

2008 was FOWS' second year and we worked extremely hard to improve the station as much as we could. Our **gardening** teams installed 5 impressive steel planters and kept the flower beds looking pretty in the face of vandalism and theft – and added a brand new one !

We organised some special events to celebrate the station and raise its profile. These included the **120th Birthday Celebration** one sunny morning in July, and a **Meet The Manager** session with Northern Rail on a cold December evening.

Behind the scenes we've been lobbying hard for improvements to the station and its services – petitioning Northern Rail and GMPTE to provide **Sunday trains**, campaigning for the **dangerous gap** between platform and trains to be closed, pushing for **CCTV** to counter the all-too-common vandalism and anti-social behaviour, and chasing Northern Rail and Network Rail to **lengthen the platform** so longer trains might be scheduled to stop here.

As yet, none of these objectives has been realised and the condition of the station has deteriorated further: the **roof is rotting** and leaks badly, and the walls are stained with years of grime and leaking water. FOWS have offered to **repaint the walls** and arranged for local firm **Jet Clean** to **professionally clean the frontage** as a goodwill gift to the community.

In 2008 the **Booking Office hours were cut** and – at the start of 2009 – passengers were hit by another **above-inflation round of fare increases**.

Frustration is growing within the group at the lack of commitment to match its efforts, and 2009 will be a critical year in determining the future viability of FOWS.

For all the latest on Walkden station, be sure to visit:

Website: www.walkdenstation.org.uk

Blog: walkdenstation.wordpress.com

What is FOWS ?

- We are a volunteer organisation formed in February 2007.
 - We have a written constitution, committee, officers and operate a bank account.
 - We regularly perform volunteer works to improve the station and its surroundings.
 - We campaign for safety, security, service, and environmental improvements at Walkden station (see details, right).
 - We have formally adopted Walkden station and been Safety Briefed by Northern Rail for platform work.
 - We are members of ACoRP (the Association of Community Rail Partnerships) and work with Northern Rail, GMPTE, & Salford City Council to improve the facilities and services provided for users of Walkden station.
 - We hold regular progress meetings every two months, an Annual General Meeting, and occasional public meetings.
 - Our membership is open to all users of Walkden station. Membership for 2009 costs a token £1.
 - We are not aligned to any political party.
 - We maintain a website and blog where our progress and news about the station are published.
 - We clean and tidy the station most weekends.
 - We run projects to build & maintain gardens on the station.
 - We campaign for Walkden station through the local press, internet and by writing to Northern Rail, Network Rail, Salford City Council, GMPTE, and The Office of Rail Regulation.
 - We liaise with Salford's highways department to improve pedestrian access to the station.
 - We survey passenger numbers using Walkden.
 - We are compiling a history of the station to encourage local interest in its heritage.
 - We apply for funding for projects to improve the station environment.
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FOWS Objectives

Safety



The station should be safe and accessible to all who wish to use it. This means providing step-free access for the benefit of elderly or mobility-impaired passengers, and reducing the dangerously large gap between the platform level and train doorways.

Pedestrian access to the station is across busy, dangerous roads and needs to be made safer.

Security



Walkden station is only manned part-time and can be a frightening place after dark. Anti-social behaviour is commonplace.

GMPTe have plans to install CCTV cameras at stations along the Atherton line ... but not at Walkden.

Services



Rush-hour trains are chronically over-crowded and even weekend and evening are often full.

Sunday services stopped in the 1960's but we believe the massive social changes that have taken place since then mean restarting the Sunday timetable is long overdue.

Environment



FOWS want to make Walkden station a brighter, cleaner, more pleasant place to catch a train. We're working on more gardening plans, toward repainting the buildings, and installing artwork.

The station facilities badly need improvement: there is no public address system, help point, live train information display, nor even a modern, clean shelter.

Trackside litter is a constant eyesore.

2008 – FOWS' Year In Review

January

- ☼ Shadow Transport Minister Theresa Villiers follows in the footsteps of Transport Minister Dr Ruth Kelly and visits Walkden station.

March

- ☼ A good turn out for FOWS' first Annual General Meeting
- ☼ FOWS, armed with buckets of soapy water, clean the station frontage.
- ☼ Following FOWS pressure Network Rail renew the pigeon netting under the road bridge outside the entrance.

April

- ☼ FOWS repair vandalised flower beds.
- ☼ Salford council conduct a survey to assess demand for a pedestrian crossing outside the station.

May

- ☼ FOWS install first 3 steel planters on the platform.

July

- ☼ FOWS organise a 120th birthday celebration for the station.
- ☼ FOWS clear the platform of weeds (which had reached several inches high in places).
- ☼ The station canopy is repainted by Network Rail.

September

- ☼ FOWS shortlisted for Best Station Adoption Group at the ACoRP National Rail awards.

October

- ☼ FOWS shortlisted for Best Community Group at Salford City Council's Community & Social Care awards.
- ☼ FOWS present at Northern Rail's Stakeholders conference in York.

November

- ☼ FOWS passenger survey records a 23% surge in passenger numbers in one year.
- ☼ New flower bed built at west end of Manchester platform.
- ☼ Flower beds replanted with winter plants.

December

- ☼ Meet The Manager session at the station.
 - ☼ New planters installed at east end of platform.
 - ☼ Empty poster case filled with winter-themed poetry.
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