

FORHS AGM 4th May 2023 - Chair's report

Once again, I can report the energetic work of the group in caring for the station planting, the waiting room and book swap (which is as well used as ever with a constant turnaround of volumes on the shelves) and in planning and developing new projects. And, once again, there is another award in which we can take pride.

We continue to be disappointed that there are gaps in the daily rail timetable but are pleased to note the gradual addition of a small number of 'missing' trains.

Highlights

We have put in place a Welcome to Rose Hill sign on the roundabout outside the car park entrance making the station more visible from Railway Road. Once again, we have the Airport Community Fund to thank for funding this. Thanks also to one of our volunteers for the donation of two planters alongside the sign.

We commissioned Woodbank Park nursery to provide our hanging baskets and they again provided a magnificent display. They work with a mental health charity and we are happy to support them.

We were pleased to bring Santa to the station again in December, with many thanks to Mark Bailey who stepped into the role for the first time for us. (Mike is an experienced 'Santa' in other venues). Thanks also to all our volunteers who work so hard to make this event a success. The afternoon was as popular as ever and was, once again, held entirely outdoors, with the grotto in a gazebo. This will now be our regular arrangement in agreement with Northern that crowding on the platform must be avoided in future for safety reasons.

In March, we attended the Cheshire Best Kept Stations (CBKS) Awards Evening and were delighted to receive the Community Rail Network award for community engagement. The citation referred to the Santa event and to the Rose Hill Primary School trip (reception classes) which we helped the school to arrange in May, with Northern's support. The totem is now displayed at the station where we have outgrown the space on the side wall of the station building and have extended under the canopy as well. As ever, we are very grateful to the CBKS team for their ongoing support and encouragement.

ISS, very helpfully, now provide regular mowing of the grassed areas around the station.

Some of the FoRHS Committee members took on the role of judges for a series of Tabletop Competitions held by the Rose Hill Allotment holders - fruit, vegetables and flowers. This collaboration was enjoyable and will be followed up this summer with joint work to present the station gardens during the Marple Open Gardens weekend this summer - 8th/9th July in aid of Cancer charities.

The new website, suitable for mobile phone use as well as a new look, is being well used, judging from the number of 'hits' it receives. The latest versions of the 4 Walks pdf's have been updated and visually improved.

Looking to the Future

We continue to take part in meetings and events organised by Northern, TfGM, Community Rail, Network Rail and the Goyt Valley Rail Users Association (GVRUA). We have been pleased to continue work with John Kenny and Sarah Morgan who now share the South East Manchester Community Rail Network role.

Discussions are ongoing regarding the TfGM initiative to pursue the question with Network Rail of how to improve access to the Middlewood Way directly from the platform.

We continued with our twice yearly passenger counts in June (the first since the pandemic) and November (the second since the pandemic) based on 18 trains running in each direction. This demonstrated a gradual return to what seems to be the new normal footfall. The December 2022 timetable, based on Northern's new schedule pattern of 20/21 trains, has resulted in the morning arrival train, used by Marple Hall school students, being moved to a later time, making it a very tight window for students to arrive at school punctually. A passenger count has just been completed to evaluate the overall effects of this new timetable on our line. We hope this has not resulted in fewer students using the train - a poor outcome for Northern's passenger footfall and for the environment. In addition, the first off-peak train departure from Rose Hill is now not until 10.11am and it is likely that some people take the earlier off-peak train from Marple. The new timetable will commence on May 21st 2023 but does not contain any adjustments to these timings.

More positively, we understand that work for the provision of a public lavatory and a baby changing area will go ahead, perhaps sometime in the next 6 - 12 months.

We still hope to contribute to a booklet of short walks from the station, in collaboration with Friends of Marple Station, aimed specifically at those who do not wish to go too far.

We have also been liaising with the Friends of Marple and of Romiley stations on the production of an information board about the Stockport Hydro, a landmark local to each of the three stations. The board will describe the Hydro and show walking routes from each of the stations. The South East Manchester Community Rail Network is supporting the production of the boards for which we are very grateful.

Already mentioned above and highlighted again here: **the station gardens will take part in the Marple Open Gardens weekend, 8th/9th July 2023 in aid of Cancer charities.** We will be putting in extra hours and effort to show our planting areas at their best and to provide explanation of our plant choices and general gardening approach.

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**
Also, find us at www.forhs.org.uk

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. We expect to have additional midweek gardening sessions throughout the summer.

Rachel Singer Chair, the Friends of Rose Hill Station, May 2023