

Cambrian Railway Partnership, Rail Development Officer's Report, February 2018.

1. Improving Links with Local Communities and their Railway.

Community and engagement work is continuing with Arriva Trains Wales and Network Rail. We recently ran a level crossing safety competition with Ysgol Maenofferren – Blaenau Ffestiniog, Ysgol y Traeth – Barmouth and Ysgol Tan y Castell – Harlech, as part of our partnership with Network rail to change the historical mind set of how level crossings are not important to young people and to show them the dangers of not using them correctly. The winner and two runners-up received free family tickets to see Santa on the Highlands and Ffestiniog Railway and book tokens courtesy of the Cambrian railway Partnership and the Welsh Books Council.

2. Continual Improvement and Development of Existing Rail Services and Infrastructure.

Strategic stake holder meetings take place on a monthly basis for the development of Bow Street with the chair of the SARLC also attending these meetings. I have recently been asked by Welsh Government and Network Rail to be the lead on the Equality and Diversity element of the project. The plans are shortly going out to consultation and we are currently working with a substantial number of disability and equality groups to ensure that the plans do not have a detrimental effect on service users.

3. Local Line-specific Timetable Production.

The December 2017 – May 2018 pocket timetable has now been produced and distributed to relevant TICs, stations and other relevant outlets. I will also be working closely with Arriva Trains Wales, Transport for Wales and Welsh Government in discussions as to whether there will be a new timetable in May or when the new franchise takes over with new or extra stock being ordered of the current timetable if necessary.

4. Surveys.

The Cambrian Railways Partnership was delighted to work with the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail 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 were presented to Gareth Evans, Rail Economist for Welsh Government along with other Welsh Government officials by the Committee on November 17th, 2017, at a meeting in Cathays Park, Cardiff. Welsh Government then disseminated this information to the franchise bidders as supporting information for their final bid which had to be submitted to Welsh Government and Transport for Wales in December 2017.

5. 2018/2019 Promotional Campaign.

The Rail development Officer has also agreed with the Partnership that to make the best of the Visit Wales “2018 Year of the Sea” thematic year and its potential for increasing tourism to the regions that it would be best to issue an invitation to tender for the creation and management of a complete Year of the Sea social media campaign along with continued management and maintenance of the new Wales on rails website. The invitation was sent out in December with responses to be received by mid-January. The contract has been awarded to Equinox Communications in Cardiff, who have already started making significant changes and fixes to the website and social media platforms, with the new website due to go live mid-March in readiness for Easter. Equinox is a highly reputable company with a wealth of knowledge in the tourism and rail industry. They are also currently working partners of Arriva Trains Wales, Cadw and Visit Wales.

6. Reports and Meetings.

Unfortunately I was unable to attend the Cambrian Coast Railway Liaison Committee in November due to moving house from South Wales to Mid Wales; however, a report was submitted and presented by Mr. Ben Davies of Arriva Trains Wales. I am also attending a number of town council meetings to raise the profile of making the Cambrian Railway a Dementia Friendly Community in its own entity. A number of towns such as Machynlleth, Welshpool and Newtown are already Dementia friendly Communities and are now adding travel as part of their action plans and I am assisting them along with the Dementia Friendly Communities Co-ordinator to support them in gaining the status for their stations.

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