

Meols Station

CHESHIRE BEST KEPT STATION COMPETITION - 2021

It has been another challenging year in the gardening season, thanks in part to the pandemic, with a much reduced team, the importance of keeping the public space well cared for has been our top priority. Footfall initially was greatly reduced, however that didn't detract from the continued work required, which was/is to ensure that work carried out on the beds at Meols



station continued/s & remains a positive place in which to visit. Either to catch a service or for some locals, advice on the planting in situ, or their own gardening challenges! This has been the main focus of the Friends of Hoylake & Meols in Bloom, during the period between March 2020/21 period.



Beds which were planted at the commencement of the first lockdown in March 2020, have come on in leaps and bounds. The growth has been unbelievable, despite a mini heatwave during the time of planting & the first lockdown just about to commence. Our vision of how the beds should look eventually, surpassed any of our original expectations. Our thinking at the time was a requirement to ensure that the beds were able to thrive during any future drought conditions, as the garden areas receive no



Newly created Ornamental Grasses and Roses flower beds

shade during the day, therefore it was important to plant a number of low maintenance, drought tolerant shrubs, which would also attract bees & butterflies, which we continue to see in abundance. This planting regime, whilst retaining some of the original rose plants, has been instrumental during the past 18 months, due to the current conditions & of course working access restrictions to the station area were initially challenging, in particular when watering was a requirement.



How the new Ornamental Grasses and Roses beds look today

Another focus of this public space is largely to engage with members of the local community and as a community group we are always keen to keep them updated via our Facebook page, with daily/weekly updates on any work which has been carried out, with photographs a plenty. We regularly receive a myriad of positive messages, with support from all those who enjoy this public space. It is a great opportunity to connect with others which helps reduce feelings of isolation or exclusion, in particular those members who were unable to join in with undertaking any "hands on" involvement. We continue to receive tremendous support from Merseyrail, those in head office along with local staff who work at the station who were/are keen to support our team in any way they can. All of whom fully appreciate the work we carry out and recognise the contribution we make to this public space, along with those in the wider community.

We have heard so much in the press & on social media about the toll our mental health has suffered during the pandemic. It is well documented, that working in a public garden space can improve the overall mental well being & mood, not only for those who work in it, but also for those who enjoy the space. It has been & is an incredibly rewarding undertaking, which has been largely possible, with the incredible support we receive from those at Merseyrail.

As mentioned we do receive a number of wonderful & supportive comments from members of the public, in particular when working at the station. From those who remember, with great fondness, the space & how it looked way back in the 1950/60's, when they were growing up & how things were very different back then, when the space was maintained by the then local station master! They continue to share their delight to see once again that the public space is being cared for with such passion, care & attention. We have also had those from other In Bloom teams, interested in the planting & how they could learn & adapt within their own areas.

Visiting locals from far away places & much warmer climes, take numerous photographs, which they promptly share with family & friends, amazed at the lovely colourful space, shared by all who use the station.

Future projects

It is hoped that once life returns to a pre pandemic nature, we can begin to focus on ideas which we hope will enhance the space, such as potentially capturing any rain water, and composting any green matter, all of which will be discussed with those at Merseyrail.