



Friends of Squires Gate Railway Station - August to October 2024 - Team Update

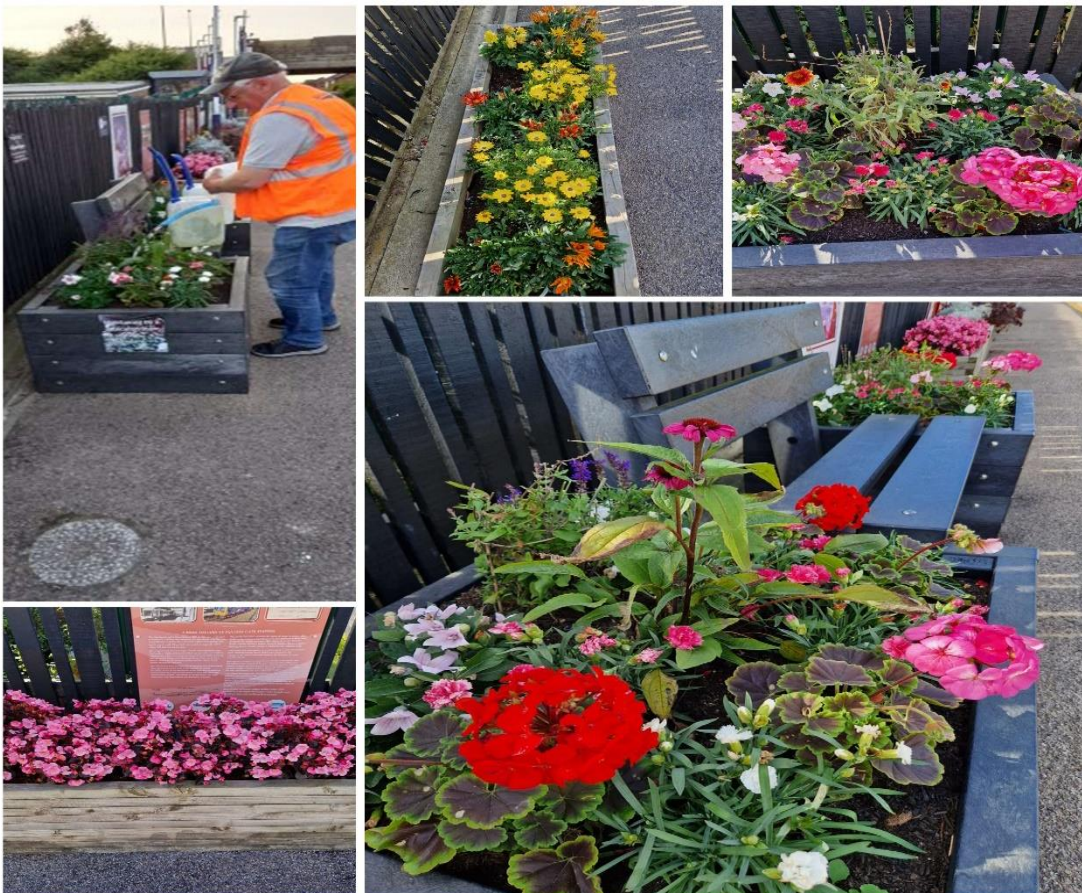
After installation of the two posts for the new station sign on Platform 2 in July, our work continued into August and we began the next stage which involved the laying of paving behind the large sleeper bed. This was required in order to provide a safe working area both for the eventual installation of the station sign board, and to enable us to care for the plants in the sleeper bed, an area where we had previously struggled because the area was very uneven.



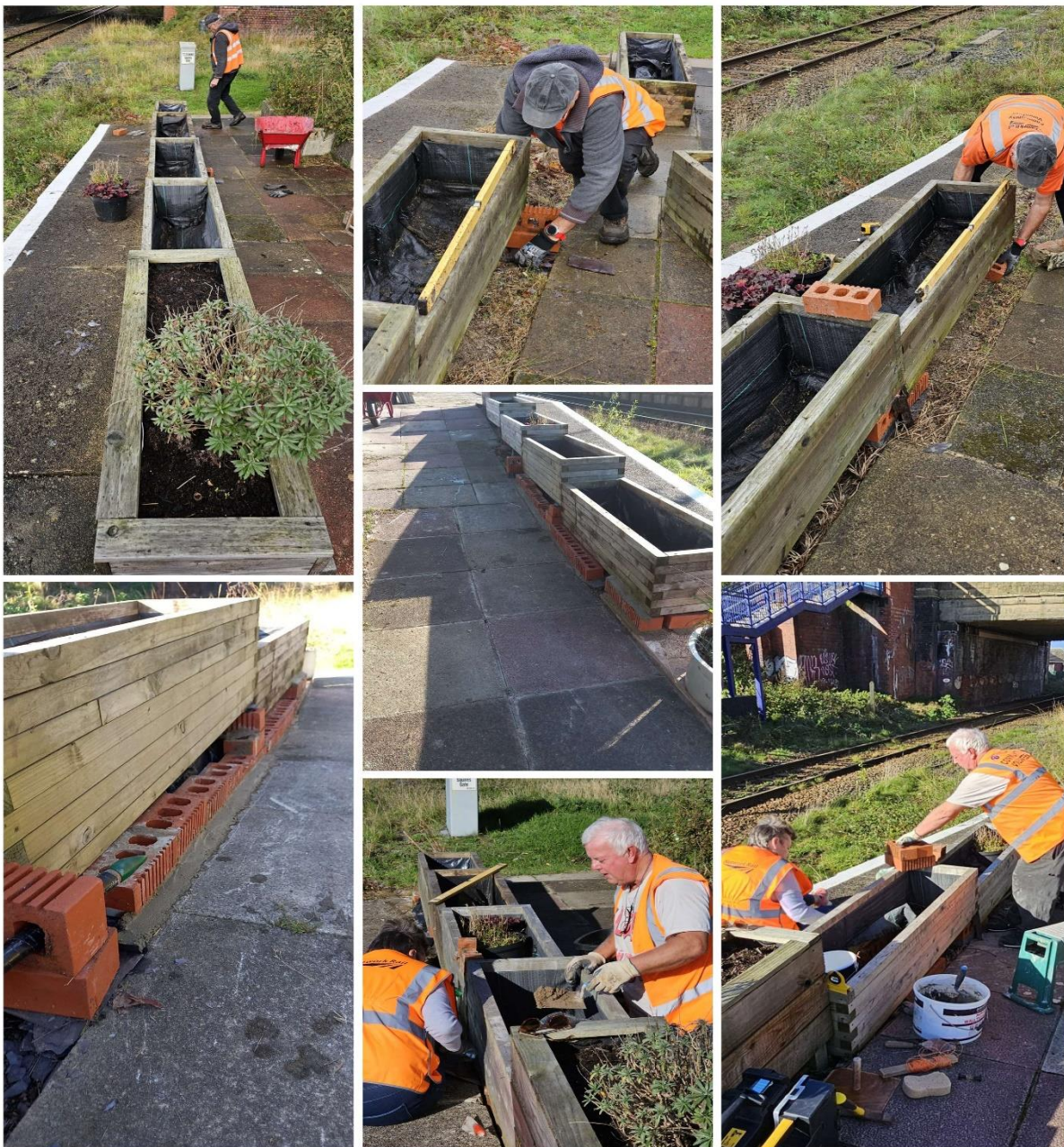
Thankfully we had obtained over 30 paving slabs and stone setts from various local sources at no cost to us and we had previously laid over 1.7 tons of grit sand in late 2023 on top of two layers of membrane to subdue any weeds, but had to order another 800kgs to finish off the paved area. The new station sign is going to be installed in Spring 2025 to coincide with the 200 years of train travel event year.



The plants that we had replaced on Platform 1 in July using the grant from Northern were looking extremely good along with the others that had been put in previously and they are still providing a good display up to now, though we know a frost is looming as we reach the end of October which could affect them. We get lots of compliments from rail users and residents as to how good the station always looks.



Moving on into **September and October** we moved the raised beds from the centre of Platform 2 onto the ramp area (three of them were the very first beds we ever installed on Platform 2 in 2019), we positioned and joined them together and laid bricks loosely under the edges to provide extra support and then mixed mortar in order to make a solid base, the project is still work in progress due to holidays and the weather, but it's taking shape as you can see. Once completed we are going to stain the timber and then fill them with compost, inserting spring bulbs and winter bedding, which should provide an excellent display in Spring 2025, the grant from the Town Council will greatly help us to fulfil this project. We might also add something relative to the 200-year anniversary - one suggestion has already been made by our team.



The perennials on Platform 2 have been looking excellent during the late Summer and into Autumn with the Nepeta on the outer front edges of the sleeper bed coming back flourishingly after being cut back in late July. You can even see our latest recruit Jake leaning over the blue and green raised bed doing some dead heading, a sharp learning curve for him as he knows nothing about plants but he was doing a great job after a little education by the team. Even the leopard caterpillars were having a feast on the vegetation. We also managed to cut back overgrown brambles and grasses at the end of Platform 2 and planted various shrubs and bulbs that can be left on their own to fend for themselves over Winter.



We obtained two more Belfast sinks from a local resident in July for Platform 2 which means we now have 5, one of which is a water trough sunk into the surface and used by our wildlife. The 4 used for display purposes were all planted up in October ready for Spring using rockery plants purchased from "Wild Daisy" a family run business based on Headroomgate Rd in St Anne's.



We have quite a few bugs on the station and throughout the summer and even into autumn we have had lots of grasshoppers everywhere you turn. (We also had some graffiti outside the gates of the compound but we have removed it). Our hedgehog has recently been seen on our wildlife cameras, its looking very well fed for Winter, we think it's in one of our hedgehog hotels, and it's an extremely fast mover as well, it almost gallops along the platform.



We now have three water tanks in use on Platform 2 which gives us 3000 litres of water with top ups being provided when required by Fylde Ashton Depot (usually during the summer season when it's hot and water levels can quickly diminish). We are grateful for the support and we have been able to obtain spent compost and pond sludge as well, which we will use for the ramp beds.



Its always good to be able to get some pictures of the rolling stock that use the line, especially when we can embrace them around the flora of the station.



We are always grateful for the all the support given by our partners without which we could not do what we do for the benefit of rail users and the local communities around us. Thank you!

Barrie Russell/Paul Nettleton
Friends of Squires Gate Railway Station (Fylde Lancashire)