



**The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service**

**F:WS**

Friends of WALKDEN Station

# **Friends of Walkden Station recognised with Queen's Award for Voluntary Service for 2015**

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A voluntary group from Walkden working in the community to improve the environment and services at Walkden railway station has been honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK.

Since 2007 Friends of Walkden Station (FoWS) have followed a three-point strategy to improve the station environment, campaign for infrastructure and service improvements, and raise the profile of the station as a valuable community asset. Major achievements have included the installation of flower beds and 20 steel planters, a successful station gala, and the re-introduction of Sunday services nearly 40 years after they were withdrawn.



FoWS volunteers at Walkden station with some of the 20 planters installed along the open platform area.

Andy Barlow, Chair, and Angela Critchley, Treasurer, from FoWS attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace on May 20th where they met the Queen and other winners of this year's award.

FoWS is one of 187 charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award this year. The number of awards handed out to groups have increased by over 60% from 2014, due to an increase in high quality applications, showing that the voluntary sector is thriving and full of innovative ideas to tackle community challenges.

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work in their communities. The awards were created in 2002 to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee and winners are announced each year on 2 June – the anniversary of the Queen's Coronation. Award winners this year range from Ablaze, a charity helping to raise academic achievement amongst disadvantaged young people in Bristol to a volunteer rescue boat service on Loch Lomond.

Friends of Walkden Station will receive the award from the Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester later this summer.

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service Committee Chair, former broadcast journalist Martyn Lewis CBE said:

"I warmly congratulate all of the inspirational voluntary groups who have been rewarded for their community work with a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. The judging panel for this year's awards were struck by the quality and breadth of all the successful groups. The thousands of volunteers who give up spare time to help others in their community and to help solve problems demonstrate the best of democracy in action."

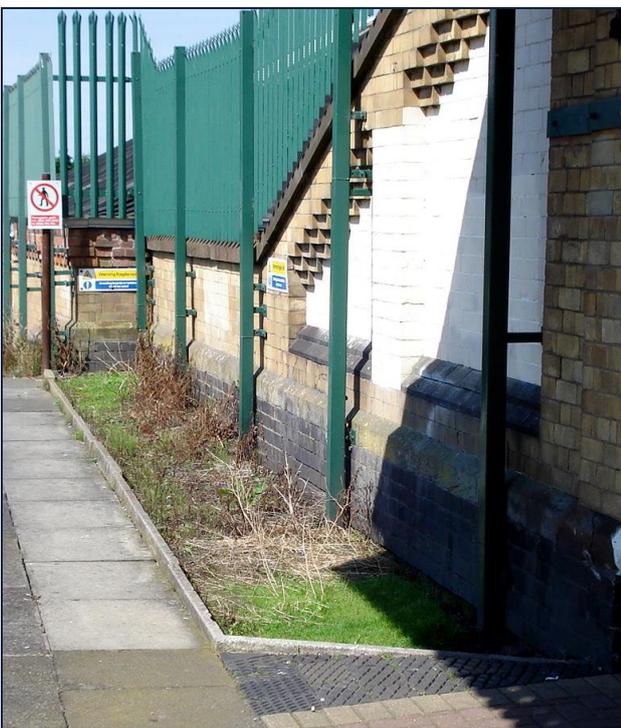


Walkden station during a busy gala day organised by FoWS to celebrate the return of Sunday services

Minister for Civil Society, Rob Wilson, said: "I would like to congratulate all groups who received this year's Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, in recognition of their fantastic achievements. The hard work and commitment that goes into the work of these organisations is surpassed only by the passion and motivation of the individuals who volunteer. I hope these groups continue to inspire others to get involved and make a positive impact so that we can continue to build a bigger, stronger society."

Andy Barlow, Chair of Friends of Walkden Station, said "We are

absolutely delighted to receive this very prestigious award, which is a reflection of the efforts of our volunteers whose work makes a real difference to our local community. We warmly welcome anyone who would like to join our group, and help us to deliver further improvements to Walkden Station for everyone to enjoy".



Above: This disused patch of earth on Walkden station has been transformed by FoWS into a colourful flower bed.

## Notes to editors

1. Lord Lieutenants are the monarch's representatives in their lieutenancy. There are 98 Lord Lieutenants who cover all areas of the UK.
2. This year there were 187 winners of The Queen's Award Voluntary Service from across the UK. More information on the winners can be found at the London Gazette **<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/>**
3. Any group of two or more people that has participated in voluntary work for more than three years can be nominated for the award. Full details on how to nominate are available at **<http://qavs.direct.gov.uk/>**
4. Nominations for the 2016 awards close on 18 September 2015
5. More details about Friends of Walkden Station can be found on our website **<http://www.walkdenstation.org.uk>**
6. For enquiries about FoWS please contact our Chair Andy Barlow: [ADBarlow@aol.com](mailto:ADBarlow@aol.com) or telephone 07802 228102