

## Friends of Ansdell & Fairhaven Station - Team Update (May - August 2025)

We started **May** in an exciting mood with bunting on our mind as we got ready to join the VE Day celebrations, we do like an opportunity to get something exciting and different up at the station to show rail users that we are adventurous with our use of themes. Both Daphne and myself put up the bunting. They were taken down towards the end of May after the celebrations were over.



We have also been working on solutions to the "slope" that runs between the path down to the platform and residential apartments on the other side of the neighbouring fencing - it previously had a row of conifers as you can see in the picture below.



We have been adding wildflower seeds over the last twelve months in order to make it a transformative area and created a "project" because it's going to take a few years for it to grow and we will probably need additional funding in order to see it through to completion. Purposely we have not watered the slope either as that would create a false micro climate, wildflower seedlings have to adapt to the environment in which they are to grow.



As far as our station horticulture was concerned the changing weather patterns meant that we needed to do quite a bit of watering to the flower and shrub beds as they were extremely dry, we also collected pine cones for the Women's Institute and to replenish those in our OXO bed. We also tidied the beds whilst taking pictures of our plants which adorn the station footprint.



In **June** we decided that it was time for our water tank to be cleaned out, an opportunity to get it ready for whatever Summer was going to lay before us. It looked like a really serious mucky task as well, needing the use of marigolds (not the flowers) and cleaning materials. Don't be deceived by the outside of the tank after cleaning, its pristine on the inside, weathering is natural to fit in with the surroundings and not make it attractive to those who would enjoy damaging it. It was also raised off the ground on pallets and timber rails so that it would be easier to fill watering cans once it was recommissioned. Later in the month Fylde filled the water tank with 900 litres of water and we were ready for our summer watering - job done, box ticked until next Spring.





Early in the month we did lots of grass cutting, bramble reduction, weeding and insect searches, looking for some good photographs of our wildlife. (*Not only do Squires Gate have foxes*), but we have one as well and field mice which can be seen on the black and white wildlife cam pictures. The two blackbirds seemed to be having a good conversation, probably about their family life in Ansdell.



We took the opportunity to purchase some plants from Kirkham Open Prison which included these geraniums along with other bedding plants, as you will recall the temperatures were excessive between 72 and 78 degrees across the region so we managed to get them in during lulls in the temperatures and lots of watering to keep them healthy and nourished which produced some stunning beds. We are so grateful for the support from Fylde without which we would really struggle with bringing water to the station.

**July** continued the warm theme and the constant need for us to be watering our plants. The new height of the water tank has led to some wet feet as it gushed out faster, but with new watering cans it is easier and definitely cleaner. We received some plants from Fylde Gardeners for use at the station, they are always welcome and this time there were verbena, zinnia, snapdragons and petunias/busy lizzies, though some needed some serious deadheading, but nevertheless they filled out the beds. Daphne and Paul can be seen doing their bit inserting bedding plants.





Jill was mowing (using the St Annes Station mower a kind of "community" tool used to support other stations) but she was interested in some kind of insect. After that she had a break from mowing and did a little bit of fence painting where previously a poster case had been positioned.



Here are some of the many wonderful pictures she captures of our wildlife (butterflies, moths and caterpillars) at the station, so stunning and ever so colourful. There must be a calendar in here somewhere with all these pictures...





And there are more:



It was a very strenuous time for the team throughout **July** with all the watering due to the hot weather but the plants survived and put on a good show for everyone who visited or passed through the station. The greenery was a survivor and always needed attention, almost a jungle, but natural habit for our wildlife. Paul is just about visible in his hiviz and I was examining something interesting in the greenery. Even the bridge parapets are growing back again with the invasive buddleia becoming quite predominant.





You can also see the station sign which is hidden from people approaching from the main shopping part of Woodlands Rd (because of the tree) and not visible at all from Clifton Drive South because the road rises upwards to the bridge deck. Ideally the sign would be better located above the station steps so that it is equally distant and visible from both directions. However, we suspect it would be a costly task to move it, but we have asked about it and that is all we can do.

By **August** we had managed to get our strimmer repaired which meant we could get down to some trimming of those hard-to-reach areas that are inaccessible with the mower. Watering at the station was confined to early morning or late evening due to the heat, with minor weeding taking place.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> August when I was at the station, I saw two people looking around the station and asked them what they were doing. Apparently, they were checking out the station for the Royal Lytham St Annes Golf Club and I showed them where people gained access to the golf course on the occasion of the last Open Golf Tournament, but couldn't get anything more out of them. We thought they might be considering options for the Ladies Open Golf Championships in 2026.

Jill and I chopped back some of the brambles, they have a habit of fighting back, especially on the platform beds, they appear everywhere.



We also seem to have a phantom brick artist at the station who had created some different brick art forms a bit like ET.



Unfortunately, there are not a lot of pictures for August due in part to the hot weather and the availability of team members to take them.

I will leave you with a couple of pictures of our station the first one is from Wikimedia.org that dates back to around 2008 and one we took in 2024 from a slightly different angle. The houses in the distance have disappeared and the conifers behind the platform have grown considerably.



Karen Cornforth

Friends of Ansdell and Fairhaven Station (September 2025)