

Report to:	Montgomeryshire on Wednesday, 8 <sup>th</sup> November 2017.
Author:	County Councillor J. Michael Williams, Montgomeryshire Rail Representative.
Subject:	Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee (SARLC).

1. Introduction.

As with my report to Members about the Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association (SARPA), I set out below a brief background sketch on the Shrewsbury – Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee.

The Shrewsbury – Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee was formed about 40 years ago, but not sure of the exact date.

1.1 Membership.

Membership is open to the County Councils of Ceredigion, Gwynedd, Powys and Shropshire; Town and Community Councils who have a station along or are close to the line; Cambrian Rail Partnership; Aberystwyth University; SARPA; the Train Operator (Arriva Trains Wales); Network Rail; TraCC; British Transport Police; Passenger Focus; Carno Station Action Group; Talylyn Railway; Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways; Rail Future (Cambrian Branch); Growing Mid Wales Partnership; Local AMs and MPs; Welsh Government Officers, who have a remit for rail.

1.2 Objectives.

These include:

Discussions on common issues between its membership regarding the main line between Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth.

To receive updates on matters affecting the line from Arriva Trains Wales, Network Rail, Rail Partnership, Police and other relevant bodies.

To influence and aid enhancements to the line's services.

1.3 Meetings.

The Committee meets four times yearly at Welshpool. Meetings are also held twice yearly with the Cambrian Coast Railway Liaison (Machynlleth to Pwllheli) Conference at Machynlleth.

2. Notes of a meeting of the Shrewsbury – Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee held at Welshpool Town Hall on Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

2.1 Representatives in Attendance.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Arriva Trains Wales, Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways and Aberystwyth Town Council.

2.2 Elections.

Chair: Councillor Trevor Roberts (Barmouth); Vice-chair: Councillor Michael Williams (Machynlleth); Secretary: Robert Robinson (Welshpool), who is also Clerk to Welshpool Town Council.

Note: the term of office is until 2022 and the Chair and Vice-chair must be serving councillors.

### 2.3 Financial Report.

Both Shropshire and Ceredigion County Councils are up-to-date with their grant of £250 each. Powys, however, have not paid. The Vice-chair said that he would chase this up with Powys' Portfolio Holder for Transport.

### 2.4 Report to Welsh Government Minister on the Cambrian Main Line and the Cambrian Coast Line.

During the summer, commissioned and paid for by the Welsh Government, the Committee carried out both on-and off-train surveys of usage/potential usage of the two lines.

A confidential draft copy of the survey report was circulated at the meeting. A meeting with the Minister's Office and Senior Civil Servants has been arranged for the 17<sup>th</sup> of November. The Secretary, Chair and Vice-chair would be in attendance.

A presentation on the survey was given by the Secretary and, following discussion, it was agreed to add to the recommendations: through trains and improved service on the Coast Line.

The full report will be published online after Welsh Government approval.

**The report is to be considered confidential until it is published.**

### 2.5 Reports.

2.5.1 Cambrian Rail Partnership: The Committee welcomed Claire Williams who has been in post for just four weeks.

2.5.2 Network Rail: a report was given by George Collinson, which included the following, Barmouth Bridge, currently celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, is due to be refurbished; Bow Street Station is progressing to a 2019 opening; Penhelig halt to close for essential works to be carried out; part of the Cambrian Coast line to close for essential works in October/November. The following matters were brought to Network Rail's attention: manual gates operation at Barmouth and the need for automatic servicing; signalling alterations needed to get the best use of Platform 3 at Shrewsbury.

### 2.6 Carno Station Re-opening.

An update was given by Jeremy Barnes (Chair of the Carno Station Action Group) on the re-opening of Carno Station which, in the last few days, moved to the second stage and is now on a list in place of Bow Street.

SARLC has a policy of supporting the station's re-opening, but subject to the one hourly service being able to be maintained.

*(Note: attached as Appendix A is the document: Carno Station Action Group Background to 2017 Petition to National Assembly for Wales. The document, together with other background documents, which set out the rationale for the re-opening of Carno station, was due to be considered by the Senedd's Petitions Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> October).*

### 2.7 Station Shelters.

The Secretary is to chase up shelters at the following locations:

- i) Dyfi Junction – find out why this one is not to proceed.
- ii) Welshpool – Welshpool Town Council is sourcing contractor to install.

2.8 Meetings.

The Chair, Vice-chair and Secretary will be attending various meetings, including those that involve the Shrewsbury – Birmingham Line and which might affect the Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Line and Cambrian Coast Line.

2.9 Dates of Meetings.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held at Welshpool on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2018. A joint meeting with the Cambrian Coast Railway Liaison Conference will be held in Machynlleth on Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

2.10 Actions to be Taken Forward.

The following actions are to be progressed:

- i) Report to Welsh Government Minister to be adjusted under recommendations.
- ii) Check on why the Dyfi Junction shelter is not progressing.
- iii) Chase up Welshpool shelter installation – being arranged by Welshpool Town Council.
- iv) Report back on various meetings planned in the next few months.

.....