

Friends of Sowerby Bridge Railway Station
Annual General Meeting
11th November 2025
Hollins Mill Inn, Sowerby Bridge

Attendees; Richard Adams, Jim Milner, Charles Adams, Mike Payne, Peter Burke, Julia White, Joy Edwards, James Hennighan, David Harriott, Ken Wilby, Richard Isaac & Chris Webster (acting President).

Apologies; Chris Harvey, Stuart Town & Sylvia Kelly.

2024 AGM Minutes; Proposed by JH, 2nd JM, accepted.

Chairman's Report; MP reported that it had been another outstanding year for the FoSBRS. Our continued success is thanks to the dedication and hard work of our volunteers, supporters and partners. I am delighted to share our achievements, reflect on challenges, and look forward to the future. Our group thrives because of the commitment and enthusiasm of our volunteers. Special thanks go to JE and her gardening team (Chris Ross & Sylvia Walker), whose efforts keep our station vibrant and welcoming. JH for his work on our infrastructure projects and being a constant presence on the station assisting/offering support to the station users. CA was thanked for his supportive and conscientious work as secretary. CH was thanked for ensuring the group's health and safety was of a high standard. John Myddelton was thanked for his continued work as Membership secretary. RA for his work taking/preparing minutes, assisting with the gardening group and flag hanging. JW as the new sponsorship lead, was thanked, and had brought in some new sponsorship in her brief reign. CW who chairs our AGM, keeps us motivated and shares his all-round knowledge. DH acts as group's official photographer and thanks to all ad-hoc volunteers who assist when they can. We are proud to have won a Gold Award and Best in Class in the 2025 Yorkshire in Bloom awards, an outstanding recognition of our collective efforts.

The events the group hosted were a great success, festive lunch, carol service and Christmas cards featuring JE's artwork. Two well attended coach trips to the Beamish Open Air Museum, and North Yorkshire Moors Railway/Whitby organised by PB. A well-attended Remembrance Service hosted by John & Val Frankland and attended by representatives of the local Round Table, Northern Rail and Deputy Lord Lieutenant Chris Harris representing the King.

The group were saddened by the passing of John Hartley shortly after our last AGM, JHart was a founding member of the group, a passionate researcher and the driving force behind the station's Information Boards. His legacy lives on in the book 'Sowerby Bridge Remembers...' compiled by CA & JM. JM is stepping down as treasurer after years of dedicated service. JM has managed the group's finances, grant applications

with exceptional care and leaves us in a strong financial position. His knowledge of the group's history and guidance will be greatly missed.

While anti-social behavior has levelled off, passenger health and safety remain a priority, there had been two major incidents this year and we continue to work on improvements. The provision of toilets, all-day refreshments, and improved train services remain key for our commuters. The car park has seen an increase in usage post Covid. The group are still on the lookout for more volunteers. There are new ideas and initiatives for continued improvements at the station and suggestions are always sought. Thanks for tendered to Richard Isaac and Karen Hornby, our railway contacts, the Hollins Mill for hosting the group, Calderdale Council and all our third-party supporters.

Secretary's Report; CA's report very much mirrored MP's, the group had good relationships with Northern Rail and the Calder Valley Rail Partnership, as well as networking with other agencies and groups. Thanks also to ISS, the station cleaners. CA also offered thanks to John White who has acted as independent auditor of the group's finances. MP was taking over the treasurer position in the short term until a permanent replacement for JM was found. There was some station work to fulfil from grants received prior to May.

Treasurer's Report; JM had supplied a Year End Financial Statement and Asset Register. He talked the attendees through these matters and offered answers to any queries that arose. He highlighted the income received via grants and sponsorship were very necessary to the group funds. The group still awaited recompense from the Calderdale Rail Network/Calder Valley Community Rail Partnership for the Remembrance plaque add-on and cleaning. KH would be asked to chase this up.

Health & Safety; CH was unavailable, but had supplied a report highlighting the groups monthly H&S updates at meetings. All current volunteers who work within the station confines had had briefings of NR H&S protocols. There had been various incidents and issues during the year, rough sleepers, track trespass, youths riding around the station, youths throwing stones/gravel, passengers taken ill. All incidents were escalated to NR and/or British Transport Police.

Sponsorship; JW had taken up the sponsorship role during the Summer, she had gained some new sponsors. She had received positive feedback from sponsors; DH's photos had been well received.

Membership; JMyd was unavailable, but he had sent an up-to-date membership listing. Membership had remained steady most of the year, currently 74 members. JM advised of the recent passing of Life member Harold Wainwright who had been a Station Master at SB during the 60's.

Election of Officers: All current officers were prepared to continue. Some tweaks were MP taking over the treasurers role temporarily along with his chairman role. JM would stand down. CA proposed JM to take on the president role, as this had been vacant since John King passed away during Covid. CW was thanked for standing in on occasion as acting president.

Guest Speaker; RI gave a positive assessment of all 'Friends' groups and of their impact on the stations and commuters they serve. There had been management changes within NR leading up to the introduction of Great British Railways which would be overseeing all of Britain's railways. Jason Wade would be in charge of train services and Kerry Peters would be taking charge of station upkeep. RI's position would not be affected. He advised that contracts that service personnel operated under would have to be aligned in the future, NR's Western and Eastern regions currently operate on differing contracts. RI has been on the national rail incident management team for a while and had cause to respond to the recent LNER incident in Cambridgeshire. He advised that funding was still available for Friends groups to access, there was on-going discussion with Transpennine to avail access to funds they make available. Building at Elland station was forecast to be starting soon, Low Moor station was still awaiting car park completion and was serving a large number of train customers. NR were supporting engineering courses at Calderdale College, in the hope to wean some aspiring engineers towards working on the railways.

A.O.B. This year's Christmas lunch would be held at the Navigation, Chapel Lane, SB on the 18th December at 1pm

The Christmas Carol service would be held at the station on the 21st December at 4pm.

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