



FRECCLES Newsletter No 16 – June 2026

Hello to all our Members and welcome to our latest Newsletter.

1) Gardens

The Gardens continue to look well and provide an attractive backdrop to the station. There is plenty of colour, thanks to the planting regime of Pat, one of our principal gardeners. There is further scope for planting due to the arrival of new planters on Platform 2. Thanks go to all our volunteers who join us for the Station Garden and Activity Days on the first Sunday of every month.



2) Infrastructure Changes at the Station

- a) New planters are in place on Platform 2, comprising one large wooden planter and 2 half-barrel planters – see photos.
- b) Work has been taking place by Northern to improve the look of the steps down to the platform including cleaning and repainting the handrails. (See photo below)
- c) A postage locker has been installed on the forecourt, though its positioning is not the best!
- d) The disabled toilet on the forecourt is still not operational and we have no firm date as to when it is likely to open. The project has been delayed due to having to replace the doors to the toilet which were fitted incorrectly for wheelchair access.
- e) Our Chair has been looking with Northern at the possibility of modifying the cycle hub on the forecourt which has been out of use for a long time. It might be possible to retain some cycle storage but allow some space for the development of a community friendly space.



3) Disabled Access

FRECCLES continues to press at every opportunity, for installation of lifts at the station. We are the only designated that hub station in Greater Manchester that does not have disabled access. Salford City Council have written to TfGM in respect of this and, following a meeting with us at the station, our MP Michael Wheeler has also written endorsing the need for disabled access at Eccles.

It is our understanding that TfGM is to revisit the criteria for funding disabled access at stations and we hope that this may lead to Eccles Station moving up the priority list.

4) Service Development

FRECCLES continues to advocate for the train service at the station to be increased to half-hourly. In January, Sean, our Service Development Coordinator, and Steve our Chair, met with Simon Elliott, Head of Rail at TfGM to present our case for an improved service. Currently, it seems that any hope for improvement will depend on a new service between Wigan and Stalybridge via a new station at Golbourne, due to come into operation in December 2027, some of which will stop at Eccles. If Northern were to agree to stop all those services at Eccles, it would give us the twice-hourly service that has been the goal of FRECCLES since our inauguration in 2005!

At present, there is still a reduced service on a Sunday, but generally, the reliability of the service has improved. In the longer term, it is part of TfGM's transport strategy for rail services to be integrated into the Bee Network but the impact this will have is not clear yet.

5) Community Involvement

Our Chair meets regularly with other community groups in the Eccles area. On 25th April, there was the second Community Event held at Eccles Town Hall bringing

together various community groups across the town and FRECCLES had a presence at this event.

Meanwhile, the *Get in To Eccles* festival took place from 22nd to 29th March with multiple events across the borough. FRECCLES contribution to the festival, was to host a two activities at the station namely

- a) A series of interactive performances by a group of volunteers led by Lowry Evans to entertain passengers during each morning rush-hour that week. This involved a series of coordinated actions and tableaux to coincide with arrivals and departures at the station which gave much enjoyment to the passengers and the volunteers involved.
- b) At the weekend , there were then performances by the Barton Choral Society, again timed to coincide with train arrivals and departures.

The whole event was a great success.



6 Suicide Prevention and Promotion of Well-being

FRECCLES has been concerned for some time about people who have chosen to end their lives on the station, a concern shared by our colleagues at FrOPS. We made contact with a local group called JAKS who are trying to help prevent suicides on the railway. From that contact, it was decided to organise a conference at Eccles Town Hall to share thoughts on this issue. This was attended by ourselves, FrOPS, the Samaritans, Northern and other interested parties. From this event, emerged a series of ideas about how to promote well-being at our stations and make stations more welcoming and so hopefully reduce the risk of people taking their own lives.

The improvements to the station mentioned above are designed to promote well-being and other ideas are in the pipeline such as creating a wildlife garden behind the Liverpool platform. Hopefully, these improvements will generate a greater sense of well-being and welcome at the station

7) Community Rail Partnership

The Liverpool to Manchester Community Rail Partnership has now been approved and has become a member of the Community Rail Network (CRN). The latest Community Rail Network map now includes our CRP! The CRP covers both our line over Chat Moss and the Cheshire Lines route via Irlam and Warrington. It will liaise with Friends groups along the two lines. Over the next few months, the partnership will be seeking full accreditation which will give access to further funding.

Currently, the CRP is managed by Manchester Histories from where Paul Greenwood has been seconded as Community Development Officer for the project. The Chair of the Stakeholders Group is Roy Chapman and our own Chair, Steve Hopkins, is Vice-Chair. Funding has been made available from Northern and CRN to develop branding for the Partnership and to look into ideas for the future such as a Community Garden at Newton-le-Willows station.

In the long-term, the CRP will seek to build links with communities along the line, develop travel initiatives, improve stations and support heritage and other projects along the lines. Finally, it will play a key role in Rocket: All Aboard which will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the inauguration of the Liverpool to Manchester Railway (see next item). More information on the CRP can be found on the Manchester Histories website.

8) Community Rail Week

Every year, CRN hosts Community Rail Week during which CRPs and Friends groups throughout the country hold events to highlight the importance of Community Rail. This year 154 events took place, some of which were highlighted in the CRN Special Newsletter which was circulated recently.

FRCCLES and FrOPS contributed to the week by hosting a Caked in History Walk which Steve Hopkins described as follows:

10 people, with our Blue Badge guide, Elizabeth Charnley, leading, completed the Caked in History Walk on the afternoon of 7th June. Starting with a train from Eccles to Patricroft, we reviewed Patricroft Station History, before taking a look at one of Naysmith's steam hammers, outside the site of its original production. We then walked to the site where the oldest intercity railway line crosses the oldest commercial canal and proceeded along the Bridgwater canal to Worsley, the site where coal was originally loaded onto canal barges to be taken into Manchester. We walked to the site of the old Worsley station (location of the picture) before continuing on to Monton and Eccles. Our thanks go to Elizabeth, FRECCLES Secretary, for organising and leading the walk.



That's all folks!

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

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