

CAMBRIAN COAST RAILWAY LIAISON CONFERENCE

Minutes of a meeting of the Cambrian Coast Railway Liaison Conference that took place at Y Ganolfan, Porthmadog on Friday, 24 April 2015 from 12.00 pm until 1.30 pm

PRESENT

Councillors Selwyn Griffiths, Annwen Hughes, Anne Lloyd Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Dewi Owen, Eirwyn Williams, (Cyngor Gwynedd), Lord Dafydd Elis Thomas (Dwyfor Meirionnydd Assembly Member), Mr Philip Sayers (Talylyn Railway), Mr Roger Goodhew (Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passenger Association), Mr Alun Wyn Evans (Un Llais Cymru (Meirionnydd), Trefor W. Jones (Un Llais Cymru Dwyfor), Mr D. Woodhouse (Aberdyfi and Tywyn Tourism), Mr Delwyn Evans (Meirionnydd Access Group), Mr Ben Davies (Arriva Trains Wales), Mr Dylan Bowen (Network Rail), Mr Rhydian Mason (Cambrian Railway Partnership), Llinos Roberts (Community and Public Transport Officer), Mrs Mererid Watt (Translator), Mrs Glynda O'Brien (Members and Scrutiny Support Officer).

Apologies: Councillors John Brynmor Hughes, Angela Ann Russell, Gethin Glyn Williams (Cyngor Gwynedd), Cllr. Michael Williams (Cyngor Powys), Cllr. Trevor Roberts (Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee), Mr Simon Thomas (Assembly Member for Mid and West Wales), PC Rob Newman (British Transport Police), Mr Tudur Williams (Ysgol Ardudwy).

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

2. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent matters were received for discussion.

3. MINUTES

Submitted: Minutes of the conference meeting that took place on 28 November 2014.

Resolved: To accept and approve the above minutes.

4. REPORT BY NETWORK RAIL

A summary of the Wales Railway Routes study was submitted to Members and Mr Dylan Bowen reported that the consultation document had been launched recently at the Senedd and there was an opportunity up to the end of June to send observations on the recommendations.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions to the officer and he responded as follows:

- (a) He would investigate what was happening to the old bridge at Machynlleth as a result of building the new lift bridge and would forward the information to the Cambrian Railways Partnership Officer.

- (b) It was noted that the Welsh Government was promoting the use of the Wales Coastal Path and suggested that there was access on the path to Aberdyfi from the Glandyfi Station to avoid having to walk inland. It was asked if any discussions had taken place with Network Rail regarding this. The above was supported by a Member serving on the South Eryri Access Forum and it was suggested that it was possible to bolt the footbridge to the Network Rail railway bridge at Dyfi station.

Mr Bowen explained that he was not aware of any discussions, however, whilst accepting that the path crossed the railway in certain places it was important to bear in mind that Network Rail was trying to prevent the public from crossing the railway in order to reduce risk and for public safety. Members were aware that the intention of Network Rail was to close level crossings rather than create them. Network Rail could not attract or contribute financially but certainly any possible plans could be discussed giving consideration to public safety.

Resolved: (a) To accept and note the contents of the summary.

(b) To request that Mr Dylan Bowen investigates the above and sends any further information to the Members' Support Officer to be circulated further to Conference Members.

5. **REPORT BY ARRIVA TRAINS WALES LTD**

A written report was presented by Mr Ben Davies on behalf of Arriva Trains Wales Ltd, and specific reference was made to improvements to the whole Cambrian railway train time-table for May 2015. Copies of the timetable were available at Train Stations. It was noted that the changes included:

- Improved services during the week and weekend on the Cambrian line (this included four additional return journeys from Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury from Monday to Saturday and two additional return journeys on Sunday).
- Additional services during the week on the Heart of Wales line which entailed significant changes to the current timetable.
- The Shrewsbury to Crewe service left a minute earlier at 05.32 to connect to the 06.27 service from Crewe to Manchester.
- The 17.04 service from Cardiff to Tenby would now also call at Llanharan.

It was explained that the morning train (5.00 am) from Machynlleth to Pwllheli had been removed due to lack of use following undertaking a survey undertaken and an evening train had been added in its place. Conference Members were of the view that this was a sensible arrangement as no use was made of the morning train.

It was explained that in terms of the Arriva Trains Wales' language policy that one new company provided and prepared a Welsh recording to be used at the stations and on the trains. It was explained that the Welsh language was important to Arriva Trains Wales and following the recent appointment of the Railway Officer there would be more marketing of Wales in towns such as Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool. In addition, there would be television adverts at peak times and adverts would also be placed on buses etc.

In terms of dealing with the formal question sent regarding arrangements for passengers with mental disorders, Mr Ben Davies explained that cards (called the

orange wallet) were available for passengers which indicated that they required assistance from train staff. These cards had been operational on the Cambrian line for approximately 3/4 years and staff were aware of the arrangements and what they needed to do. The cards were also in operation on Arriva buses.

The Railway Officer added that Mr Phil Caldwell had produced a film to promote good behaviour by young people on trains and it was proposed to produce a second film to include information about the orange wallet and this would be an excellent opportunity to launch this formally at the end of June/July.

Members suggested that this should be advertised/circulated to specific groups, Siop Gwynedd, Council Website, local papers as well as the Council's Communications Department.

In the context of WiFi on the Cambrian railway trains, Mr Ben Davies noted that Arriva Trains Wales would submit a bid for funding to have WiFi on every train in Wales.

Resolved (a) To accept and note the report.

(b) To request that the Integrated Transportation Unit organises for information to be circulated to specific groups regarding the orange wallet and to organise with the Communications Department to advertise in the local papers, Siop Gwynedd and on the Council's website.

6. REPORT OF THE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT UNIT MANAGER

Members were guided through the contents of the report by the Manager of the Integrated Transport Unit, by Llinos Roberts, Community and Public Transport Officer drawing attention to the update on

- Pont Briwet – that the programme of work on the bridge would finish at the end of June 2015.
- Cambrian Railway Officer – that the post had now been transferred to Ceredigion County Council and Mr Rhydian Mason had been appointed to the post on 10th November 2014. It was noted that the Integrated Transport Unit was collaborating with the officer in order to develop an Access to Health service in the Harlech area to improve connections with the train as well as connections with TrawsCymru at Maentwrog.

In response to a query regarding the position of TraCC and TAITH (North Wales Regional Transport Consortium) and specifically the decision of Gwynedd Council to include the whole of Gwynedd within the TAITH network plan, what impact was this likely to have on the Meirionnydd area, it was suggested:

- that the Community and Public Transport Officer should be requested to look into the above; and
- that the Railways Officer should provide further information regarding TraCC having contacted Ann Elias.

In terms of the financial situation, it was understood that it was local authorities who contributed financially to TraCC and the importance of considering other sources was noted such as European funding to finance TraCC considering the financial climate facing local authorities.

Resolved: To accept, note and thank the officer for the report.

7 **REPORT BY THE BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE**

The Chairman noted the absence of PC Rob Newman, however, it was possible for any member to raise any questions they wished and arrangements would be made for these to be forwarded to him.

Resolved: To accept and note the above and no questions were received to be forwarded on.

8. **REPORT OF THE CAMBRIAN RAILWAYS OFFICER**

A report was presented by the Cambrian Railways Officer on the activities thus far, including his attendance at various meetings, marketing and promotion of the Cambrian Line.

- (a) The Cambrian Railways Officer guided Members through the report and drew attention to the following:
- Contributions to the Cambrian Action Group established by the Minister for the Economy, Science and Transport.
 - Collaboration with other colleagues who work on the Line and sharing information.
 - Working on a film for people with special needs to enable them to travel confidently.
 - Had been filming in Euston and organisations such as Arriva Trains, Virgin, Network Rail had been included and they had taken an interest in the work.
 - A local film company had been used and there was collaboration with Coleg Derwen in order to use their expertise.
 - It was trusted that this would be an opportunity for the film to be used nationally.
 - During the next few months they would promote new elements such as commuting in order to open the market and promote this by working jointly with the Welsh Government.
- (b) The Chair stated that partnership and joint-working were vitally important especially in the current financial climate and bearing in mind that financial sources were getting scarcer.
- (c) A Member noted that the Minister was listening to the Cambrian Action Group and the next three years would be essential in terms of using the facilities to ensure the continuation of the service and justify the need to invest more in the provision.
- (d) Reference was made to the laudable contributions and the tireless work of Cllr. Mansel Williams, Cllr. Trevor Roberts and Mr Robert Robinson in the Cambrian Action Group.
- (e) The following matters were raised by a Member:
- That the steam train service should be restored.

- Concern regarding the lack of parking spaces along the Cambrian Line.
- Network Rail was thanked for the new graded humps installed in stations.
- Gwynedd Council should contribute financially to the Cambrian Railway.

(f) A Member further noted that there were complaints from passengers regarding the lack of seats on trains.

In response to the above, the Railways Officer noted that some trains were full but it was trusted that by implementing the new timetable with additional trains from Machynlleth, that this would solve the problem of a lack of seats.

(g) It was understood that Cllr. Mansel Williams, Chair of the Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee, was unwell and it was suggested that best wishes be sent to him for a complete and speedy recovery.

Resolved: (a) To accept, note and thank the Cambrian Railway Partnership Development Officer for the report.

(b) To request that the Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer sends a word to Councillor Mansel Williams to convey the best wishes of this Committee to him for a complete and speedy recovery.

9. **FORMAL QUESTIONS**

It was noted that the formal question received from a Member of the Conference had received attention above.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

(a) It was reported that the next meeting of the Joint Meeting with the Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee would take place on 18 September 2015, with the details posted on the Welshpool Town Council website.

(b) It was reported that the Chair and the Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer would organise a convenient date for the next meeting sometime in March.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

CHAIRMAN