

Report to:	Montgomeryshire on Wednesday, 10 th January 2018.
Author:	County Councillor J. Michael Williams, Montgomeryshire Rail Representative.
Subject:	Joint Meeting of the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee and the Cambrian Coast Line (Machynlleth to Pwllheli) Railway Liaison Conference.

1. Notes of a joint meeting of the Shrewsbury – Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee and the Cambrian Coast Line Railway Liaison Conference held Plas Machynlleth on Friday, 24th November 2017.

1.1 Representatives in Attendance.

In attendance there were representatives from the County Councils of Ceredigion, Gwynedd and Powys; from the Town Councils of Aberystwyth, Barmouth, Machynlleth and Welshpool; Growing Mid Wales Partnership; Talylyn Steam Railway; Railfuture Cambrian Lines; Cambrian Rail Partnership; Carno Station Action Group; Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association, Network Rail and Arriva Trains Wales.

1.2 Dementia Friendly Cambrian Lines (Main and Coast Lines).

Claire Williams, Cambrian Rail Partnership, (*see her full report at 1.6 below*) gave an outline of her work with seeking a Dementia Friendly Cambrian Lines. To take this forward, discussions have started with Machynlleth, Barmouth, Pwllheli, Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury stations.

There is to be a steering group and members were invited to express an interest in taking part in this. The first meeting was planned for January 2018.

There are other Dementia Friendly Towns on route, including Welshpool and Newtown.

1.3 Report on a Meeting with Welsh Government.

The meeting received a full presentation and report on the surveys (*copies of which are attached and are well worth reading*) held for Welsh Government earlier in the year, culminating in a meeting with Welsh Government on 4th October.

From the meeting the following was confirmed:

- a) The existing enhanced services are to be the minimum service provided under the new Franchise, including through services to Birmingham International.
- b) The survey report was well received and formed a good basis for discussions on future services going forward. Welsh Government also requested that the Shrewsbury – Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee meets again with the remaining (three) Franchise Companies to present the survey and discuss improvements to the Cambrian Lines.

The need to retain Cambrian Rail cards was recorded.

1.4 Report from Arriva Trains Wales.

A report was given by Arriva Trains Wales, which included the following main points:

- a) Issues with trains during and post the recent storms was acknowledged with 90 trains hitting objects and many needing maintenance causing issues with the service delivery.
- b) Prior to the storms the service was running at close to 90% services on time.

- c) Work continues to complete better toilets on remaining trains yet to be upgraded.
- d) The service delivery will continue unchanged during the final part of the current Franchise.
- e) Existing staff will pass onto the new Franchise Company.
- f) There is an investment of £1 million by Arriva Trains Wales and £1.5 from Welsh Government to order four new train sets. They will be used on the Valley Lines but this will cascade trains down, which may help the Cambrian Lines.
- g) Wi-Fi is coming to stations over a set programme.
- h) The new Franchise comes into effect at 2am on the 18th of October 2018.

1.5 Report from Network Rail.

The above-mentioned report was not available at the time of writing this report

1.6 Report from the Cambrian Rail Partnership Officer, Claire Williams.

I have been in post since early September 2017, and this report refers to activities prior to my appointment and activities since that time. Prior to joining the world of Community rail, I spent five years working as a Neighbourhood Partnership Officer with Cardiff Council where my role covered all aspects of Community Safety, Health and Well Being, Environmental issues and Education and Employment so with a background in community engagement I bring with me a wealth of experience.

During this short time I have met with a number of partners, both funding and strategic to introduce myself and to discuss how we can continue working together in collaboration to ensure that work is not duplicated work and that best value is received for public monies.

1.6.1 **Surveys:** The Cambrian railways partnership was delighted to work with the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee and to commission a survey that was undertaken in spring 2017 as part of our grant from the Welsh Government. The surveys follow on from the success of the 2013 and 2015 surveys which resulted in improved services on the Cambrian Lines. The results of this survey are being presented to Gareth Evans, Rail Economist for Welsh Government by the Committee representatives on November 17th, 2017, at a meeting in Cathays Park.

1.6.2 **2017/18 Promotional Campaign:** The partnership received additional funding which allowed us to prepare a brand new tourist focussed website which is now live, the web address is www.walesonrails.com and to produce further short films which we are looking to release February/March until early summer this year. The campaign will be exclusively based on social media platforms on the 2018 “Year of the Sea”. 2018 is “Year of the Sea” and in conjunction with Visit Wales, Arriva Trains Wales (ATW), and various other key partners we are looking to put together a number of community engagement events throughout the year based on the various themes of each session with all events taking place within the Cambrian Coast, with some taking place on the train. More details will be available at the next meeting.

1.6.3 **Bow Street Re-opening:** I have recently attended a meeting with Welsh Government, Transport for Wales and a number of other strategic partners regarding the re-opening of Bow Street station following the UK Department for Transport (DFT) announcing the outcome of successful applications made to its New Stations Fund – funding which has been made available towards the capital expenditure cost of schemes to open new or re-open previously closed railway stations promoted by third parties in England and Wales.

The proposed scheme is a local and regional transport priority in the Mid Wales Joint Local Transport Plan 20015-2020 and will provide a public transport interchange with a new railway station, car park and cycle parking facilities to enable passengers to access both bus and rail services and to car share from this location. The scheme also seeks to address local road safety concerns by providing a A487/A4159 junction improvement access to services and facilities located in and around Aberystwyth and north Ceredigion.

Whilst the project is currently in its design stage, it is on plan for completion during the summer of 2020.

1.6.4 **2017/18 Business Plan:** The business plan for the current financial year was presented at the March 2017 meeting of the Cambrian Railways Partnership for approval by the funding stakeholders. The business plan was approved by the partnership and is currently being worked on.

1.6.5 **Dementia Friendly Communities and Stations:** As the new Cambrian Railways Partnership (CRP) Officer, one of my key objectives is community engagement, developing plans to the reach of the CRP to a wider range of groups including those socially disadvantaged. Under this remit, I am currently working with strategic and funding partners at making the Cambrian Railways Line a Dementia Friendly Community in its own entity. This is a huge task and will take approximately three years to fulfil. However, I am looking to break this down and do it station by station, starting with those named stations, these will initially be, Machynlleth, Barmouth, Pwllheli and Shrewsbury. This would make the Cambrian Railway Lines the first Dementia Friendly Railway Line in the UK. There are currently a very small number of Dementia Friendly stations in Wales but I strongly believe this goal is achievable. As we are in the design element of Bow Street, I have requested that whilst doing an Equality Impact Assessment for the re-opening of Bow Street station I have asked if we could work with the Alzheimer's Society and make it a Dementia Friendly station.

1.6.6 **Contact Details:** Claire Williams, Rail Development Officer, Cambrian Railways Partnership. E-mail: Claire.williams@ceredigion.gov.uk

1.7 Report from British Transport Police.

There was no report from the British Transport Police.

1.8 Shelters for Stations.

The secretary to chase up with Welsh Government on the provision of the shelters proposed for stations at Welshpool and Machynlleth.

1.9 Actions to be taken forward by the Secretary.

- a) Meeting with Franchise Companies.
- b) Support for Dementia Friendly Cambrian Lines.
- c) Chase up installation of new shelters.

1.10 Next Meeting.

The date for the next joint meeting was agreed as 11.15am on Friday the 13th of June 2018 at Plas Machynlleth.

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