

# ECCLES STATION NEWS

FEBRUARY 2016

Here we are into 2016 and this FEB issue is the first following the festive season. Of course this is the season of the **'TRAVEL CHAOS ON RAILWAYS'** headings in our national press, as essential planned maintenance (i.e. NOT chaos) takes place when fewest people are relying on the railways to travel to work on a daily basis. Which option is preferable: five or ten return trips to work affected or one return journey to say Edinburgh to see Auntie Flo?

It was also a time of **'FLOOD DEFENCE FAILURE'** headings spilling over the sanity barriers. Can you imagine the expense and the heights of flood defences needed to protect against three months' rain falling in one week? There was only one true failure and that was with the gates on the River Foss as it runs into York. This probably made the flooding worse in the centre of the city but floods are a regular occurrence in the centre of York. (It was interesting to see the River Ouse up to the spandrels of the railway and road bridges!)

The railways elsewhere were affected by a number of land-slips. As the ground becomes saturated the pressure of the water can become sufficient to push soil or clay particles away from each other at the bottom of slopes. The rest of the slope then slides down, riding on this runny material. Many were repaired rapidly by Network Rail, but some will take rather longer to repair. Trains are running on the Settle and Carlisle line but a northern section of it is working single line only at the moment. See:

<http://www.northernrail.org/news/7854> . The landslip at Prudhoe between Carlisle and Newcastle will take a few weeks to repair before trains can run again. See: <http://www.northernrail.org/news/7842>

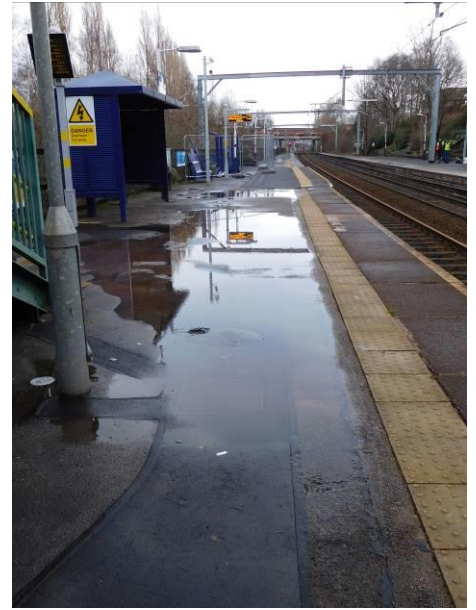
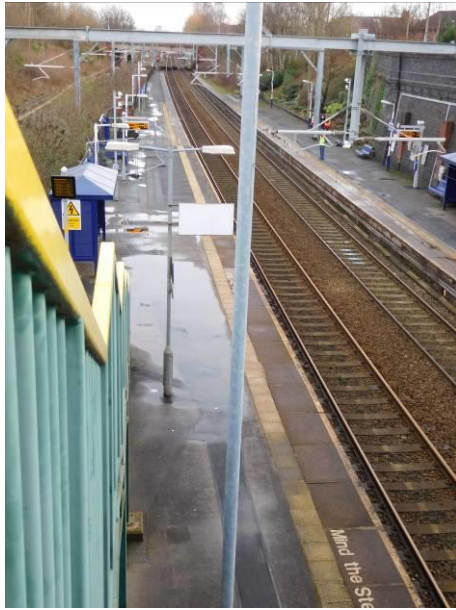
There is long term damage also north of Carlisle to the West Coast main line. This is at Lamington viaduct which will be closed for repairs until March. See below:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-35401921>

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=lamington+viaduct&qpv=lamington+viaduct&qpv=lamington+viaduct&FORM=IGRE>

This leaves only the Glasgow and South Western rail route from Carlisle to Glasgow (via Dumfries and Kilmarnock).

The wet weather brings the state of the Manchester platform at Eccles station to ESN's attention once again. Minor in comparison to the above but we have our very own flooding which makes commuting to work in the mornings an even less pleasant experience:



Surely this will be due for some attention soon?



## NEWS

Work has been completed on the new Farnworth (Clammerclough) tunnel and trains are running through at normal speeds this week. See <http://www.networkrailmediacentre.co.uk/news/full-speed-ahead-through-the-upgraded-farnworth-tunnel> for more details and photos.



**Northern Rail** achieved recently its **best ever National Rail Passenger Survey results** with 84% customer satisfaction. This follows winning the North of England Excellence Award for Customer Service last year, and is now capped by an announcement last week that it had achieved the Putting the Customer First accreditation. Northern Rail is only the third train operating company in the country to attain the accreditation; Merseyrail (also a Serco and Abellio operated company) was the first.

At an event held at Manchester Victoria station on Friday, Northern Rail was presented with a commemorative plaque by **Ted Stone, CEO of Customer First UK Ltd.**, who commented: “Northern Rail understands that the very best customer service starts from excellent internal processes. This recognition is testament to the hard work and determination of each and every member of the team; working to provide the very best experience for their customers.”

A reminder to older readers that the **club55 tickets are still available:**

Arriva Trains Wales Club 55 offer of bargain fares. See <http://www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/Club55/Buy/>

For First Transpennine Club 55see <http://www.tpexpress.co.uk/train-destinations/attractions-offers/club-55/>



*An old platform shelter at Eccles in the process of being dismantled.*

*There have been more improvements for passengers at Eccles in the form of **new additional shelters on the platforms**. They have a clean modern appearance.*



*The new shelters are more enclosed and there is perch seating of the misericord type.*



*They are lit by LED lighting, and although more enclosed than the older shelters approaching trains and information boards can be seen through the perforated screens, all of which is very welcome. A bench type seat has been transferred to one of the older shelters.*



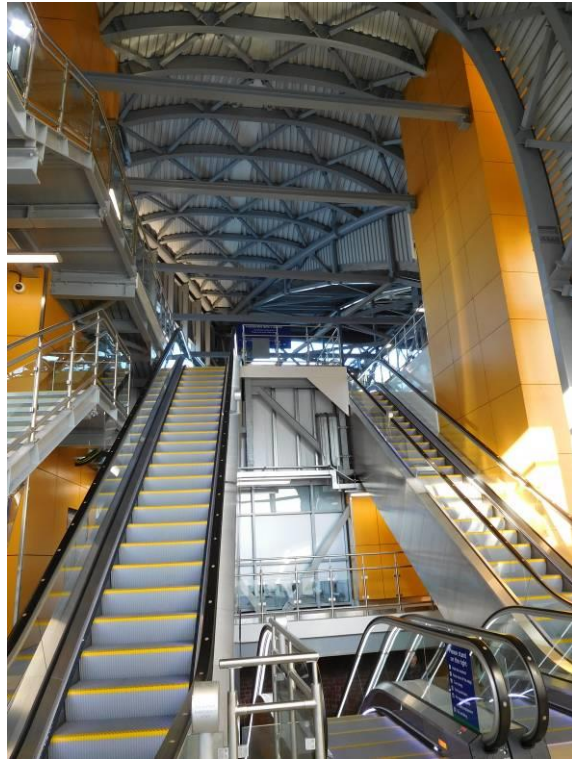
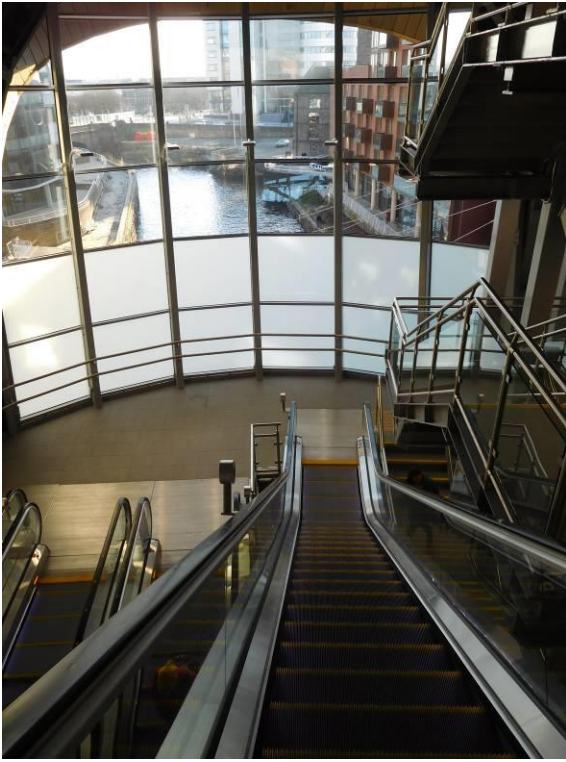


## **OUT AND ABOUT...**

In January ESN took a trip to Leeds to see some new railway architecture.



The new and impressive south entrance opened a few days before and is constructed on two concrete piers in the bed of the River Aire. The interior is impressive and filled with natural light.



It leads out to a side of Leeds that was once in need of much regeneration, and would have been unknown to most visitors to the station: now it teems with new buildings, flats and businesses by the side of the canal. This could almost be the Netherlands.



By this open area, restaurants and bars have filled a number of the railway arches including one run by Ossett Brewery.





A new footbridge from here takes pedestrians across the Aire thereby avoiding road under bridge route which was noisy and polluted. The footbridge is on the picture below:



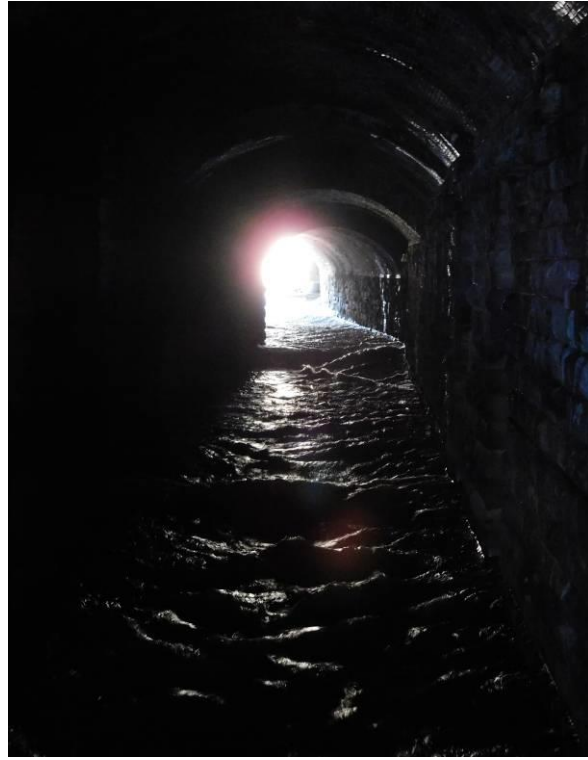
This is not all though. For those of a subterranean inclination the area underneath the station must be explored: the Victorians seemed to love creating these vaulted labyrinths. **It's very noisy down here and a bit alarming!**



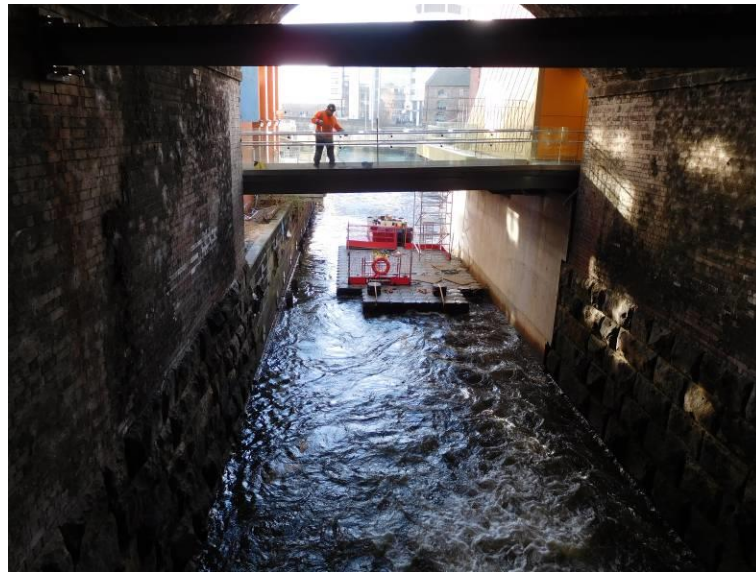
The vaults have been strengthened with additional steel work, lighting added, and a pedestrian bridge created a bit higher than the former bridge for road goods traffic.



The reason it is higher is so that it does not get flooded in the same way as the road does! The noise is the River Aire (one of Yorkshire's big rivers) flowing under the station – something not visible to the train travellers passing through above.



Detailed work was still being carried out on the day of this visit, and an essential part of the safety is to make provision in case anyone should fall into the torrent!



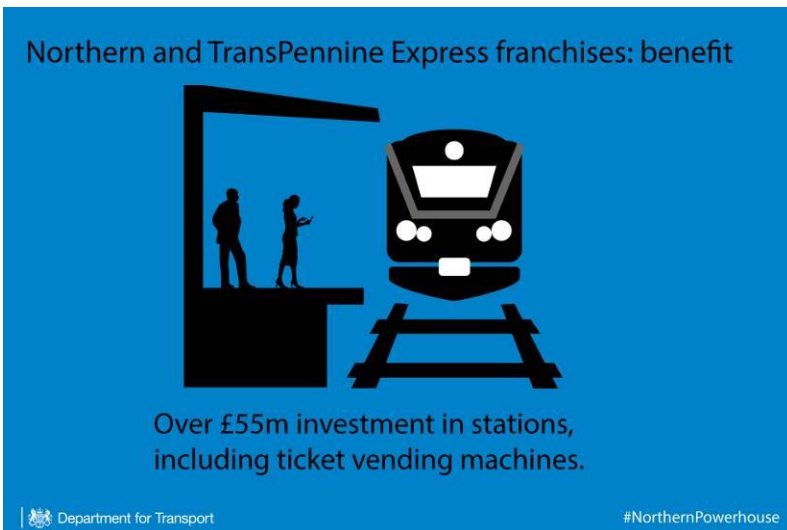
**...By TRAIN from ECCLES STATION.**

## ARTICLES

# ***New Franchise - Better Rail Services.***

On the 9 December 2015 the government announced it intends to award the Northern franchise to Arriva Rail North Limited for a period of nine years, and the Trans Pennine Express franchise to First Trans Pennine Express Limited for a period of seven years. The franchises will be jointly managed from Leeds by the Department for Transport, and Rail North Limited - which represents 29 local authorities across the north. It is anticipated that these operators will oversee a £1.2 billion boost to rail services with 500 brand-new modern carriages, the removal of the outdated and unpopular Pacer trains by 2019, room for 40,000 more passengers, more than 2,000 extra services a week, more space into Manchester and Liverpool at peak times, newer trains for Bolton and new services into Scotland.

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin said: “In 2004, the last time these contracts were awarded, the government did not plan for growth – today we’ve put that right. Arriva Rail North Limited and First Trans Pennine Express Limited went far beyond our requirements with exciting, ambitious plans that will make a real difference to customers, and – coupled with our commitment to push ahead with electrifying the vital TransPennine route – will help the region realise its full economic potential, ensuring it has a modern 21st century transport system. This is fantastic news for the north-west.”



*The graphics in this article are from the Department of Transport website.*

## Northern franchise: benefit



37% extra am peak capacity on Northern franchise into Newcastle, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds by 2019.

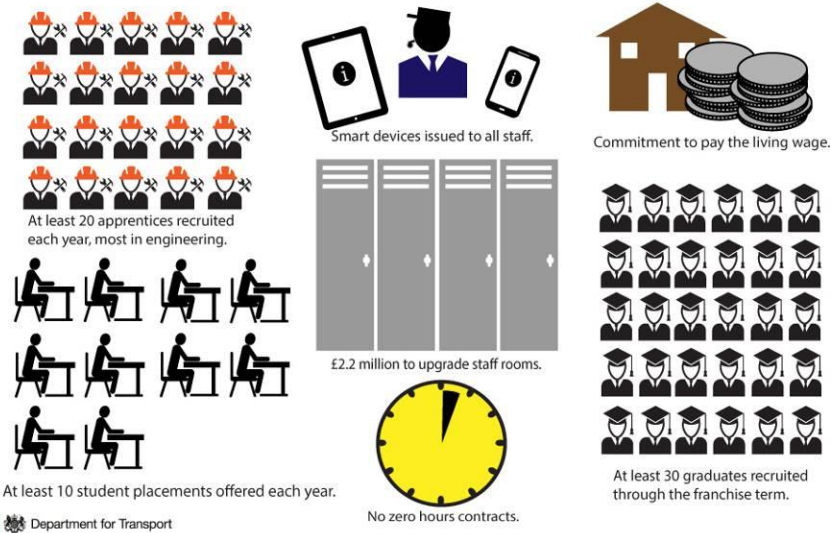
 Department for Transport

#NorthernPowerhouse

### Specific improvements on the Northern network include:

- longer trains and more frequent services providing space for nearly 13,000 more passengers – around 26% more capacity – into Manchester and Liverpool during the morning rush hour; plus longer, newer trains serving Bolton
- a new high-quality ‘Northern Connect’ service, meaning new or refurbished trains on longer-distance services, faster journeys and stations staffed daily with catering services and free Wi-Fi at each one – as well as serving Liverpool and Manchester, this network will also serve other destinations including Blackpool North, Lancaster, Barrow, Chester, Windermere, Huyton, Carlisle and Warrington
- brand new electric trains on services from Manchester to Preston and Blackpool once electrification is complete
- new late evening services on the Todmorden Curve from Manchester Victoria to Blackburn via Burnley and Accrington
- more services into Manchester from Liverpool, Wigan, Blackburn, Chester, Hazel Grove and Macclesfield; into Manchester Airport from central Manchester, Liverpool and Warrington Central; and a new direct service from Chester to Leeds
- more services and space on the Cumbrian Coast line, with timetable improvements to benefit workers at Sellafield and Whitehaven
- improved ticketing, including mobile and print-at-home tickets, and discounted fares for jobseekers

Northern franchise benefits: jobs, skills and apprenticeships



First Trans Pennine Express Limited will operate services on the TransPennine Express franchise – which runs intercity services across the region and into Scotland – from April 2016 until March 2023. They will bring in 220 new carriages, equivalent to 44 trains, providing fast 125 mph services across the network, as well as introducing in the north-west:

- nearly 4,000 more seats on Liverpool and Manchester services – an overall increase of 59% - during the morning peak
- a new, direct Liverpool to Glasgow service from December 2018 with new electric trains and additional services from Manchester to Glasgow and Edinburgh from December 2017
- more trains from Manchester to Hull, Middlesbrough and Liverpool, with faster, more regular services from Liverpool to Manchester and Leeds, plus a new direct link from Manchester Airport to Newcastle
- discounted advance fares for 16- to 18-year-olds and jobseekers

## TransPennine Express franchise: benefit



 1,000 seats

9,000 extra seats into Newcastle, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds by 2019.

 Department for Transport

#NorthernPowerhouse

## Northern and TransPennine Express franchises: benefit



Free Wi-Fi, entertainment and information direct to your smart device.

 Department for Transport

#NorthernPowerhouse

## TransPennine Express franchise benefits: jobs, skills and apprenticeships



Career development programme for customer service and conductor staff.



Smart devices issued to all staff.



Commitment to pay the living wage.



No zero hours contracts.

### Traineeships

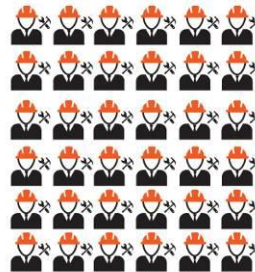
At least 20 places on Prince's Trust 'Get into Railways' traineeships.




Nine months full pay during statutory maternity leave.



At least 7 graduate placement opportunities during the franchise term.



At least 36 modern apprenticeships during the franchise term.

 Department for Transport

During the franchises, the government and Network Rail will proceed with electrification of the TransPennine line to deliver faster journey times and significantly more capacity. Network Rail is currently developing a detailed plan for the work which, when finished, will provide a fully electrified route between Liverpool and Newcastle. The work is expected to be completed in 2022. The operators will also support the roll out of Oyster-style smart ticketing on public transport across the north, backed by £150 million of government funding.



The deal will also mean significant returns to government and better value for the taxpayer. The government will receive £400 million in premiums from First Trans Pennine Express Limited over the life of the franchise; previously, the franchise was subsidised by the government. The amount of annual subsidy the government pays for the Northern franchise will be reduced by £160 million by the end of the 9-year contract.

### Related documents

- [Northern franchise interactive map of improvements and benefits](#)
- [TransPennine Express franchise interactive map of improvements and benefits](#)



## **Salford Bus Review.**

**Salford City Council** appointed consultants, **Agito Transport Planning**, in 2015 to undertake the **Salford Bus Network Review** which aims to identify the main issues that Salford's residents have with local bus services to enable a network to be developed that better meets their needs. Although Salford is reasonably well served by the existing bus routes, there are strong opinions that residents in parts of the City are socially disadvantaged, in terms of their access to jobs, education, health facilities, shops and leisure activities.



Many communities consider that the bus services should be improved to provide:

- Better connections;
- Higher frequencies;
- More late night and early morning bus services;
- Better access to employment areas, hospitals, education and leisure facilities; and
- More bus services that travel around Salford rather than follow radial routes.

Phase 2 is now being undertaken in the **Claremont & Weaste**, **Eccles**, and **Irlam and Cadishead** Community Committee areas. The review features a series of consultation drop-in sessions to enable bus users to have informal discussions with local transport experts from Agito. The next session is being held at:

- **Eccles Gateway:** Saturday 13th February 2016, 10.00am - 12.30pm

The information collected will be used to inform Salford City Council's discussions with local bus operators and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), to encourage bus service improvements to be made in Salford, which will help to support the City's regeneration and future economic development. Suggestions about how bus services can be improved can also be made by email at [consultation@agito-llp.com](mailto:consultation@agito-llp.com) The closing date for emails is 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2016.

## **Transport for Eccles (XIII).**

For the purpose of this article we shall take it as given that Eccles station should have a service that is more frequent than hourly even in the off peak daytime. There are many reasons to think that this is the case and they will be dealt with in a later article. The publication of the franchise awards allows us to pin down what these extra trains are likely to be.

To be pragmatic it is unlikely that Trans Pennine express services will provide these trains: very likely it would be operationally inconvenient and not profitable to do so at present. In addition Arriva Trains Wales has shown no interest in tapping the North Wales market from Eccles by stopping their Piccadilly to Llandudno services. ESN anticipates that this lack of interest will continue. This leaves us the Northern franchise of mainly stopping trains to explore, and here it is worth looking at the following map:

- [Northern franchise interactive map of improvements and benefits](#)

**From Liverpool there will be two Northern trains per hour going through Eccles station.**  
These are:

Liverpool, Manchester Piccadilly, Manchester Airport –*likely to run seven days a week.*

Liverpool, Manchester Victoria, Bradford via Rochdale (Calder Valley) – *Monday to Saturday?*

**From Chester there will be one Northern train per hour going through Eccles** being:

Chester, Manchester Victoria, Leeds via Rochdale (Calder Valley) – *seven days a week.*

**This gives the potential for three trains per hour to call at Eccles on weekdays off peak.**

ESN is assuming that the one train per hour serving off peak hours at Eccles station will be the Liverpool, Manchester Piccadilly, Manchester Airport running seven days a week, and operated by the four carriage 'Northern Electrics'. The gain here would be the fast direct link to the major employment side of Manchester at Oxford Road, and to the airport. Without an extra train per hour the pain would be the loss of the Victoria service which is far better for leisure and shopping purposes.

If either or both the other trains were to call at Eccles there would be no pain but all gain because both would maintain the service to Victoria. In addition they would provide a direct Calder valley service. This would mean from Eccles: Rochdale in about 20 minutes, and Hebden Bridge in about 45 minutes. It is an ideal leisure and shopping service and is the one that was so successful in the later more entrepreneurial British Rail days.

Travelling westward Eccles would gain either an extra train to Liverpool Lime Street (leisure, shopping, and employment) which might improve connection times to Warrington and Chester or a new service direct to Warrington Bank Quay and Chester (leisure, shopping, and employment) and would mean from Eccles: Warrington in about 25 minutes, Chester in about 55 minutes. This latter would be in contrast to the very poor connections currently provided to Warrington and Chester making Warrington over an hour's journey!

Of course Eccles would gain both the above with a three trains an hour service.

The designation of the Chester – Victoria –Leeds service as a 'Northern Connect' service with new dedicated diesel units makes ESN wonder if this will be a semi-fast service which the franchisee might be reluctant to serve Eccles with. The franchise award requires a minimum of one train per hour to serve Eccles off peak – it does not specify an increase in service.

In other words it will be the choice of the franchisee as to whether the Eccles service is more frequent than hourly off peak. A more frequent service for Eccles would probably be moderately profitable for the operator but a very strong boost to Eccles itself (railways typically bring more external financial benefits than profits to themselves). For these reasons pressure for the extra trains must come from **Salford City Council** and **Transport for Greater Manchester**, while **The Friends of Eccles Railway Station** will need to make clear that they will not be satisfied without improvement and the excuse of 'not part of the franchise' will not be accepted.

Our Some **Local History** article will resume in the next issue.

**Eccles Station News** welcomes feedback from readers. Please do not hesitate to send in your own views, photos or snippets of news to the e-mail address below.



**FRECCLES**

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Visit our website: [www.freccles.org.uk](http://www.freccles.org.uk)



**FORTHCOMING FRECCLES MEETINGS:**

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016: Eccles Fire Station Community Room, 7pm**

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016, Eccles Town Hall Community Room, 7pm (this is the AGM)**