

### **Annual General Meeting of Friends of Brighouse Station.**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Friends of Brighouse Station was held at St John's Church Conference Centre on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 at 7pm.

Paul Marshall, Chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed 19 members and one guest, the Environment and Sustainability Manager of the North East Region, Danielle Clarkson.

Apologies were received from 9 members.

1. A short video of Brighouse Station, which was produced Margaret and Paul Marshall as an entry to the Community Rail Network It's Your Station competition was shown. The video which achieved Lead Gold award at the recent CRN event at Swansea and an attractive trophy. It was well received by the members and Paul and Margaret were praised for their hard work.
2. The Minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting had been circulated and were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **3. Secretary's report**

The Secretary gave her report outlining the various events over the last twelve months. The Committee met for 7 meetings and on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2023 Alan Whittel had tendered his resignation from the committee as he wished to concentrate on his Crown Green Bowling interest. He is still willing to assist at changeover days if time allows. He was thanked for all the hard work he had undertaken over the many years he had worked for FoBS. In the past couple of days another member of the Committee, Beulah Shaw has also resigned after being ill for many months. It had been a difficult decision but sent good wishes for the future and will remain as a member of FoBS. We also thank her for all the work at the station, maintaining the bug hotel, selecting and planting the numerous plants on many changeover days.

We also thank Paul and Margaret Marshall for their hospitality and providing refreshments for the meetings.

A Health and Safety briefing for all volunteers had taken place and all working volunteers were made aware of what was expected of them.

David Thorpe was thanked for taking over as a joint administrator of the Facebook page. David James was also thanked for maintaining the excellent website and for his work alongside David Woffindin visiting the valuable local sponsors.

A visit and tour of the Industrial Museum in Halifax organised by the Community Rail Partnership had been enjoyed by 5 members in February where they met volunteers from other stations. The installation of the Art work on Platform 1 had been finally completed in May after many site meetings after the Enhancement Contractors had altered the under bridge platform area to provide more shelter for passengers. Phase two on Platform 2 was completed in July. Some problems had occurred but the murals have now been reprinted and replaced.

Yorkshire in Bloom judging also took place in July when several working members were introduced to the judge. She was very impressed and we received the highest award, PLATINUM.

In September Richard Isaac provided a group ticket to travel to Chester for a day out and we thank Norman Hodgson for arranging the outing. Although the weather was not the best, those who attended enjoyed their day in the city.

The work of FoBS continues and we thank all the volunteers and members who work in various ways to maintain a welcoming environment at the station. Your time and support are much appreciated. Thank you.

#### **4. Treasurer's report**

Margaret Marshall presented her annual report and balance sheet saying we were grateful for the continued support of local businesses and all 47 members and we were pleased to keep everyone on board.

We also welcomed 3 new businesses as sponsors of fence planters and barrels – Inline Kitchens, Woodhouse Stores & Post Office and St John's Rucksack Club.

We received generous grants from Northern Trains which were used towards work on the new Climate Change garden at the end of Platform 2 and future work on one of the entrance beds in the car park.

The cost of maintaining the website increased and there were further increases in the cost of plants and compost, however plants are still being bought at a good discount from catalogue prices.

It was agreed that we should keep the membership and sponsorship fees unchanged during these times of increasing costs for everyone.

Hopefully travellers using the station will take note of the business plaques and visit the FoBS website where the businesses are listed.

A good balance has been brought forward to this year's accounts and we thanked Margaret for producing the accounts and Derek Ashton, one of our members for inspecting and signing the accounts.

#### **5. Chairman's report**

It has been another good year for Brighouse Station. The station improvements have continued and our volunteers have worked exceptionally hard to develop the Climate Change Garden and maintain the plants to a high standard.

The group entered two horticultural competitions and have been awarded Platinum for the Yorkshire in Bloom competition and Gold for the National Community Rail Network competition. Very well done to everyone who helped in any way. A total of 1347 Volunteer hours have been spent on the station in 2023.

The platform artwork has finally been displayed to fit in with the recent station alterations and the rusty Gooder Lane Bridge is adorned with art provided by the students from Calderdale College. Thank you for all the help from Richard Isaac and the Northern team for their grants and can do attitude to help us achieve our goals. Paul illustrated this report with photographs.

##### **January 2023**

Started the year well with good plant displays and a tidy station. The new Climate Change Garden at the Halifax end of Platform 2 Has been cleared of overgrown Laurel and Sycamore, spring bulbs have been planted and are just showing through.

##### **February.**

The Bug Hotel near Platform 1 attracts many favourable comments from the public and the winter flowering entrance bed greet our visitors. And the newly planted miniature daffodils are flowering well.

##### **March**

A group of volunteers attended the Brighouse Elderly Persons Fair to look for new volunteers, we recruited one person who has been an asset since starting working in all areas on a regular basis along with our other volunteers. The miniature daffodils planted in autumn 2022 are flowering well in the Climate Change Garden.

##### **April**

A special thank you to Brighouse Civic Trust who presented us with a new Blue Plaque which replaced the original one under the bridge which had faded badly.

## **May**

First set of artwork installed under the bridge on platform 1. Our resident engineer constructed five raised beds from timber saved from the old fence where platform 1 was widened. The only cost was for the screws and water-based paint. Thirty-five bags of sterilised soil was purchased to fill the raised beds and Drought resistant plants like Phormium, Lavender, Thyme and Photinia red Robin and Trachycarpus were bought and planted, all the plants have established and survived the hot summer.

## **June**

The Summer plant changeover came along and the 18 barrels and 29 fence planters along with the car park beds were replanted with summer trailing and flowering plants which grew beautifully into the award-winning displays.

## **July**

A senior Judge from Yorkshire in Bloom judge visited the station and was greeted by some of our volunteers. After Judging refreshments were kindly provided by the Commercial Railway Hotel and the judge inspected our press coverage and other documentation over a welcome cuppa. The Second set of artwork was installed on Platform 2 to mirror the display on Platform 1.

## **August**

The station plants looked magnificent due to our diligent watering and plant deadheading teams, there were many compliments and smiling faces from our station users.

The plants in the raised beds are fully established with flowering Lavenders attracting bees and other pollinating insects. The path was edged in recycled timber and made from woodchip from the old plants was laid and looks well.

## **September**

Wild flower seed sown down slope for spring 24 flowering.

The Yorkshire in Bloom ceremony took place in Tadcaster where FoBS were awarded Platinum, the highest award. FoBS also entered the National Community Rail Network competition in the It's your Station category.

## **October**

Autumn plant changeover took place but a shortage of volunteers prolonged the operation. After the successful installation of the platform artwork, it was decided to take a look at the rusty graffiti painted Gooder Lane Bridge near to where the old station once stood. Thanks to cooperation between Northern, Calderdale Council, TP Enhancement, Grand Central and Calderdale College the bridge was cleaned up and painted, then artwork by local students was applied to the bridge. This brightens up the whole area which has looked neglected for many years.

## **November**

Celebrations all round when we were told we had been shortlisted for a gold in the CRN competition. The awards event was held in March 2024 in Swansea.

## **December**

Work on the station continues despite the cold wet weather. The volunteers met for a well-earned coffee break in the warmth to celebrate our Gold shortlisting certificate from CRN just before Christmas

## **To complete the Projects carried over from 2023**

- a) Complete planting in CC garden Lay species rich turf surrounding the raised beds.
- b) Re plant Lavender bed and gravel over, use as a drought tolerant bed to save water.
- c) Start to introduce new history boards from the closing down of the old station in January 1970 through to the construction of the new station during 1999 and the opening of the new station in May 2000 from a series of original press cuttings. Northern's graphic team could assist with this project.

A huge thank you to our individual members, our planter sponsors who provide a vital income stream for the plant displays and to Northern who support our group and the station users who encourage us to do a good job.

## 6. Election of Officers & Committee

The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer are eligible for re-election and the appointments were taken 'en bloc'.

Proposed Anne H      Seconded      Allen Cass                      All in favour.

Richard Armitage is willing to continue on the Committee but due to resignations there are 2 vacancies. Paul proposed David Mallinson as additional member of the Committee.

Seconded Anne Cass              All in favour.

The meeting closed at 8 pm and refreshments were served.

Danielle Clarkson provided the meeting with news from Northern trains and thanked the group for the many hours worked, the value of labour equating to over £8000, have contributed to maintaining Brighouse Station as a welcoming place for staff and travelling passengers. The on-going Transpennine up-grade has had TPE trains travelling through Brighouse and rail replacement buses calling at Brighouse whilst Huddersfield Station is closed. The opening of a new station at White Rose Centre Leeds is expected by the end of the year, lifts at Morley station are now in use but strike action has been announced over the next weekend period. We were advised to check before travelling.

The Northern's graphic team could assist in reproducing Echo cuttings illustrating before construction, during and then opening of the new station in 2000.

Catherine Kingdom gave out books entitled 'Arlos's Adventures ' a pick - a - path railway safety book and spoke about her work with school children in the local area.

Paul gave an interesting power-point presentation showing old photographs of the **Construction of the M62 Motorway in the Brighouse area** which was enjoyed by those present.

Signed.....

Date.....