

# Welcome...

Welcome to our first newsletter. We hope you will find our news informative and that it will inspire you to get involved in supporting our voluntary group.

The Group has been in action for 8 months now and already we are making steady progress in gaining new members and raising awareness about what we are trying to achieve for the local community.

Our key aims are:

- To breathe new life into Sowerby Bridge station for the benefit of all station users; and
- To attract more visitors (and custom) to the town.



We hope to achieve this through volunteers donating their time; local businesses providing their support and by lobbying the relevant rail partners for improvements outside the Group's control.

Over the coming months we will be telling you about our key initiatives and projects; and hope to secure your support along the way.

*Christopher J Wright, Convenor (FofSBRs)*

## So, what have we been doing?

**'Work Together' Sessions:** volunteers from the Group have given their time over a number of Saturday mornings to tidy up the station and its surrounding area. This has included weeding; replanting of the flower tubs and general garden maintenance. These 'Work Together' sessions are held every month and are open to anyone who has a few hours to spare on a Saturday morning. Please see 'Calendar of Events' for more details.

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**Station Users' Survey:** During April and May, we conducted a survey at the station to understand what improvements are important to station users. Our Volunteers surveyed over 100 station users and the feedback showed (unsurprisingly) that lack of facilities such as toilets; a ticket office, live screens, and waiting rooms were high on the list.

These issues are outside the Group's control though the results and analysis have been passed onto the relevant rail partners.

Other areas for improvement included: General attractiveness of the station; tired paintwork; lack of colour/flowers; lack of welcome signs and information boards; inadequate platform seating to name a few. And this is where the Group is able to make a difference.



**Since the survey**, we have already seen a number of improvements, such as:

- Northern Rail have repainted parts of the station and they have also agreed to provide an Information Board / Panel for each platform.
- The station is soon to see new platform seating – a fantastic and grateful donation by Sowerby Bridge company **W P Eglin Ltd**, Victoria Road.
- Planters and flower boxes have been replanted to improve the attractiveness of the

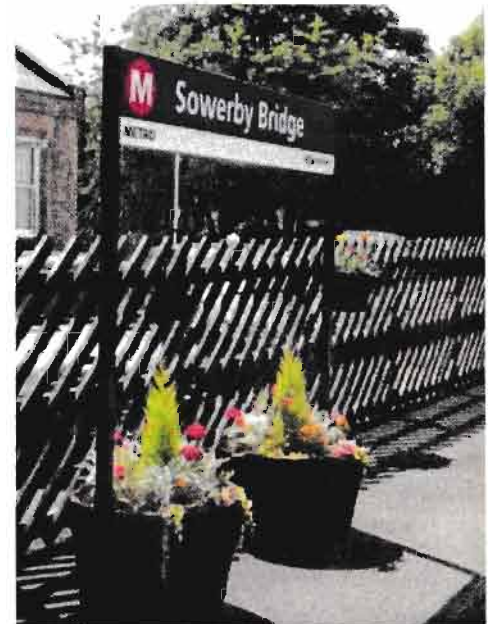
platforms and a water capture system implemented to maintain these displays. (By rain-water harvesting from the station roof).

- The station is to be included in a partnership scheme between Metro, West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive and Northern Rail which will see Sowerby Bridge railway station benefit from up-to-date information screens (showing departure/arrival times).

**Yorkshire in Bloom:** A key initiative over the summer was to increase visitors to Sowerby Bridge by our entry into the annual Yorkshire in Bloom competition.

Again, volunteers put in lots of effort before the judging day (on 15<sup>th</sup> July), along with volunteers from the 24<sup>th</sup> St Paul's Cub Scouts. Calderdale MBC also supplied the Group with extra flower tubs before the event. The day was a great success – the sun shone and we had lots of positive comments from visitors on the day. We now eagerly await the judges' decisions (due 20<sup>th</sup> September). Thanks to all those who supported this event.

**Local Business Communications:** We have written an introductory letter to local businesses in the area about the Group and our aims, which was distributed in May and we intend to follow this up in the autumn. Its purpose is to raise awareness within the



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local business community in order to gain their support. As a result of this communication, **W P Eglin Ltd** of Victoria Road, have pledged to donate new seating for both platforms. This is a great result and we will hope to secure support from other local business in the coming months.

**Development of FofSBRS Website:** We are now close to launching our FofSBRS website, courtesy of CASS Technologies of Greetland, which will be updated regularly, with links to relevant articles and topics. More on this in the next newsletter.

## Want to get involved?

If you would like to get involved in any way – such as:

- joining us at one of our 'Working Together' sessions or delivering our newsletters & updates to the local area;
- sharing your ideas at one of our open 'Group' meetings;
- providing funding for specific initiatives to improve the station (such as sculptures; information boards);
- Offering your services e.g. printing; design, free advertising, we would love to hear from you.

Please contact Christopher Wright on 07850 822590 or feel free to join us at one of our open 'Group' meetings as detailed under the 'Calendar of Events' section. Any support – however small - would be welcome.

## Calendar of Events

The following are our upcoming events and ALL are welcome.

'Work Together' Sessions vary and may involve weeding, tidying up the station, planting or watering the flower boxes etc. Meeting place is the Jubilee Refreshment Rooms at the Station – just ask for Chris.

Open 'Group' Meetings are held once per month and the agenda includes: Updates from the Convenor, Secretary, Treasurer and group discussions about relevant topics such as upcoming events or ideas.

Royal Horticultural Society's 'Dig Together Day' This is a national initiative to help RHS affiliated societies raise their profile by organising community gardening activities in September 2011. Find out more at: [www.rhs.org.uk/Gardening/Community-gardening/RHS-affiliated-societies/Dig-Together-Day](http://www.rhs.org.uk/Gardening/Community-gardening/RHS-affiliated-societies/Dig-Together-Day)

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Sat 20 Aug	Work Together session – 9am-12noon – meet at the Jubilee Refreshment Rooms at 9am.
Tues 6 Sept	Open 'Group' Meeting. Meeting starts at 7.30pm til 8.30pm at the Jubilee Refreshment Rooms.
Sat 24 Sept	Royal Horticultural Society's 'Dig Together Day' – 9am to 12 noon – meet at the Jubilee Refreshment Rooms
Tues 4 Oct	Open 'Group' Meeting. Meeting starts at 7.30pm til 8.30pm at the Jubilee Refreshment Rooms.
Sat 22 Oct	Work Together session – 9am-12noon - meet

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to: Councillor David Draycott (Labour – Sowerby Bridge ward) for joining our 'Work Together' sessions; Elaine Milner for donating a selection of home made greeting cards – this has raised £92.00 for the Group; Matt Gibson (Northern Rail) for his ongoing support and production of the Group's letterhead stationery; and Stuart Elwin for his valuable support and advice.

### Finally....

On behalf of the Friends of Sowerby Bridge Railway Station, we hope this newsletter has been of interest and we'd be delighted for any constructive feedback – please email [fofsbrs@gmail.com](mailto:fofsbrs@gmail.com).

Watch out for our next newsletter in November or December!



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