fridays. In addition, Marple and the Middlewood Way provide wonderful walking, cycling and other leisure opportunities and the railway should be available to bring people in to our area to enjoy them.
- We are in ongoing discussion with Network Rail about how the unused platform area can be improved, to provide a better outlook for passengers waiting at the station. We are told there is agreement in principle for this and remain hopeful of seeing some action.

## **Our railway industry and community partners**

We are grateful for the support - advisory and financing of projects - from across the railway industry. As a Friends group, we are part of the 'Community Rail' focus by which

the rail industry seeks to increase awareness and use of the railway within local communities and to maximise the use of station facilities for the benefit of the community.

We receive support from Northern, Network Rail, SEMCRP, Transport for Greater Manchester, the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP), Rail Futures and even Cross Country trains (because our line runs to a mainline station where they operate)

We liaise with the 'Getting Around' group within the development of Marple Neighbourhood Plan and the Goyt Valley rail Users Group (GVRUA)

We already engage in joint projects and activities with the Friends of Marple Station and both organisations now include working together in our planning. We can help each other out with additional people power when necessary, e.g. for the passenger counts and we can campaign together for improved rail services for Marple.

This year, we are particularly grateful to the Marple and Romiley Lions who have supplied us with two new planters for the platform.

## **The Future**

**Rose Hill 150** - Planning has started for our celebration of the 150th anniversary next year of the opening of Rose Hill Station. As well as events around the station, we are working with groups along the Macclesfield, Bollington and Marple (Rose Hill) line to recall the line in its hey-day.

The actual anniversary is 2nd August 2019 when we will hold an event at the station but, as this falls well and truly in the holiday season, there will be events along the Middlewood Way earlier in the summer as well.

Look out for publicity in due course.

**Timetable** - We will continue to campaign for a full evening and weekend service to Rose Hill. This includes lobbying and responding to consultations during the timetabling planning stages.

**Membership** - Membership of FORHS is free. New members are always welcome, with whatever skills and ideas you can bring, whether it be gardening, IT, campaigning or any other. Be assured that we also value it when people who do not have time for an active role join, as this enables us to communicate with you easily and demonstrates interest in our station.

Whether or not you choose to join, do please follow us on Facebook and Twitter. And you can always email us with comments or queries: [forhs142@gmail.com](mailto:forhs142@gmail.com)

**Working groups** - We usually work at the station the first Sunday morning of the month, from 10.00am, so do drop in to have a look at us, if you can. But please check our notice board or website for dates, as sometimes these change.

Best wishes and happy travelling to you all.

Rachel Singer  
Chair, the Friend of Rose Hill Station, May 2018