

CAMBRIAN COAST RAILWAY LIAISON CONFERENCE 30/11/18
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**Minutes of a meeting of the Cambrian Coast Railway Liaison Conference held at Y
Ganolfan, Porthmadog on Friday, 30 November 2018
from 11.15 a.m. until 2.00 p.m.**

PRESENT

Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams - Chairman
Councillor Dewi Owen - Vice-chairman

Representing:

Councillors Dewi Owen, Angela A. Russell, Eryl Jones-Williams, Owain Williams (Gwynedd Council), Liz Saville Roberts (Dwyfor Meirionnydd MP), Cllr Trefor Jones (Unllais Cymru Dwyfor Representative), Cllr Trevor Roberts (Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Railway Committee), Claire Britton (Ffestiniog Railway), Delwyn Evans (Meirionnydd Access Group), Alun Wyn Evans (Unllais Cymru - Meirionnydd), Ben Davies (Arriva Trains Wales), Sam Hadley (Network Rail), PC Andy Greaves (British Transport Police), Roger Goodhew (Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passenger Association), Claire Williams (Cambrian Railways Partnership Officer), Llinos Williams (Transport Co-ordinator), Mererid Watt (Translator), Sion Owen (Member Support Officer).

Also in Attendance: Councillor Louise Hughes (Gwynedd Council)

Apologies: Councillors Dylan Bullard, Selwyn Griffiths, Annwen Hughes, Anne Lloyd Jones, Angela A. Russell, Eirwyn Williams, Gethin Williams (Gwynedd Council), Tudur Williams (Headteacher of Ysgol Ardudwy), Lord Dafydd Elis Thomas (Assembly Member for Dwyfor/Meirionnydd), Ann Elias (GMW), Stuart Williams (Tal-y-llyn Railway).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams was elected Chair for 2018-19.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Dewi Owen was elected Vice-chair for 2018-19.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

4. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair had not received any urgent items.

3. MINUTES

Submitted: Minutes of the conference meeting held on 9 March 2018.

Resolved: To accept and approve the minutes.

4. REPORT BY NETWORK RAIL

Sam Hadley, Wales Route Public Affairs Manager, was welcomed to the meeting and he reported on the following matters:

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- That the severe weather during October 2018 had created very challenging conditions.
- That the impact of climate change was to be seen in Network Rail's workload, and that a review had been commissioned to look at the future impact of this issue.
- That the railways' performance had not been as positive as expected, but noted that the Cambrian Coast Railway had not been as adversely impacted as other routes.
- That there was close collaboration between Network Rail and Transport for Wales, ensuring a strong voice for Wales.
- That a higher settlement had been received for the next funding cycle
- That a new Chief Executive had been appointed in August 2018, who had expressed an intention to review the body's structures. He noted that there was an intention to take action on a more local level in the future, improving the focus on customers.

In response to an observation regarding the Williams Review of British railways, he noted that he would make enquiries with regard to arranging meetings for Cambrian Coast Railway stakeholders to provide input to the Review.

Chris Wood, Network Rail Project Manager (Infrastructure Projects), was welcomed to the meeting, and he gave a presentation on the recent installation of Rock Netting at six sites in the Aberdyfi area. The work was essential in order to upgrade the rocky crevices and the railway verges so that they conformed to modern standards, and to make them safe where this was impossible. He noted that the work had been challenging due to the environment and the sites where the work had been carried out. The land had been assessed thoroughly as part of the preparatory work, and a proactive approach had been taken to land management, with a design life of 120 years in order to reduce the need to disturb local residents to work on the line; and to reduce the cost of maintenance in the future.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Network Rail was congratulated for completing the work in such a way as to cause very little inconvenience, and gratitude was noted for the extra effort made to reduce disruption for local residents.
- That a great deal of work had been done to tidy up, and that this was to be welcomed as it had improved the appearance and safety of the area around the line
- That the improvement work at Penhelyg Halt had been welcomed locally. A request was made that images be shown at the next meeting.
- Would the vegetation cut back in order to complete the work be managed in future?
- Would Network Rail's vegetation management policy return to the 'fence-to-fence' cutting policy which had previously existed?

In response, Mr Hadley noted that the vegetation on either side of the line had been treated in an attempt to ensure that it would not grow back to the same extent. He added that Network Rail's vegetation clearance policy was developing to include more extensive cutting than in the past.

5. REPORT BY TRANSPORT FOR WALES

The Chair welcomed Ben Davies, Transport for Wales, to present his report on Transport for Wales' activity to date. He reported on the following matters, concentrating on Transport for Wales' long term plan:

- That he had transferred from Arriva Trains Wales, with responsibility for mid and North Wales.
- That Transport for Wales had experienced a troublesome start, with four weeks of severe weather leading to a significant percentage of its trains having to be withdrawn from service for repairs.
- That Transport for Wales' long term aim was a comprehensive service, running seven days a week, with new carriages.

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- That 421 new carriages had been ordered, and that these would be introduced over the next four years, ending the use of class 158 trains on the Cambrian Coast Railway.
- That Transport for Wales aimed to upgrade all Welsh stations in order to improve their facilities and appearance, as well as improving travel information, wireless connectivity and community engagement.
- That Transport for Wales' long term aim was to develop an integrated network in which trains and buses worked together to create one network.
- That the Welsh language would be given a central place by the new company.
- That these were exciting times, as there had never been a situation in the past where funding was available for new developments. He therefore invited Cambrian Coast Railway stakeholders to contribute their ideas.

The Conference welcomed the report, noting the following observations arising from the discussion:

- Was it possible to share the details of the Cambrian Railway's development programme for the future when available?
- Who would be responsible for monitoring CCTV which was to be installed in the stations?
- Would the connectivity upgrading work include the installation of a 5G network?
- Would the developments lead to shorter travel times?
- The intention to promote the Welsh language was welcomed.
- The intention to improve safety, especially for vulnerable groups within society, was welcomed.
- There was a call for human presence on every platform in order to make passengers feel safe.
- What would the pricing structure for tickets be?

In response, Mr Davies noted:

- That the CCTV would be monitored in Cardiff, but that this work would be done by staff.
- No information had been received regarding the installation of 5G connectivity
- That the nature of the Cambrian Coast Railway, due to the number of stations along the line, would not permit much reduction in travel times.
- That using and promoting the Welsh language was important to Transport for Wales.
- That Transport for Wales would improve stations' safety whilst upgrading them, but that it would not be possible to employ staff at every station. However, he noted that there would be a guard on each train as part of the service agreement.
- That the pricing structure and timetables had initially been transferred directly, and that Transport for Wales would review them in due course.

5. INTEGRATED TRANSPORT UNIT MANAGER'S REVIEW

The Chair welcomed Rhian Williams, Integrated Transport Manager, to the meeting. She reported that the Council's Integrated Transport Service intended to review the bus network in 2019. She added that it also intended to work closely with Transport for Wales in the future.

6. REPORT BY THE CAMBRIAN RAILWAYS OFFICER

The Chair welcomed Claire Williams, Cambrian Railways Partnership Officer.

She outlined the activities completed since the previous meeting, namely:

- That the work of promoting the Railway had continued, with the development of a new website and the social media pages reaching more people. Visit Wales' emphasis on the Year of the Sea in 2018 had been of assistance in promoting the Cambrian Coast Railway.
- The Cambrian Railways Partnership had decided to produce an advertisement to be shown on Sky network in the Shropshire area. The advertisement was considered to have been a success as it had been seen by approximately 171,000 people.

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- A highly successful event had been held at Birmingham New Street under the name 'Taking the Beach to Birmingham'. This campaign was placed second in the 'Best Marketing or Communication Campaign' at the Community Rail Partnership Awards.
- That work had been done in order to assess Newtown Station's dementia friendly status. This had been a valuable experience in assessing Cambrian Coast Railway stations as more communities aimed to become dementia friendly communities. Transport for Wales had assisted by offering free transportation for the assessors and their assistants.
- That a video had been produced in collaboration with Network Rail in order to notify the public of the dangers of level crossings, which continued to be a problem.

Resolved - to accept and note the report, and to thank the Cambrian Railways Partnership Officer for it.

7. BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE REPORT

The Chair welcomed PC Andy Greaves of the British Transport Police.

He introduced himself and provided an overview of his work, noting that the number of crimes on the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth line and the Cambrian Coast Railway was very low. The main issue on the Cambrian Coast Railway was trespassing on the line as members of the public took advantage of the railway route to find shortcuts. He hoped that it would be possible to use technology to catch people trespassing earlier. He noted that he would be happy to chat with any Conference members to discuss and attempt to solve problems.

8. FORMAL QUESTIONS

Formal written questions had been submitted by various Community Councils, and the following responses were received:

1	Cllr Annwen Hughes - a question for Network Rail
	"What is the latest regarding the installation of barriers at the Talwrn Bach level crossing?"
	It was noted that the package of developments that included the Talwrn Bach crossing was one of the few to have been affected when the Carillion company folded. The situation had not changed since the Conference's previous meeting, and the work was programmed for after April 2019. Sam Hadley noted his sympathy with local residents' frustration, and that he would report on any progress made at the next meeting of the Conference.
2.1	Richard Williams, Porthmadog Town Councillor - a question for Transport for Wales
	"Why is the information broadcast over the tannoy system at Porthmadog Station provided in English only?"
	It was noted that tannoy announcements would be bilingual in future, in accordance with Transport for Wales policy.
2.2	"I was treated rudely by the 'Train Ticket Officer' when I made an enquiry as to the reason I was not allowed to use the Travel Card. (Why are Blaenau Ffestiniog and Conwy passengers allowed to use the card throughout the year?)"
	It was noted that the current Cambrian Coast Railway trains were too busy to allow free journeys. There was confidence that the arrival of trains with more seating would enable the provision of the same service in the future.
3.1	Porthmadog Town Council - Questions for Transport for Wales, Network Rail and the Committee
	"Porthmadog Town Council would like your assurance that the Welsh

	<p>Language is to be used in all aspects of service by the train operator on the Cambrian Coast Railway.</p> <p>We wish to see everything bilingually, and to see place names pronounced/published correctly in Welsh."</p>
	<p>It was noted that Transport for Wales policy meant that this was ongoing, and that there was a need to improve the provision as part of the new arrangements.</p>
4.1	<p>Cllr Owain Williams - Questions for Transport for Wales and Network Rail</p> <p>"Is all Cambrian Railway literature, i.e. posters, information sheets etc., fully bilingual? If not, then when can this be achieved?"</p>
	<p>It was noted that it was Transport for Wales' intention to collaborate with Claire Williams, Cambrian Railways Partnership Officer, and implement its policy of working bilingually. It was intended to start the work in the near future.</p>
4.2	<p>"Are all staff who engage with customers on the Cambrian Railway bilingual? If not, when can this be expected?"</p>
	<p>It was noted that Network Rail had very little direct contact with the public. However, it was added that Network Rail would be working in close collaboration with Transport for Wales to ensure a bilingual public front.</p>
5	<p>R Goodhew, Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail Passenger Association - a question for Transport for Wales</p> <p>"Are there any plans to provide specific guidance for passengers who are travelling to and from the Cambrian Coast Line and the Cambrian Main Line west of Machynlleth in the next version of the printed pocket timetable (Dec 2018)? [any through carriages/change at Mach/Change at Dyfi Jn etc]"</p>
	<p>It was noted that many of the arrangements inherited from Arriva would be reviewed as Transport for Wales began with its work programme, and that the suggestions would be taken into consideration. It was added that the Cambrian Railway Partnership already produced a version of the timetable, summarized for passengers who were changing from one line to the other.</p>
6.1	<p>Liz Saville Roberts MP - Questions for Transport for Wales</p> <p>"What plans do you have to improve the safety of passengers at night e.g. passengers waiting at remote train stations such as Dyfi Junction; and what is the timetable for the implementation of any improvements?"</p>
	<p>It was noted that Dyfi Junction had historically been a problem due to its remote location. Transport for Wales' hope was that its work programme would lead to an improved situation in addition to improvements to the connections between trains on the Cambrian and Aberystwyth-Shrewsbury Railways.</p>
6.2	<p>"It came to my attention over the summer that young people had been playing on the railway line. How are you collaborating with the British Transport Police to educate children and young people of the dangers of playing on and near railway lines?"</p>
	<p>It was noted that the prevention of trespassing on the railway line required continuous partnership work, which was addressed in the reports of the Transport Police and the Cambrian Railways Partnership Officer.</p>
6.3	<p>"Many constituents are getting in touch to pass on their experiences of using public transport, and report that train and bus timetables, for example, do not connect effectively, causing long waiting times. What are your plans to improve train connectivity between Aberystwyth and Meirionnydd, and what discussions have you had with regard to improving bus connectivity?"</p>

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	<p>It was noted that work was ongoing between the Railways, TrawsCymru and Gwynedd Council in order to co-ordinate timetables, but that the commercial nature of certain bus routes made this difficult. It was added that a request had been made for buses to wait for trains before leaving a connection point.</p>
7	Cllr Louise Hughes - a question for Network Rail
	"The local community has raised great concern regarding the lighting situation at Llwyngwril station, in addition to the state of a wall near the station"
	<p>It was noted that Gwynedd Consultancy had been commissioned to inspect the wall and to suggest a solution. It was added that this was a lengthy process, but that a healthy dialogue had been held and that the work would be programmed once the development work had been completed and funding was available. Until this happened, it would be a process of risk management. In terms of the station lighting, it was noted that this was part of a wider scheme which was to include lighting the path to the station in order to improve safety in the area. This work was to be completed by April 2019. Sam Hadley noted that he would be willing to meet with the Community Council to discuss the members' concerns.</p>

Resolved: To extend thanks for the questions and the positive responses from the officers.

CHAIR