

Report to:	Montgomeryshire on Wednesday, 14 th March 2018.
Author:	County Councillor J. Michael Williams, Montgomeryshire Rail Representative.
Subject:	Meeting of the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee.

1. Notes on a meeting of the Shrewsbury – Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee held at the Town Hall, Welshpool on Friday, 16th February 2018.

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, Newtown and Welshpool; Talyllyn Steam Railway; Cambrian Rail Partnership; Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers’ Association (SARPA) and Arriva Trains Wales.

1.2 **Actions Taken since the last Meeting.**

The meeting received a report on actions taken since the last meeting:

- i) Report to Welsh Government Minister was adjusted with recommendations.
- ii) The Dyfi Junction shelter is not to progress due to platform width.
- iii) The Secretary did chase up Welshpool shelter installation.
- iv) The Secretary reported back on various meetings.

1.3 **Financial Report.**

The meeting considered the financial report, which showed approximately £400 in the bank account. There is still no receipt of payment from Powys County Council.

1.4 **Reports.**

1.4.1 **Arriva Trains Wales.**

The following were the main points of the report:

- i) The main issues were around communication. The meeting asked that better communication takes place in a number of areas identified as follows:
 - a. Notifying stakeholders of delays and cancellations with details of how if possible town councils such as Welshpool, Newtown and Machynlleth can get information out to their local communities.
 - b. Train information not always accurate.
- ii) It was confirmed that Wi-Fi is now available on all Arriva Trains in Wales.

- iii) Station Wi-Fi is being rolled out with larger stations first (i.e. Aberystwyth first).
- iv) More rolling stock is being made available to strengthen the existing stock.
- v) The early morning busy commuter trains are now often 6 carriages.
- vi) All trains must be disabled compliant by 2020 with no exceptions.
- vii) Arriva Trains has done very well in overall train standards of service.
- viii) Storm issues have meant that 100 trains out of 128 have had to be subject to wheel refurbishment.
- ix) The fare increases have not affected passenger numbers.
- x) Arriva Trains will issue growth figures for the last 12 months in a few weeks.
- xi) Consultation on the May 2018 timetable is due to be issued in a few weeks' time.
- xii) Details of the Machynlleth shelters' refurbishment was outlined.
- xiii) Comment was made regarding the Aberystwyth station toilets and their opening hours. Arriva Trains Wales confirmed that there will be no change due to misuse.

1.4.2 Network Rail.

The following were the main points of the report:

- i) The meeting expressed concern over works being carried out during weekends during the holiday periods.
- ii) 3.7m of work on the Cambrian Line is continuing but is often over running which has caused issues. The works are now being scheduled to end early to allow a better finishing time.
- iii) The fact that there were 3 trains cancelled on 3 consecutive days was not good news. Things are improving again.
- iv) Network Rail was concerned at the overruns to the extent that the MD did attend to see what is happening.

1.4.3 Cambrian Rail Partnership.

The full report is attached to these notes as Appendix 1.

- i) An offer of 2 for 1 entry at CADW castles and buildings on production of a rail ticket is to be announced.
- ii) Although there is a social media tourism campaign there will also be paper based material.
- iii) The Orange Wallet scheme continues.
- iv) Big Trains little trains is being launched again this year.

1.4.4 British transport Police.

There was no report from the British Transport Police. However the following was notified to the meeting:

- i) There has been a reduction in antisocial behaviour between Machynlleth and Aberystwyth on the trains.
- ii) A reduction in drug related incidents at Aberystwyth has been recorded.
- iii) The waiting room on Shrewsbury station's platform 3 is now closed on occasions due to misuse.

1.5 Franchise.

The meeting received an update on the current situation:

- I) A formal announcement is expected during May 2018.
- II) It has been confirmed that the current rail service is to be the minimum services running now.

1.6 Welshpool Station.

The meeting received a short report on the initial proposals:

- i) A new direction sign is being located on the bridge facing the ramp to the platform in the next 24 hours.
- ii) A new station plan was tabled (see attached report).

The meeting was unanimous in its support.

Welshpool Town Council will now prepare an artist's perspective and take the matter forward to Welsh Government and Network Rail.

1.7 Freight on the Railway.

This subject is to be added to the next agenda.

Before the next meeting Welshpool Town Council will carry out a survey of the industrial estate to see who would use rail freight if it were available.

1.8 Dates of Meetings.

The meeting noted the dates for the next three SARLC meeting:

Friday, 11th May 2018 in Welshpool; Friday, 5th October in Welshpool; Friday, 8th February 2019. The joint meeting with the Cambrian Coast Railway Liaison Committee in Machynlleth on Friday, 13th July 2018.

1.9 Actions to be Taken Forward.

The following actions are to be taken forward:

- i) Rail freight to be added to the next meeting's agenda.
- ii) Welshpool Town Council to complete the survey on freight.
- iii) Rail crossings to be added to next agenda.
- iv) Welshpool Town Council to take forward Welshpool station proposals.

- v) Both Ben Davies and Robert Robinson to chase up the extra shelters.
- vi) Ben Davies to pass on comments on rail information.
- vii) Letter to be sent to Network rail expressing disappointment at weekend working during holiday periods.
- viii) Arriva Trains is to issue growth figures for the last 12 months in a few weeks. The secretary will then pass them on to members.

Further to the report of the meeting please find attached at appendix 3 copy of a self-explanatory communication 'Abellio'. One of the three remaining bidders for the Wales and borders franchise indicating that they have withdrawn from the bidding process now leaving two remaining bidders MTR and KEOLIS AMEX.

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