

FRIENDS OF WESTHOUGHTON STATION

Minutes of Friends of Westhoughton meeting

Wednesday 9th January 2013 at Sports & Social Club

1. The Chair, Joanna Parncutt, opened the meeting and introduced the following:

Val Chadwick, Cllr David Chadwick, Yvonne & Dennis Woolley, Stephen Curry (Northern Rail) Cindy Ritchie, Pat Munde, Graham Dolphin, Ted Wisedale, Kath & Fred Kelly, Patrick Swainson, Karla Campbell, Steve Freeborn, Cllr Jack Speight, Preva Crossley and Cllr Freda Henderson.

2. Apologies - Janice Bayliss, Tom Briggs, Robert Appleton, Hannah Williams (PCSO)
3. Matters arising from the public meeting - The elected officers were reconfirmed as Joanna Parncutt (Chair), Preva Crossley (Secretary) and Cllr Jack Speight (Treasurer) with a number of the above attendees offering their services as per required. It was agreed the 3 elected officers above would be signatories to the bank account (Action - Jack to arrange to open account).
4. Constitution and ACORP Membership

Preva advised the group he had been in touch with Steve Magner at Transport for Gtr Manchester, re the sponsorship of our membership to ACoRP (Association of Community RailPartnership) with Cllr Jack Speight informing an application form can be downloaded from the ACoRP website. (Action - Preva to deal with this)

5. Programme of work
 - a. There was considerable discussion on an action plan including health and safety, ideas and suggestions coming from Yvonne, Karla, Jack, Freda, and Steven including planting of Spring bulbs, creating bird feeders, attracting wildlife, wildflowers and compost areas.

Stephen Curry (Northern) offered to provide planters (Action - Stephen to look into types/sizes and get back to us). Joanna advised she had drafted letters to local schools with a view to designing artwork to be placed on the pathway boards leading down to the Manchester bound platform.

- b. It was unanimously agreed to start with a small triangular patch of land on the Wigan bound platform near the bridge with members all working as a team and bringing their own tools. but it was advised before any work can go ahead, a designated licence agreement with Network Rail will be required. Joanna informed she was meeting Shelia Chester on Friday 11th January and would report back accordingly. Many offers of help and suggestions to contact the local Garden centre (Darby's) for any support they could offer with any discounts and possibly sponsorship. Insurance was discussed, although members would basically be covered while on the Northern Rail's lease area but it was advised the group should invest in their own liability insurance.

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6. Funding

Various ideas including asking for support through Bolton MBC, the Area Forum, CVS, Community Princes Trust, GM Fire brigade, TfGM, Supermarkets and local businesses. Membership subscriptions - these are required under the Friends of constitutions but it was felt that any amount other than a token amount would discourage membership. Yvonne proposed a nominal £1.00 (p.a.) to start and this was unanimously agreed.

7. Website

Kate Booth (not present) has kindly offered to help set up a website by paying the hosting fee. An organisation called "Made with Jam" offers a basic package specifically aimed at community groups.charities etc, for £1 a week. (Those interested can look at examples on <http://www.madewithjam.org/>). It was unanimously agreed to accept her generous offer for the first year until we have funds of our own.

8. Any other business

A number of issues were raised over faults at the Station and what help the group could be gained from our Partners.

- a. ISS (the service company) to be asked to deep clean the platforms (Action – Northern Rail)
- b. Repainting of the white edges on the platforms. Response - Northern would need to apply to Network Rail for a stop order closing the line - this is being looked into.
- c. Broken telephone on Manchester Platform - Response - property of BT and it is for them to remove same - this is being chased by Northern Rail
- d. Disabled access down to the Manchester Bound platform - No plans at the present time due to expense.
- e. Replace the shelters on both platforms - no plans to at present time.

9. Date of Next meeting

This left open - will probably be in April unless urgent matters necessitate bringing it forward.

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PROGRESS SINCE MEETING

- 1) Artwork on the walkways - so far, I have had responses from 6 schools asking to be included in this project - Eatock, The Gates, Sacred Heart, St. Bartholomew's, St. James, St. George's. (Action - Stephen to arrange for frames to be put in place).
- 2) I advised you all previously that Network Rail had approved us working on the selected area of the bank and Sheila Chester was going to grant us a licence and arrange to check for buried cables. It later transpired that the area is actually leased to Northern Rail! Stephen is going to the site on 30th January to see about the cables and will report back. One advantage is that we can defer getting our own insurance as Northern's will cover us. From my amended map it also looks as if the area opposite - by the bridge on the Manchester platform - is also covered by Northern (perhaps Stephen could confirm this?) so we could work on that area next.
- 3) Steve Freeborn is a good friend of the Darby family and said he would talk to them about helping us. It was a very successful conversation and they have agreed to help! They will supply some plants and bulbs and will let us store any tools/equipment at their premises (Steve - could you reconfirm to me exactly what they said please?). As a thank you Steve said when we have funds available and we need to buy any tools/plants etc we would go to them. It was also discussed that they might have a stall on the platform selling plants.
- 4) The next work day is Sunday 3rd February. The weather, and whether Stephen has surveyed the area for cables, will determine exactly what we can do. There will definitely be another litter pick (unless there is thick snow!), as Sheila said she was happy that we could pick litter off the banks. Tom has again arranged for litter pickers and bin bags from Bolton Council under the "Love Bolton, Hate Litter" campaign. He has spoken to Ian, who runs the newsagents opposite, and he is happy for the council to deliver and collect them all from the shop, so Tom doesn't have to lug everything back to his house. The council has said that it doesn't want organic waste - so no more leaves please! I am happy to wheel my green bin down there, and maybe others could take any bags of leaves back to their house to put in their green bins. I can also wheel my purple bin down to collect bottles and cans.

If we are in a position to proceed with major works on the banks, then people should bring spades, forks, a couple of stepladders, a wheelbarrow, secateurs, brushes. Any rubble can be saved as we will need to use it for ballast in the planters so passing trains don't drag them off the platforms.

I'll confirm times and arrangements nearer the date, once I have a better idea of what we can do on the day.

Joanna Parncutt

Chair Friends of Westhoughton Station

25th January 2013