



**SHREWSBURY ABERYSTWYTH RAIL LIAISON COMMITTEE**

# **MINUTES**

**of an Executive meeting of the  
Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee  
in liaison with the Cambrian Coast Conference held on  
Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 10.30am  
By Zoom**

## **1. Record of attendance**

Present were: Cllr Trevor Roberts Chair  
Cllr Michael Williams Vice Chair  
Robert Robinson Secretary

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr E Jones-Williams.

## **2. Minutes of the meeting held by Zoom May 2020**

The meeting approved the minutes of the last meeting.

## **3. Actions to be taken forward from last meeting**

The meeting considered the list of actions to be taken forward and their status as follows:

- i) Letter to Minister regarding carriage designs and layouts.**  
A letter has been sent, awaiting response.
- ii) June update to be posted on the web site.**  
Updates have been posted.
- iii) Finalise consultation and issue future plan 2020-2025 for consideration at the next meeting.**  
The plan is prepared with suggested member alterations and is ready for adoption.

## **4. Financial Report**

The meeting considered a financial update.

Currently the account has £500 in it, the only invoice paid out was for a laser printer cartridge.

The meeting noted the issue of annual grant aid applications to Ceredigion, Powys, Gwynedd and Shropshire Councils.



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### 5. Ministers letter

The meeting noted the letter (as per attached at appendix A) to the Minister. There has been no reply to date. The Secretary will seek a response before the next meeting.

It is unlikely the carriage mock-up will be available before October due to the Covid19 restrictions.

A concern was expressed that with mid carriage doors there may be large gaps for passengers where there is a curved platform.

In particular Dovey Junction, Morfa Mawddach, Pensarn, Penrhyndeudraeth Minffordd and Criccieth are all on a curved alignment with some sharper than others. The measurements need a full technical measurement. The secretary is to point out possible problems to Transport for Wales.

### 6. Future Plan 2020-2025

The meeting considered the final draft of the above plan taking into account member's comments.

The plan is now to be published as ready for adoption and is to be emailed and posted on the web site to give time for any further members comments before adoption on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020 (the next Executive meeting).

### 7. Transport for Wales, Network Rail and British Transport Police

There were no matters of note to discuss.

### 8. North Wales Liaison Committee

The meeting considered update from the North and Mid Wales Association of Local Councils regarding the introduction of a Liaison Committee for the North Wales Lines. Transport for Wales has supported the new liaison committee and with the Association backing the proposals are now being taken forward.

### 9. Carno Station

The meeting noted the current situation with regards the re-opening of Carno Station. It is hoped that more news as to funding will be available soon.

### 10. Newtown Ticket Office

The meeting noted the closure of the ticket office at Newtown. The meeting was grateful to Gareth Marston for his work with the Office.



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### 11. Meeting with Welsh Government and action plan

The meeting considered progress on the action plan since the meeting with Welsh Government. (see attached at appendix B).

The actions to be taken forward are:

- a) A letter to be sent to Transport for Wales seeking a response to the action plan.
- b) If no satisfactory conclusion reached then a letter to be sent to Welsh Government.

### 12. Any other business

There was no other business raised at the meeting.

### 13. Date of next meeting

The date for the next Zoom Meeting is to be Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 10.30am. A link to the meeting to be issued the week before.

### 14. Actions to be taken forward from the meeting

No	Item
1	Publish minutes on web site
2	Publish final future plan 2020-2025
3	Letter to TfW regarding action plan from Welsh Government meeting. If no satisfactory response a letter to be sent to Welsh Government.
4	Confirm to TfW concern over platforms and access when trains with more central doors are in use.



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### Appendix A

29<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Ken Skate  
Minister for Economy,  
Transport and North Wales  
Welsh Government  
5th Floor  
Tŷ Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Dear Ken

#### **Cambrian Lines – new rolling stock 2022**

Good morning, I hope this letter finds you well.

I have been asked to write to you with the serious concerns that the Cambrian Lines liaison groups have regarding the delivery of the new rolling stock due to be in place in December 2022.

I can perhaps summarise our concerns as follows:

##### **Current services**

Currently the main line from Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth has an hourly service at peak times but a two hourly service at other times.

The Coast line has 9 trains each way per day.

At present the Sunday service has 5 trains per day.

##### **Proposed services**

The full hourly service for the main line from Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth is due to come into effect in December 2022.

The Coast line is to remain at 9 trains each way per day as a minimum.



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### **Number of 2 car units**

The current number of 2 car units that can run services on the Cambrian Lines (ETRMS Signalling system) is 24. This just about supports the existing services.

The proposed number of 2 car units will be reduced to 21 from December 2022 with more services being run.

The trains which run through to Birmingham International are 4 car units.

This is fewer units than at present, not more as we were informed at the time of the franchise discussions.

### **Cambrian Coast**

In the summer months (May through to September) a two car unit from Machynlleth to Barmouth is not enough. The overcrowding is at a dangerous level. For example a lady went ill on a train last year and the guard could not get to her to help due to the mass overcrowding. If there were an accident this dangerous situation will come to the fore under Health and Safety.

The Liaison Committee did offer a solution to this but to date any suggestion has not been taken up.

### **Design of new units**

The designs of the new units have some significant defects which are:

- a) There is only one toilet per two car unit for a journey of over 4 hours. (currently there are 2)
- b) The number of seats per carriage is reduced by 11 seats and therefore provides less passenger space.

There appears to be more luggage space and cycle space.

The number of passengers using the lines is substantially more since the new timetable in May 2015 and indicates strongly that 3 car units should be used where they are replacing 2 car units on the specification proposed by TFW.



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### Passenger numbers

The passenger numbers have increased (as set out above and in the reports completed in 2015/2106 and 2017 by SARLC for Welsh Government) with further increases expected into the future.

The need for more passenger space has been identified now and should be provided for at this stage.

It is noted that the new non-executive directors along with many other senior staff in TFW are not railway experienced and this may be a factor in what is being decided.

The views of the Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee are supported by the various surveys and reports (as mentioned above) which were completed and presented to the Welsh Government at their request (Edwina Hart was the Minister at that time).

These were completed as an independent organisation and not by the operators.

These reports also informed the new services put in place in 2015 and the proposed services in December 2022 (i.e. full hourly train timetable). Copies can be made available if you have not seen them.

We would welcome a meeting (by Zoom in these current times of the Coronavirus restrictions) with you and or a senior rail official from the Welsh Government to discuss the above and seek a workable solution to address the issues raised. Please do ask if we can be of any help with regards to the situation outlined above.

I would be pleased if you could consider the above and confirm that we can meet up in the very near future (virtually of course).

Kind regards.

*Robert A Robinson*

Robert A Robinson FRICS  
Secretary

CC Russell George  
Dyfedd Ellis-Thomas  
Tim James TFW



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### APPENDIX B

#### ACTION PLAN FROM WELSH GOVERNMENT MEETING

No	Heading	Action	By who	Status
1	Station Audits	A copy of the revised station audit to be provided to SARLC	LJ	Not received
2	Welshpool Station shelter	A new shelter to be considered in station audit review.	LJ	No action
3	Dementia & publicity Publicity to be altered to be visually impaired and dementia friendly in next issues.	Dementia & publicity Publicity to be altered to be visually impaired and dementia friendly in next issues.	CW	No action
4	Train designs	A mock up being prepared, details to be provided to SARLC when ready.	LJ	No action to date
5	Indicator boards in car parks	Indicator boards in car parks at Welshpool and Caersws to be taken forward through the station audit.	LJ	No action
6	Indicator boards on platforms	Indicator board at the Aberystwyth end of the Dovey Junction platform to be taken forward through the station audit.	LJ	No action
7	Train connections	Further consideration to be given to extending the time for the Cambrian Line trains to link with London & Cardiff Trains at Shrewsbury.	LJ	Nothing confirmed
8	Machynlleth-Barmouth	Further consideration to be given to Re-enforcing the seating provision during summer months along this stretch of line. See suggestions at 3.3 above in these minutes.	LJ	Nothing confirmed
9	Survey/Evaluation work	TfW to come back to SARLC regarding this work in time for the summer months.	LJ	No response
10	Events List	A list of major events to be provided by SARLC to TfW.	RAR	Issued



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11	Peak fares	The peak fares reference to be removed from publicity as it does not apply to the Cambrian Lines.	LJ	No response
12	Reservations	Reservations and their relationship with carriage numbering to be investigated.	LJ	No response
13	North Wales Liaison	Consideration to be given to a Liaison Committee for the North Coast Lines – Tfw to come back to RAR in time for the N&MWA meeting on 25 <sup>th</sup> April.	LJ	Ongoing
14	Minutes of meeting	To be circulated for comment before being made available to SARLC members.	RAR	Completed
15	Station audit	SARLC to issue their station audit to Tfw	RAR	Completed