



FRECCLES Newsletter No 12 December 2024

Hello to all our Members and Supporters.

1) Gardens

The station garden and tidy sessions continue on the first Sunday of every month and there is always plenty to do. Despite the lack of flowers at this time of year, the gardens remain very attractive to passengers and railway staff. The next garden/clear-up day will take place on Sunday January 5th at 11am. Everybody is welcome to attend!



2) AGM

As was circulated at the time, our AGM this year was particularly successful. The keynote speaker was Martyjn Gilbert, managing Director of LUMO – the Company which has proposed to run a service from Rochdale to London Euston stopping at Eccles! About 30 people attended the event, from whom we attracted 4 new members!

3) Changes at Northern

In October, a new Station Manager was appointed whose area will include Eccles. She is Kate Williams and we look forward to working with her in the future. Then, this month, Simon Abbott, Regional Community and Sustainability Manager has announced that he is moving on. We have worked

together with Simon on numerous issues and you may have seen him at one of our meetings.

Our Chair has written to Simon to thank him for his support to FRECCLES and to wish him well for the future. Simon's letter of thanks to Friends groups and others who volunteer on the railway, is set out below.

From: Simon Abbott <Simon.Abbott@northernrailway.co.uk>

Sent: 02 December 2024 10:16

Subject: New role

Hi Everyone,

I am writing to share some personal news with you all. After much reflection, I will be leaving my role at Northern Trains. My last day will be the 3rd of January.

Working alongside you has been one of the most rewarding and inspiring parts of my role. Your dedication, creativity, and passion have been instrumental in making a real difference within our communities. Together, we have achieved so much, and I will always cherish the memories of the projects we brought to life and the impact we've had.

While it is bittersweet to be saying goodbye, I am confident that you will continue to achieve incredible things. I am so proud to have been part of this team and to have had the privilege of supporting you in your important work.

Because of the time of year, with Christmas parties and annual leave, I won't be organising a formal farewell. However, I will be raising a few glasses to you all over the next few weeks and reflecting fondly on some amazing memories.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if there's anything I can do before I leave to ensure a smooth transition.

Thank you once again for everything. Wishing you all the very best for the future.

Kind Regards,

Simon Abbott
Regional Community & Sustainability Manager

4) **Current Train Service**

The train service provided by Northern in our region continues to cause great concern with numerous cancellations on a daily basis. The situation is particularly critical on Sundays when there are high numbers of cancelled trains and some services such as Chester to Leeds are suspended altogether.

The main problem seems to be that many Sunday services have traditionally relied on staff undertaking rest day working, as Sunday is not part of the normal working week, but now staff, backed by their unions, are currently unwilling to work rest days giving rise to staff shortages.

So the current advice is to always check with Northern or the National Rail website, before commencing your journey.

5) **Winter Timetable**

In general, there are no changes to the train service at Eccles Station when the new winter timetable comes into force on December 15th. However, Northern have indicated that they will issue a revised timetable for Sunday services in the region to provide a more reliable service which takes into account the staffing problems on Sundays, referred to above. As ever, do check your journey time if you are travelling in the region but especially so on Sundays!

All that is left is for me to do is, on behalf of FRECCLES, to wish all our members, supporters and friends a very Happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year!

