

Marple Station Community Hub

Key groups engaged with: Friends of Marple Station; Marple Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee; Network Rail; Northern; Marple Local History Society; Transport for Greater Manchester; Stockport Council.

28 Local Groups (source Marple Website) contacted initially by email.

7 Local Primary Schools

3 Colleges

Plus, a number of groups and individuals (see appendix) who represent potential partner organisations and/or larger 3rd sector 'community' orgs.

Community engagement

Email/Letter to Community Groups:

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Name of Organisation

Marple Station – Community Hub Feasibility Study

Dear *Name*

The feasibility study to explore the replacement of the old waiting room at Marple Station, commissioned by Friends of Marple Station (FOMS) is underway. We are grateful for all the letters of support which helped in this successful application.

A new building on the station could include rooms/café/toilets/studio/work space for community and local business use. I have been asked to contact community groups and ask you what kind of use you/the organisation that you represent might have for a new community building. We are very keen to know what you think Marple needs and what the issues might be.

Please see below for more detail of the project.

Thank you for your help

Rachel Francis
On Behalf of Friends of Marple Station

Background info for community groups

Marple station is well-used, with around 500,000 passengers per year. The original station buildings were demolished in 1970 and replaced by a small ticket office on the Sheffield-bound platform and a waiting room on the Manchester-bound platform.

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Recent investment in a new footbridge and the ticket office was welcomed by Friends of Marple Station, but the 1970 waiting room – which leaks and has poor mobility access - is in dire need of replacement.

In 2016 Friends of Marple Station bid successfully for “Seed Corn Funding” from Northern Rail. The feasibility study expands upon the need to replace the existing waiting room with proposals for a “Community Hub”.

This is a unique opportunity to provide more than just a waiting room: it could include better facilities (e.g. café, toilets) and tourist information for rail-users; community space for meetings, community arts; business space for local micro-businesses/start-ups.

The Marple Station feasibility study is now underway. Work is being undertaken by
The Railway Consultancy Ltd
Professor Paul Salveson
Friends of Marple Station
Architect, Robert Keefe RIBA ARB

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Emerging Ideas

Response from the initial outreach was slow but has yielded some useful responses, both on potential use and also on other issues that arise. Response was followed up with phone calls and more detailed exploration of the ideas coming up.

Ideas

- Community meeting space. Detailed included – design primarily for smaller groups say 6 – 12, must be well equipped – tables/chairs, projector, screen, whiteboard, Wi-Fi, refreshments. One suggestion for tele-conferencing – requires market research.
- Space for community activities (e.g. fitness classes, community arts). Details: Well-equipped, attention to design of space and floor area.
- Tourist Information Point/Local Walks/local history exhibitions. Trans peak expressed need for a larger waiting gathering area for walking groups and supported having a Tourist Information Point.
- Station Cafe was supported by local groups, potential user groups (of a community hub) and passenger survey by FoMS. (Report has gone into this option in detail on page) Start Point suggested Cookery classes (which they run).
- Drop-in/Health Centre - NHS but also Natural Health options
- Art gallery /exhibitions/ develop Agatha Christie theme – there was not much feedback on this suggestion although nobody felt it was a bad idea.
- There was interest and support for further links with schools / school groups^[1] the main ideas were around rail safety/local history/art on the station.

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- Multi-purpose office and desk space /workspace for start up/micro businesses/social enterprise, with an online booking system. Vicky Cropper suggested that this kind of rentable office/desk space could be offered to groups connected to Marple station by rail and has provided suggested contacts for development.

Issues

The key issues for potential user groups are:

1. The need for guaranteed parking at the station
2. The need for toilets that are available for use, even when ticket office closed
3. The issues around safe access to and from the station
4. The need for online booking and key availability for rentable / community facilities
5. Equip spaces well to attract use i.e. for office space – modern whiteboard/Wi-Fi etc. For a fitness studio, modern dance floor/equipment
6. Aim to establish lasting partnerships for community involvement.

Passenger Feedback - source FoMS station surveys June 2017

Improvement	Respondents	Respondents (%)
New waiting room	27	22
Café	50	41
Toilets	76	62
More car parking	51	42
Safer crossing of Brabyns Brow	81	66

EXPANDING ON EARLY FEEDBACK

1 - Develop new community partnerships for long term viability and mutual benefit.

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This was a point made especially strongly by Vicky Cropper who is Regional Community and Sustainability Manager, Central Region for Northern rail. Vicky stressed the need to develop partnerships that would help to keep the community hub busy and financially sustained in the longer term. She cited several different options, one of which was Turning Point.

EXAMPLE

TURNING POINT - 'RAIL JOURNEY TO RECOVERY'.

Northern Rail funded phase one of a project, which set out to integrate rail-based activity within established programs of rehabilitation in Cumbria through the seed corn funding.

The original trial project was a partnership between Community Rail Cumbria and Turning Point, a national charity specialising in the rehabilitation of people with substance and alcohol abuse issues. The purpose - to integrate rail-based activity within established programmes of rehabilitation. Small work groups carry out structured maintenance tasks at stations - ranging from painting neglected shelters to tending station gardens, landscaping and wildlife conservation.

This project benefits the stations. And it benefits the participants – giving them a real sense of worth and value again. At the end of the rehabilitation programme, participants receive a Certificate of Appreciation to acknowledge their support and participation. Having now established that the concept works a framework for developing the project will be taken forwards in other areas.

NEXT STEPS - to explore a partnership arrangement between Turning Point, Northern and FoMS, centred at Marple Station. Based on the model trialled in Cumbria. Groups of 5 – 8 plus supervisor could carry out work on station/station environment. Frequency to be agreed. Rail passes. Would be useful to have a storage unit in new building and somewhere to make a cup of tea/eat sandwiches. Oldham group keen to open discussions as early as August with FOMS and Northern. To discuss how the project could go forwards, i.e. aims and objectives, funding, risk management. Turning Point. Base: Manchester /Oldham Liam Finnigan 07976202354 Liam.Finnigan@turning-point.co.uk

2 – Community – led or local small business options for running a café

There are some good examples of Community-run cafes across rail networks. (See Paul Salveson's paper for more on this). This paper explores three different and proven examples.

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Who was interested in running or helping?	Who simply wanted to use a café?
Catering department at Stockport College	Passengers – 41%
Start Point – could possibly help. Also run cookery courses.	Trans peak Walks
Opportunity for local, entrepreneurial chef?	Local groups

EXAMPLE. Gobowen Station community cafe

The facilities provided at Gobowen Station (Wales) include a ticket and booking office, café, and toilets. Gobowen Station is run by Severn Dee agency, which was established 20 years ago. *Severn Dee Travel is operated as a not-for-profit company administered by a group of six volunteer directors* and is a pioneer in the history of community rail enterprise.

A local educational establishment, Derwen College, runs the lively station café. The college is for young people with learning and physical disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, medical needs and challenging behavior. The college focuses on building employability skills through authentic work opportunities in commercial outlets and off-campus with partners in the wider community. This has led to a very productive working relationship, which began with students from Derwen College being given work experience on the station. Now the college

runs the café and the station may soon become an outlet for crafts produced at the college. The café provides all-round value – for passengers, for the station as a business and by providing valuable work experience for Derwen students.

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EXAMPLE. Etchingham Bistro

The Bistro at Etchingham Station is managed by a local Community Interest Company via a tri-partite lease agreement with Network Rail and South Eastern Rail. In 2007 the station buildings were derelict. Less than ten years later and a thriving Bistro opens early each morning and stays open till late. The business plan revolved around opening a Bistro-style café with a license that would cater for early morning commuters, lunches and dinners for villagers and visitors plus local and social events. The upstairs rooms would be let for meetings etc. The Bistro would benefit rail users and local community alike and create jobs locally.

The CIC interviewed for a local couple to run the Bistro. Paul and Julie Collins were chosen - they run it as their own business and are not employed by the CIC. The Bistro was provided fully equipped and furnished – “ready to go”. Food is cooked on the premises and everything is of a very high quality. The Bistro staff also organise imaginative social events. They applied for grants allowing them to provide training and work experience for a catering student from a local college. The CIC structure has proved to be a useful model for managing station buildings at a local level. The CIC provided business advice and also a financial cushion to take in the peaks and troughs of early development.



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EXAMPLE. Café Des Fleurs at Rye

The Café des Fleurs at Rye Station is a Café and Flower Shop run as small local business, paying a commercial rent. It has been open for over four years and (in 2016) supported one full-time worker, three part-time workers, one work placement and one extra during holiday period. The café is held on a 6 year tri-partite lease through NwR and Southern Rail and is run as an independent business. The café opens every weekday at 6.30 am to meet the needs of early morning commuters and stays open till 4pm. The early commuters are important trade for the café and the availability of good coffee etc. enhances passenger experience for the Rail Industry. Commuters make regular use of the café.

The Café des Fleurs has strong links with the local community, creating local work and work placements. The florist arm of the business makes displays for local weddings etc. and older people from the community come specially to the café so that they can watch the flower displays being created in the shop. A café that is also a florist is an unusual idea but it works extremely well. For a relatively small station, with a relatively low footfall in terms of commercial viability, a business that can provide more than one service is often a good way to make the business plan sustainable.



*** I have included contact emails for these 3 café projects in appendix

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3 – Address the need for better equipped meeting/Co-work space in Marple/environs

Meeting Space, Desk space, Co-work space

Numerous responses have indicated the need for more meeting space, citing the library as the main space available at the moment.

Vicky Cropper <Vicky.Cropper@northernrailway.co.uk> suggested it is an opportunity to offer a new station meeting facility to groups at other stations along the line. She has provided contacts for following this idea up (Appendix)

Vicky also proposed the new project could offer desk resources for ex offenders providing access to landline and internet use as part of Northern scheme to get them back in work.. Vicky's contact for this is Stuart McGregor, who works for Tomorrow's People. He's identified local need for facilities providing internet, landline, skype for interview. Funding available for providers.

Tomorrow's people: Provide support for young people who have not made a successful transition into the work place, for adults who face complex barriers to getting and keeping a job and for students who are at risk of under-performing at school.

Contact email address is; smcgregor@tomorrows-people.co.uk

Mark Whitaker mark@marple-uk.com - provided detailed response to meeting space needs (these were echoed by other respondees, citing:

- Parking availability
- Opening hours and access/keys
- Well-equipped - tables, chairs IT facilities (projector, screen, white board)
- Wi-Fi throughout. Smartphone recharging points
- Toilets with disabled access
- Affordable Rates. Online Booking

A good working example is at Beccles Station (see Paul Salveson's section on successful station buildings)

4 – Involving schools

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“We would love to be involved in linking with the station/ Community. The school’s long history links with the station as the school was established to serve the families of the Irish workers who came to dig/ build the railway - as shown on the board near the station steps. Count us in! Art, history, personal and social, geography - we can make links with all these areas of the curriculum, and more - and besides, it is a great way to introduce/ teach the children about rail.”

Fionuala Boucher, St Mary’s Primary School, Marple. Email fionualaboucher@gmail.com

Local suggestions for involving schools have included:

Developing local history connections

Developing concept of Art on the Station

Liaison with British Transport Police (contacts provided in Appendix) for Rail Safety classes (on station and train rides)

5 – Well-being Centre

TfGM “ACTION STATIONS” outlines opportunities for accessible and convenient exercise centres in stations; providing gym /exercise classes and the opportunity to bring together as wide a community of people in and around the station as possible.

The facility could include:

- exercise programmes for those commuting
- exercise programmes targeting specific groups within the community including: children and young people, older people and the elderly, those with physical disabilities and special needs, new mums;
- doctor referrals
- confidence, self-awareness and positive body image programmes;
- nutrition clinics to provide dietary advice and programmes; and physical therapy clinics to improve posture, address injuries and work-related problems such as RSI.

This might be complemented by a Drop-in centre that could provide a treatment and advice service for minor illness and injuries plus a range of primary care services including immunisations, minor surgery and women’s health. TfGM contacts in appendix.

Appendices

CONTACTS

Marple Station Community Hub

ORGANISATION

CONTACT

EMAIL

Marple N'hood Forum Mgmnt C'tee

Joe Harvey

harveyjoseph379@gmail.com

Marple Civic Society

Gillian Postill

info@marplecivicsociety.org.uk

Mellor and Marple Bridge U3A

Malcolm Moss

malcolmu3a@gmail.com

Marple Local History Society

Ann Hearle

chairman@mlhs.org.uk

Revealing Oldknow Legacy

Pamela Pearson

pamela.pearson@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Marple Chess Club

Terry Cowling

marplechess@aol.com

Transpeak Walks

Karen Padley

enquiries@transpeakwalks.co.uk

U3A Mellor and Marple Bridge

secretary@mbmu3a.org.uk

Marple U3A

u3a.marple@gmail.com

Dragon Mini Railway

dragonrailway@hotmail.co.uk

Marple Bridge Association

marplebridgeassociation@gmail.com

Marple Health

info@marplehealth.co.uk

Society of Marple Artists

masteeden@btinternet.com

Friends of Marple Memorial Park

Mark Whittaker

info@marplememorialpark.org.uk, mark@marplememorialpark.org.uk

HeartBeat Chorus

Online

<http://www.heartbeatchorus.com/contact-us>

Marple French Group

Form

marplefrenchgroup@gmail.com

Marple Tai Chi Group

brendahowlett@hotmail.com

Stockport and District Railway Modellers

sdrmclubroom@gmail.com

Sk6 Spinners CC (Marple)

Online

Form

All Saints' C of E Primary School

schooladmin@allsaints-pri.stockport.sch.uk

Rose Hill Primary School

headteacher@rosehill.stockport.sch.uk

St.Mary's Catholic Primary School

headteacher@st-marys-marplebridge.stockport.sch.uk

Ludworth Primary School

admin@ludworth.stockport.sch.uk

Mellor Primary School

schooladmin@mellor.stockport.sch.uk

New Mills Primary School

enquiries@newmills-pri.derbyshire.sch.uk

Disley Primary School

admin@disley.cheshire.sch.uk

Turning Point in M'chester

info@turning-point.co.uk, Liam.Finnigan@turning-point.co.uk

Stockport College

Catering unit

enquiries@stockport.ac.uk

West Cheshire College

Catering unit

info@west-cheshire.ac.uk

Marple Sixth Form College

CHOICES

info@cmcnet.ac.uk

Start Point

torie@startpoint.org.uk

info@startpoint.org.uk

Local Transport police

manchester.npt@btp.pnn.police.uk

Northern Regional CRP

Vicky Cropper

Vicky.Cropper@northernrailway.co.uk

Stockport CRP

Stephen Forde

stephen.forde@stockport.gov.uk

Tomorrow's people

Steve McGregor

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Marple Station Community Hub

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Joe Harvey	<harveyjoseph379@gmail.com>
Hilary Atkinson	<chairman@mlhs.org.uk>
Stephen Forde	<stephen.forde@stockport.gov.uk>
Owain Roberts	<owain.roberts@tfgm.com>
Cllr Geoff Abell	<cldr.geoff.abell@stockport.gov.uk>
Malcolm Allan	<cldr.malcolm.allan@stockport.gov.uk>
Cllr Annette Finnie	<cldr.annette.finnie@stockport.gov.uk>

STATION/OFFICE SPACE

Friends of Rose Hill	– Rachel Singer	rachelbrianelm@btinternet.com
Friends of Chinley	– Paul Tatham	tattams@gmail.com
Andrew Walker		andrew.walker@derbyshire.gov.uk

STATION CAFÉ experience

Café des Fleurs	Lucy Forrester	ljforrester6@hotmail.com
Etchingham Station CIC	Sue Westbrook	spwest177@gmail.com
	Colin Phillips	colin@gospaplanning.com
Gobowen Station / Severn Dee Travel	Sheila Dee	dee.rail@tinyworld.co.uk

TURNING POINT

Cumbria CRP	Laurence Hilland	m.hilland@btinternet.com
	DawnMcGough	Dawn.McGough@cumbria.gov.uk
Manchester Turning Point	Liam Finnigan	Liam.Finnigan@turning-point.co.uk

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