

CAMBRIAN COAST RAILWAY LIAISON COMMITTEE

28 March 2025

Virtual Meeting

Present:

Cllr Anne Lloyd Jones (Cyngor Gwynedd)
Cllr Eryl Jones-Williams (Cyngor Gwynedd) – Chair for this meeting only
Cllr Gwilym Jones (Cyngor Gwynedd)
Cllr Elin Hywel (Cyngor Gwynedd)
Cllr Meryl Roberts (Eryri National Park Authority)
Bill Redfern (Shrewsbury – Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association)
Lorraine Simkiss, Kate Day and Barbara Fuller (Tal-y-llyn Railway)
Shane Brennan (Plaid Cymru Office – Dwyfor Meirionnydd)
Gail Jones (Transport for Wales)
Lowri Haf Evans (Democracy Services Officer, Cyngor Gwynedd)

1. APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received from Cllr Dewi Owen (Cyngor Gwynedd), Cllr Gwynfor Owen (Cyngor Gwynedd), Cllr Elfed Wyn ab Elwyn (Cyngor Gwynedd), Cllr Louise Hughes (Cyngor Gwynedd), Cllr Richard Glyn Roberts (Cyngor Gwynedd), Cllr Alwyn Evans (Powys County Council), Cllr Trevor Roberts (Shrewsbury / Aberystwyth Railway Committee), Liz Saville Roberts (Dwyfor Meirionnydd MP), Mabon ap Gwynfor (Dwyfor Meirionnydd MS), Llio Hughes (Plaid Cymru Office), Delyth Griffiths (Plaid Cymru Office, Dolgellau), Joyce Watson (Mid and West Wales MS), Gwyn Rees and Tomos Roberts (Network Rail) and Clare Britton (Ffestiniog Railway).

It was noted that Cllr Alwyn Evans had been appointed as the Powys County Council representative.

It was noted that Tomos Roberts (Network Rail) had accepted a new post and that Gwyn Rees would represent the company in the near future. Tomos was thanked for his support to the Committee.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note

4. MINUTES

The Chair accepted the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, held on 29 November 2024, as a true record.

5. UPDATE FROM THE SERVICES

Transport for Wales (TfW)

Gail Jones was welcomed to the meeting.

A video was shared of recent work undertaken by Transport for Wales on the Cambrian Railway which included engineering works to replace tracks, reinforce the embankment and key maintenance activities between Shrewsbury and Machynlleth from 21/3/25 until 3/4/25.

A request was made for a Welsh medium video to be shared with the Members so that they could share it on other social media platforms.

It was reported that the recent disruption due to an accident in Talerddig in October 2024 had ended on 21/3/25, with trains now running between Newtown and Aberystwyth and Machynlleth to Pwllheli.

The impact on children who attend Tywyn High School and others travelling to the College in Newtown was highlighted due to road closures and the closure of the railway at the same time. It was noted that some students had been unable to attend college for a fortnight and had stayed at home to work and had not been able to undertake any practical work. The Chair noted that the complaint was valid and had a significant impact on local people. When road and rail services close it makes life difficult for people in rural areas, with very long diversions and the bus replacement service was ineffective.

In response to the comments, it was noted that the essential work undertaken by Network Rail had been planned in advance.

Gail was thanked for her contribution.

2025 – 2026 Timetable

Attention was drawn to the cuts in the Cambrian Winter timetable, and it was noted that losing the last train would be significant to the local economy and the hospitality sector. Although the Welsh Government sought to encourage people to use public transport, due to the lack of service in rural areas, cars had to be used, and by withdrawing the last train service on the Cambrian Railway, it was considered that this was contrary to the Welsh Government's policies.

Some members added that several businesses had been impacted because of the loss of the last train, stating that establishments such as the Magic Lantern in Tywyn and the Dragon Theatre, Barmouth had had to re-arrange many of their events. It was also noted that the impact on some was 'fairly destructive'. It was considered that the winter service was already insufficient, and the connections between towns and villages were now impossible. A reference was made to one day journeys (such as a trip to Shrewsbury for the day) and to passengers spending evenings in Pwllheli, Barmouth or Aberdyfi, which was now impossible. It was noted that there was a lack of understanding or appreciation of what was happening in our communities because of what was controlled by the railway timetable.

Reference was made to a petition with 3500 signatories who were in favour of saving the night-time services, which drew attention to the difficulties facing businesses with examples of losing employees and having to take-on additional costs. An appeal was made for a better solution and a means to resurrect the railway.

Attention was drawn to the Impact Assessment completed by the Tal-y-llyn Railway staff which included information about the negative impact of the train service on the local economy. Reference was made to several responses that had been received from individual users and organisations and a request was made for the information to be shared with Members and Transport for Wales.

It was reported that the concerns had been highlighted in a meeting of the Full Council and that the matters had also been addressed by Mabon ap Gwynfor who had raised these matters in the Senedd.

Gail Jones highlighted that she would share the messages with the Senior Officers of Transport for Wales, but she stated that Members and the MSs needed to continue to lobby and draw attention to the impacts. She added that the new trains would keep a better record of the number of passengers which would strengthen the evidence that there was good use made of the service.

Network Rail

There was no representative present from Network Rail at the meeting to present an update but their willingness to receive observations / feedback about the service was noted.

British Transport Police

There was no representative from the British Transport Police present at the meeting to give an update.

It was reported that a public meeting would be held in Tywyn with Network Rail and Transport for Wales (date to be confirmed). Details of the meeting would be shared with the Committee Members when the information was available.

6. FORMAL QUESTIONS

Questions were received from Llanbedr Community Council

- *The name Talwrn Bach on the sign as well as Llanbedr. This would be acceptable before the summer.*
- *Bin near the site – jointly with Cyngor Gwynedd (litter bin and dog mess bin)*
- *Safety barriers on the road.*
- *Improvement to the Shelter – there was a need to strengthen the roof so that it was waterproof.*

- *A scheme to buy a map of public footpaths to promote these – similar to the one in the Village and install it on the back of the Shelter.*

In response, it was noted that time had been set aside during the railway closure period to make improvements in the Station. It was noted that arrangements to build a new shelter were in the pipeline and information about the shelter would be communicated in an e-mail directly to the Community Council. This would be funded via the Community Budget. In the context of including the name Talwrn Bach, it was noted that there was sufficient space on the sign to include this.

No response had been received regarding the bin. LHE to contact them again.

The next meeting to be held in November 2025 – LHE to arrange.

The meeting commenced at 10:30 and concluded at 11:30.

CHAIR