



FRECCLES Newsletter No 15 – November 2025

Hello to all our Members

1) Gardens

Work continues to maintain the station gardens. The gardens retain some colour despite being well into autumn. We are now into bulb-planting ready for spring, led by Pat, one of our team of gardeners.

We have monthly Garden and Activity Day on the first Sunday of the month at 11am at the station. The next one takes place on Sunday 7th December at 11am. Do come down and join us – either to join in the gardening work (no experience necessary), or just to meet the team and learn about our work.



2) Membership and Support

We now have 30 paid members, 2 members (payment pending) and 3 Honorary Members giving a total of 35 members. Of those, 14 are active members who fill most of the officer posts and undertake most of the regular activities. Our numbers have increased significantly over the last couple of years, mainly thanks to successful Annual General Meetings.

In addition, we have a group of 15 supporters who opt to receive our newsletter and circulations.

Finally, we also have a **Facebook Page** which currently registers **230** followers, many of whom are regular contacts who 'like' our page. Our most recent post has had **209** views so far, of which 44% were followers and 56% non-followers. The previous post had **361**

views. We are looking at ways to develop our Facebook and social media presence to increase our membership and reach.

3) Annual Meeting and AGM

Our Annual Meeting this year was a celebration of our 20th Birthday and our Chair Steve took us through a short history of the work and achievements of FRECCLES. The meeting was well attended with over 30 people present and of those, 6 joined FRECCLES for the first time.

The speaker on the night was Paul Greenwood from Manchester Histories who is currently Development Officer for Rocket 2030 and Liverpool Manchester Community Rail Partnership and he took the meeting through progress on these 2 developments. (See section on the CRP below).

4) Service Development

A report from Sean who chairs our Service Development Group is attached. In it, Sean records our disappointment that the proposal to run a service from Rochdale to London Euston, stopping at Eccles, had been rejected by the Office for Road and Rail. However, since the AGM, Sean has received news that LUMO the private rail operator behind the proposal, has submitted a revised bid to run the service with a reduced frequency to start in 2028. So fingers crossed!!

5) Community Rail Partnership

The development of the Community Rail Partnership covering the 2 Liverpool to Manchester lines, including our own line over Chat Moss, is now progressing. It has been approved by the Community Rail Network and a part-time Development Officer, Paul Greenwood, has been appointed (see under Annual Meeting), to lead on implementation. The Chair of the CRP is Roy Chapman with whom we have worked a lot in the past while the Vice-Chair is our own Chair Steve Hopkins. The CRP will

generate the potential to promote the Chat Moss line, develop awareness of the unique history of the line as the first inter-city railway line in the world and promote wider community involvement in the railway.

6) Northern Rail

In general, service reliability on our line has improved recently with the reduced Sunday timetable giving a more robust timetable for Sunday services. There are still some cancellations, particularly in the evening period, so the advice is still to check with National Rail Enquiries before you travel.

We now have a new Station Manager, Gemma Magee, and we look forward to working closely with her in the future. Our Community and Sustainability Manager at Northern remains Sarah Morgan with whom we have a regular dialogue over key issues. We are currently awaiting confirmation as to when the toilet, installed on the station forecourt, will come into operation (See Photo Below).



Finally in this section, it has now been agreed to install a blue plaque at Salford Crescent station to commemorate George Bradshaw, the pioneer of railway guides and timetables, who was born in Salford with Salford Crescent being the nearest station to his birthplace. George Bradshaw's guides form the basis of Michael Portillo's popular TV series 'Great British Railway Journeys'.

7) Network Rail Community Day

I attended the Network Rail Community Day held in Manchester in October. Network Rail began by thanking all the various CRPs and Friends groups who attended, for all

their major contribution to the enhancement of our railway service in Britain. They then gave an update on major developments in the North-West.

- ! Wigan to Bolton Electrification now complete
- ! Work in progress to add an additional platform at Salford Crescent Station (2026)
- ! Future projects include major works at Manchester Airport Station, Oxford Road and Piccadilly Station including re-modelling the approach to the station from Ardwick Junction

8 Suicide Prevention

You may be aware that there have been recent tragedies, one at Eccles Station and one at Patricroft, whereby individuals have taken their own lives on the railway. First and foremost, our thoughts go out to the families and loved ones of the two people whose lives were tragically ended.

FRECCLES has recently made contact with a charity called JAK'S WORLD which is a suicide prevention charity based in Salford. Kasia who runs JAK'S WORLD is particularly concerned about the number of suicides that take place on the railway- particularly at Eccles and Patricroft - and it has been agreed that we and FrOPS (Friends of Patricroft Station) will work together with JAK'S to see what can be done to prevent such tragedies in the future.

It is planned to hold a conference in January involving JAK'S WORLD, FRECCLES, FrOPS and representatives from the railway industry to focus on how to work together on this important issue.

Members of FRECCLES have had training in the past on Suicide Prevention and we have several notices from the Samaritans to let people know that help is available (see below).



However, it is hoped that by bringing various agencies together who are concerned with this situation, we may be able to take forward the work on this very serious issue.

There is more about FRECCLES on our web page (www.freccles.org.uk) and on our Facebook page, or you can contact us at info@freccles.org.uk or tel 0161 789 5016

Steve Clapham

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