



CAMBRIAN
Public transport
Liaison Committee



MINUTES

of a meeting of the
Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee
held on Friday 4th November 2022 at 2pm
at the Bowling Club Machynlleth

1. Record of attendance

Present were:

Cllr Trevor Roberts	Chair
Cllr Michael Willaims	Machynlleth Town & Powys County Council
Cllr Jeremy Barnes	Carno Station Action Group
Angus Eikhoff	SARPA
John Ellison	Carno Station Action Group
Ken Law	Welshpool Rail Users face-book page
Wendy Lewis	Welshpool Town Council
Cllr Geoff Smith	Aberystwyth Town Council
David Taylor	Rail Future
Cllr Andrew Wallbank	Caersws Community Council
Roger Whitehouse	Tallylyn Railway
Cllr Alun Williams	Ceredigion Council
Robert Robinson Secretary	Llanfair Caereinion Town Council

Apologies were received from:

Gail Jones	Transport for Wales
Cllr Anne Lloyd-Jones	Gwynedd County Council
Cllr Dylan Wilson-Lewis	Aberystwyth Town Council
Ann Alias	Ceredigion Council
Cllr Richard Church	Welshpool Town Council

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The meeting considered and approved the minutes of the last meeting as per the website.

3. Financial Report

The meeting received a financial update. The bank account is now only a few pounds. No income and no expenditure during the last 12 months.

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4. Future of the Liaison Group

Following an introduction from the Chair and a presentation by the Secretary the meeting held a full discussion regarding the way forward for this liaison committee. A full paper had been issued to the meeting with agenda and is attached to these minutes.

From the discussion the following points were made:

- i) The groups combined will be stronger together.
- ii) Both North Coast and Cambrian have similar issues.
- iii) Both main lines are linked by using the same TFW trains. (i.e., route is Aberystwyth – Birmingham – Holyhead – Birmingham – Aberystwyth.
- iv) The web sites would be combined.
- v) Membership of the North Coast or Cambrian Main Line would be via a membership fee of £10pa.
- vi) Public Transport should be included in the headings used.

Representatives from the Cambrian Coast Line may only attend the Cambrian main line meetings with the membership rules applying.

The Joint North Coast/Cambrian Main Line meetings shall be held by Zoom.
The Cambrian Lines meetings shall meet in person in Aberystwyth.
The North Coast Main Line meetings via zoom or in person.

The headings were agreed subject to the inclusion of a note stating 'public transport liaison group'. The web site for SARLC will cease soon and all be included in the North and Mid Wales Association website under transport.

The new web site will be northwalesassociation.org.uk with the meetings being included under Transport. The existing web site will remain until the annual hosting runs out.

Proposal:

The proposed is to adopt the report attached to these minutes and take forward the joint arrangements under the umbrella of the North and Mid Wales Association of Local Councils.

Proposed by Cllr Trevor Roberts and Seconded by Angus Eikhoff. The vote was unanimous in favour of the proposals.



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5. Welshpool Rail Users Facebook Page.

The meeting received a short report on the issues raised by local rail users. The issues raised have been included in the Transport for Wales item no 6.

6. Transport for Wales

The Secretary informed the meeting of the contents of the written report from TFW and included some items of interest from the North Coast Liaison Group.

There were a number of concerns raised as follows (extended list due to larger than usual gap between meetings):

- i) Welshpool (in particular) rail replacement buses – still confusing over where they start from. Better signage and a common approach required to be put in place urgently.
- ii) Access for those with disabilities is not good when the bus stops on the opposite side of the station using stairs only.
- iii) Replacement bus services are not particularly friendly to those with access issues. (i.e., wheelchairs)
- iv) Announcements on the trains still poor and often inaudible. This appears to be staff training issue demonstrated by changing of guards on trains using the same system – one poor and one clear.
- v) Information both on the station platforms and on apps are often wrong and do not tie up with various forms of information available. Often the carriages you are advised to use for Aberystwyth or the Coast are the wrong way around in Birmingham.
- vi) Information point should be on platforms and not at remote entrances. (Welshpool sited again).
- vii) Changing of trains (i.e., train from Birmingham returning to Birmingham and train from Aberystwyth returning to Aberystwyth) still an issue. Due to signalling system.
- viii) Car park at Welshpool is not managed and car spaces are being taken up by those not using the trains.
- ix) Staff reported to have closed doors on trains whilst a passenger for that train was asking if it was the right one – leaving them on the platform.
- x) Cancellations are continuing to be an issue along with many trains running late – affecting connections and causing late starts for work.
- xi) Too many short trains causing overcrowding – one electronic sign indicated Aberystwyth front two carriages and Coast rear two carriages on a two-carriage train.

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- xii) When the franchise was granted the statement used was 'a rail service to allow for increases in passenger traffic'. As the number of units is the same and the number of seats reduced on each train this appears to be in conflict with the franchise objectives.
- xiii) There was also a pledge made that passengers would not have to stand on a train for more than 20 minutes. Passengers are often standing for well over that time on a regular basis.
- xiv) Overcrowding on the Coast Line (in particular) in the summer months is bordering dangerous with just 2 car units.
- xv) Confirmation of when the hourly train services on the main line will be introduced and how certain can members be that this will happen with a shortage of drivers.
- xvi) Responses to emails by operators in not timely if they are answered at all.
- xvii) Ticket machines do not always give the cheapest fare. Also do not allow to purchase all tickets – i.e. Does not bring up Machynlleth to Marylebone service.
- xviii) No ticket machine at Tywyn.
- xix) A permit to travel is needed
- xx) Confirmation of how many services on the Cambrian lines on cancellations, running late etc would be helpful.

It was noted that a number of the above have been issues for some considerable time and need to be addressed.

7. Liaison Meetings with Transport for Wales

The meeting was informed of some up and coming meetings to which the Chair and Secretary will attend and report back.

8. Liaison Groups common remit

TFW issued a remit for all liaison groups. This is not for discussion or comment but for information. The group accepted the remit as per that attached to the minutes.

9. Travel early in the morning and cancellations

The issue around early morning train cancellations was raised. This is giving rise to employees of companies losing pay or having to give up holidays to cover the lost hours. It has led in a number of cases to people having to change jobs or to change their hours to suit the railway and not their own lifestyle.

This subject is to be raised with Welsh Government and the local Assembly Member.

10. Network Rail

To consider any matters relating to Network Rail.

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11. British Transport Police

No report received

12. Cambrian Rail Partnership

No report received

13. Meetings

This meeting was unable to provide a hybrid accommodation for one member to attend. It was agreed that as Aberystwyth Town Council has such a system built in that future meetings of the Cambrian Main Line Liaison Committee should be held there. A time of 11.45am was suggested so that members could attend by train.

14. MP and AM invite

The secretary confirmed that the MP and AM for the main line was included on the list of invites. One member suggested that he should contact them to urge their attendance.

15. Buses and Machynlleth

The issue was raised around buses and timetables at Machynlleth.

The timetables show buses stopping at the main line station and there are no notices to state otherwise. However, the bus does not stop there. Clarification is to be sought along with an explanation from Powys County Council (John Forsey).

16. Actions to be taken forward

The actions to be taken forward from the meeting are attached.

17. The Chair thanked the Secretary for his work on the future plans of the group.

18. Dates of meetings

The meeting noted dates for future meetings as set out below:

North Wales Transport Liaison Meetings

Friday 14th April 2023 (to be confirmed) at 10.30am by Zoom

Friday 20th October 2023 (to be confirmed) at 10.30am by Zoom

Cambrian Line Transport Liaison Meetings

Friday 13th April 2023 at 11.45am at Aberystwyth

Friday 14th October 2023 at 11.45am at Aberystwyth

North Wales & Cambrian Transport Liaison Meetings

Friday 13th January 2023 at 10.30am by zoom

Friday 14th July 2023 at 10.30am by zoom

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ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN FORWARD FROM THE MEETING

No	Subject	Action	By
1	Minutes	Issue minutes of meeting and post on both web sites.	Secretary
2	Early morning train cancellations and loss of income to travellers	Letter to Russell George	Secretary
3	New arrangement for transport liaison groups North Wales and Cambrian Main Line	Inform North Wales & Mid Wales Association of Local Councils	Secretary
4	Buses at Machynlleth not stopping at station when timetable clearly shows they do.	Letter to John Forsey of Powys County Council for explanation	Secretary
5	Transport for Wales	Issue minutes with list of issues.	Secretary
6	Membership Fees	Issue invoices for payment of membership fees	Secretary
7	Meeting with Russell George and TFW	To be arranged asap.	Secretary



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TRANSPORT LIAISON IN MID AND NORTH WALES

Introduction

The Association has set up a Transport Committee for the North Coast due to the importance of this issue and the future changes in the pipeline by Welsh Government and Rail Operators.

The Cambrian Lines (Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee) has found that the liaison with rail companies (TFW in particular) less effective than in the past. Several liaison committees have expressed the same viewpoint. The lines along the North Wales Coast and Mid Wales are intrinsically linked as the rail timetable covers both lines (i.e., trains start at Aberystwyth and go via Birmingham International and onto Holyhead and back). A lot of the discussions are similar for both lines with the same concerns and when meeting with Welsh Government and senior rail officials both lines are represented.

Approach

An approach has been received from the Chair and Vice Chair to seek a join arrangement between the two rail liaison groups, with more effect being under the umbrella of the Association.

Proposal

The proposal put forward is as follows:

- a) The rail liaison groups from North and Mid Wales join together.
- b) The groups would meet separately for two meetings a year and together for two meetings a year.
- c) The Association would become the parent for both groups.
- d) Member Councils of the Association would be included with that membership, other members would pay a smaller fee to be members of that group only (say £10 per representative group).
- e) Members would need to meet the one of the following criteria:
 - i) Be members of the North and Mid Wales Association or be a Transport Group member paying the appropriate membership fee
 - ii) MP's, Welsh Government and County Councils covering each area
 - iii) The rail operators (Avanti/TFW), Network Rail, British Transport Police, bus companies and Rail Partnerships.
- f) Each member of the group must also meet one of the following:
 - i) Have a station within their local council boundary
 - ii) Have a specific interest in rail use approved by the Association
 - iii) Both rail liaison committees would share the same web site pages on the Association website.

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- iv) The Liaison groups would be named as follows:
North and Mid Wales Transport Liaison Committee
North and Mid Wales Transport Liaison Committee (Cambrian) North and Mid Wales Transport Liaison Committee (North Coast).
- v) The meetings would be by Zoom jointly but could meet in person for the individual area meetings.
- vi) There would be a chair of the joint grouping with two vice chairs (one looking at the North Coast and one looking at the Cambrian Line).

Requirements

If such a proposal was considered worthy of consideration a way forward might be:

- a) Formal approval from each group.
- b) A revised constitution to cover any new arrangement.
(Approved by the Association)

Pros and Con's

The advantages and disadvantages could include:

Advantages	Disadvantages
More powerful together with the ability to be more effective.	Not all those involved would be full members of the Association.
Less duplication of discussions between the rail companies and the groups.	Times when interests are different on each line.
Common issues between lines could be worked on together.	Meeting with larger numbers may make management a little more difficult
Combined cost of websites	
Fees from both the Association members and Transport Members would cover cost of any person-to-person meetings.	
Representation to senior officials of rail companies and Welsh Government would be more effective (they meet together at this time in any event but as separate units).	

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TRANSPORT FOR WALES

Terms of Engagement

Transport for Wales Stakeholder and Community Engagement Team and Transport User Groups

Transport for Wales (TfW) recognise the role Transport User Groups (TUG's) play in supporting TfW with their ambitious goals for a transport network that Wales, and the Borders can be proud of. This document sets out a standardised approach to how TfW engage with TUGs (Transport User Groups) ensuring there is clear and concise guidelines for all parties involved.

TfW Contact for Transport User Groups

The Regional Stakeholder Manager will be the initial and main point of contact for TUG's. Contact

details for each region can be found on the attached map (excluding Metro Central and Cardiff Bay)

The Borders Nichole.sarra@tfw.wales

Mid and North Wales Gail.jones@tfw.wales

Mid and West Wales Alexander.bryant-evans@tfw.wales

Core Valley Lines & South Wales Helen.dale@tfw.wales

Metro Central and Cardiff Bay Kelsey.barcenilla@tfw.wales

Engagement

TfW welcomes requests to attend TUG (Transport User Groups) meetings to provide updates on projects, relevant regional TfW news, to address any issues and concerns and most importantly, to hear from group members in respect of local knowledge and input that can potentially guide, support, and assist TfW in decision making and shaping future transport plans.

Requests for TfW representatives to attend TUG meetings and events can be made via the RegionalStakeholder Manager.

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We will do our best to attend meetings, however this might not always be possible, particularly with any requests made for meetings or events taking place outside of office

working hours or for those where short notice is given. When making requests for TfW to attend, please include the following information at the earliest convenience as this will help us to ensure that we source the correct representation for the meeting:

- Date and time of meeting
- Advise if the meeting will be in person or via a digital platform
- Duration of required attendance

Include timings

- Purpose of attendance request

i.e.: update/ overview on projects/ issues*/ concerns*

*Please provide as much information ahead of the meeting in respect of any specific issues or concerns.

In addition to attending TUG meetings, TfW also engage with groups to address any queries and concerns, host biannual Transport Liaison group meetings and issue written correspondence via email and our monthly Bulletin.

Feedback

TfW welcome and value feedback from TUGs, it is therefore important that this feedback is received via the correct channels to ensure data is captured, and information can be acted on. This is particularly important when in relation to real time feedback such as late and cancelled trains/buses, misinformation, etc.

Our dedicated Customer Relations team will also log queries and ensure that trends are evaluated through their voice of the customer reporting, crucial to helping us continually improve.

Individual items regarding poor (or positive) experiences on journeys should also be raised through the Customer Relations channels to ensure they are actioned swiftly.

It is equally important that incidences of antisocial behaviour and/or vandalism are reported to the British Transport Police (BTP).

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Contact telephone numbers and email address for TfW Customer Relations and the British Transport Police and details of how you can provide feedback on our services or report issues to both TfW and BTP, can be found by visiting the following websites.

TfW Customer Relations

<https://tfw.wales/help-and-contact/rail/contact-us>

British Transport Police <https://tfw.wales/about-us/our-culture/safety/security>

Other feedback, such as fleet, stations, and general issues/queries concerning TfW can be sent directly to TfW Stakeholder Managers, who will investigate and issue a response as soon as possible.

(Please note that at busy periods Stakeholder Managers can be dealing with a high volume of correspondence and queries from stakeholders across the region).

Help us to help you

We recognise that not all TUGs are the same. To help us understand the role of each group it would be beneficial if you could provide us with copies of your terms of reference, if these are available, or a summary of your main objectives as a group. This will enable us to understand your demographic/role within the community and help us to understand how we can better engage with you.

Code of Conduct

We wish to build a network which provides opportunities to:

- Engage in an open, transparent, proactive way.
- Input and contribute ideas and opinions.
- Share information by presenting work being done by our members, partners and colleagues.

The above will be delivered in the following manner:

- Respect each person
- Challenge only ideas, not people

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- Keep an open mind
- Listen constructively
- Be punctual attending meetings
- Must observe confidentiality when requested to do so
- Be concise when providing feedback (written or verbal)

Expected Outcomes

- Clear and concise communications
- Opportunities to input and shape
- Escalation routes

Please note that TfW reserve the right to remove themselves from any meetings that do not uphold the code of conduct and to refuse engagement with groups/individuals that do not adhere to the code of conduct.

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