

NORTH AND MID WALES ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

CAMBRIAN AND NORTH WALES COAST TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of a meeting held on
Friday 9th January 2026 at 12noon
By Zoom

Present were

Cllr Ian Hodge Chair	Holywell Town Council
Cllr Norma Davies Vice Chair	Flint Town Council
Gail Jones	Transport for Wales
James Nichols	Transport for Wales
Robert Granville	Transport for Wales
Zandra Ling	Transport for Wales
Ross Rondel	Transport for Wales (buses)
Cllr M Blackwell	Rhyl Town Council
Cllr Vivienne Blonder	Buckley Town Council
Cllr Shelley Childs	Holywell Town Council
Cllr Pat Corbett	Holywell Town Council
Angus Eickhoff	SARPA
Cllr Paul Fletcher	Abergele Town Council
Cllr Ben Gwalchmai	Welshpool Town Council
Cllr Patrick Heeson	Mostyn Community Council
Ken Law	Welshpool face-book group
Cllr Chris Lemon	Shropshire Council
Cllr Alan Manship	Connah's Quay Town Council
Cllr Helen Roberts	Conwy Town Council
Cllr Trevor Roberts	Chair Cambrian Line Committee
Bob Saxby	Rail Future
Cllr Jeff Smith	Aberystwyth Town Council
Cllr Andrew Wallbank	Caersws Community Council
Cllr Alun Williams	Ceredigion Council
Cllr Andrew Wood	Abergele Town Council
Robert Robinson Secretary	Llanfair Caereinion Town Council

Apologies received from

Cllr Michael Davies	Beaumaris Town Council
Cllr Lynette Edwards	Caersws Community Council
Dylan Wilson-Lewis	Rail Future

1. Welcome by the chair

The meeting received a welcome from the Chair.

2. Minutes of the last joint transport meetings

The meeting considered and approved the minutes of the last joint meeting held on 4th July 2025.

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3. Actions since the last meeting

The following actions were noted from the last meeting:

- a) Arrangements for a Welsh Government representative have been made for attendance at the main Association meeting on 23rd January 2026.
- b) The secretary attended the rail 200 event in Aberystwyth.
- c) The secretary has met with Stena-line (Holyhead) and they are receptive for a meeting hosted by the Association with TRW and Avanti. This is to be arranged soon.
- d) The markings on the platform (5) at Shrewsbury for carriage identification on the Cambrian line are of little value. Unless all Cambrian bound trains depart from Platform 5 and unless the lettering is included on the electronic display boards the markings are of little or no effect. Further thought required.

4. James Nichols Transport for Wales

A presentation was given by James to the meeting (copy of this to be circulated following the meeting).

Points raised by members from the presentation were:

- a) Will the changes and improvements to Machynlleth Depot permit the maintenance of 3 car units? This would allow for expansion of usage which would be expected with the introduction of an hourly service. – ***all trains on the Cambrian Line are to be 2/4 units taken from the 21 new units with the ERTMS system fitted.***
- b) Interesting to see how many trains are short-formed on the Cambrian, i.e. 2 car units running far more often than 3 or 4. It is noticeable that passengers now often have to change at Shrewsbury from a 197 to a 158, which is vastly inconvenient to say the least. Is this likely to increase as the year wears on? – ***To be followed up and monitored.***

In relation to the anti-social behaviour in Flint, can we have increased visibility of transport police in the evenings as a number of local people have stated they feel uncomfortable waiting on the platform.

In addition, in relation to mental health, is there a possibility of putting signposts at railway platforms with contact number for the Samaritans or local mental health as there was a fatality at Shotton 24hrs ago. – ***Follow up 'samartan' signs.***

- c) SARPA hopes the idea to extend Platform 3 at Shrewsbury outwards to allow access to the Crewe line will be reconsidered. There is room for a crossover at the North End of Platform 3 as it stands which would achieve the same effect.
Extending Platform 3 outwards will remove the separate through freight road and will be a lot of expenditure to achieve not very much.
Last train Aber to Mach is 23:30. - ***comment noted.***
- d) Later trains – a later train from Aberystwyth and from Birmingham International to be considered. An earlier train on a Sunday would also be a good addition. – ***Secretary to follow up.***

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- e) There is still a need for the meeting with Colin Lee regarding the hourly train service on the Cambrian Line and how this fits with the existing path being occupied by a Holyhead train. – **To be arranged.**
- f) The issue of overcrowding on many trains (as the norm) was noted.
- g) Can you please confirm that the call points will be on the platform and not in the car park?
- **To be clarified.**
- h) Can TfW look at the front car park to see if the number of car parking places can be increased now not used by the Rail replacement service? – **This exercise was completed about 18 months ago.**
- i) Bilingual announcements on trains – TfW indicated that when the class 197 trains arrive on the Cambrian Line that all announcements would be bilingual. **Situation to be monitored.**

The meeting thanked James for his time and presentation.

5. Robert Gravelle Transport for Wales

A presentation was given by Robert and Zandra to the meeting (copy of this to be circulated following the meeting).

Points raised by members from the presentation were:

- a) Some of our group members have raised the issue that they have to time their journeys carefully as they have conditions where they need access to toilets. If a train is cancelled or delayed it can lead to real problems. Welshpool Station has a high footfall but very limited facilities. What are the plans for rolling out toilets to stations like Welshpool? – **There are no plans at present – to be kept on the agenda.**
- b) Are there any moves to improve Welshpool. Simple one was the painting of handrails red - suggested over 2 years ago and would help with dementia. Ramp is not to today's standard and very long and steep. Maybe lifts should come forward bearing in mind that Welshpool is one of the busiest stations along the line. – **TFW expressed surprise that the red railings painting had not been done. This is to be chased up. The ramp situation details to be passed to TfW.**
- c) Flint has a large proportion of disabled people due to the primary and secondary ALN schools. There is no changing place toilet in Flint. I have raised this previously with TfW, I would be grateful if this request could be looked at formally. – **TFW noted the situation.**
- d) How does Passenger Assist function when services are cancelled en masse - such as today? Many vulnerable people could be caught out..... - **No real answer on this one.**

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- e) There is a huge issue at Welshpool station with the rail replacement service which now stops outside Tesco. Passengers have to go over a bridge and down to the platform to find out this information which is difficult for those with disability. We need an additional smart sign unit at the up ramp to Welshpool Station such as that that can be found in the middle of Porthmadog high Street giving both train and bus information. – ***Further discussion between secretary and Gail Jones to be done.***
- f) In terms of inclusivity, where are we with getting bilingual announcements on Cambrian Line trains? - ***TFW are looking at this. will seek update from station manager. Gail***
- g) Will it be a smart sign/information sign such as that in Porthmadog? – ***To be followed up.***
- h) You mentioned level boarding. But the 197s will be higher than the existing 158s. Some platforms will be altered if they'd be non-compliant but most stations will see a significantly higher step from platform to train. How does this fit with equalities? Do more adjustments need to be made? – ***More work to be done – to be monitored.***

6. Ross Rondel Transport for Wales (Buses)

A presentation was given by Ross to the meeting (copy of this to be circulated following the meeting).

Points raised by members from the presentation were:

- a) Big issue in any town or community is finding out where your bus goes from and to and when. In Llanfair we have put up 5 new bus stops with timetables in them. Result bus used Llanfair to Welshpool as more than doubled in a year. Just a thought. - ***Noted.***
- b) What steps are being taken to improve integration not only within bus services but with rail as well? Over 25 years of Welsh Government and we still don't have an "All Wales Travel Card". - ***Noted for future discussion.***
- c) Many of our resident's struggle with all timetables being in an app. The app is good, I use it myself, but I understand that not everyone can use it. – ***App is fine but many do not have smart phones. Noted.***
- d) As I see bus transport it based on private companies are putting profit before decent bus services we need better regulation and better services. – ***Standard of service delivery is important and all will be done to ensure good service.*** – ***To be monitored.***
- e) An integrated map of all bus services is very important (accepting that there are good maps of Traws Cymru services). E.g. London overground lines have substantially increased their patronage simply by including them on the well-known tube map. – ***To be followed up.***

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- f) A bus stop in Machynlleth in 2024! Admittedly things have improved since then (the sign is now upright, though not vertical!) but we need better than this. = **Noted**.
- g) We had a London Style network in 1986 called BWS GWYNEDD which worked well until for 10 years despite deregulation. The new approach should work but network planning needs to include connectivity which is now very poor in my area. Interchanges at Bangor, Caernarfon and LlanfairPG need development. - **Ross and Bob Saxby to make contact**.
- h) Can Town and Community Councillors be invited to these workshops, we have hyper local knowledge that would be beneficial. - **Yes they will be. There will be lots of in person and on line engagement opportunities**.

7. New trains in 2033

The subject of new trains for 2033 is to be carried over to the July meeting.

8. Surveys

Further surveys will take place in 2026.

9. Deganwy crossings

The secretary is to seek information on the current position.

10. Committee

10.1 Remit of the liaison committees

The meeting considered and agreed an outline remit for discussion with TFW as follows:

To receive updates and reports from rail operators and Network Rail.
To discuss topics and respond to consultations.
To make recommendations to the operators/Network Rail on rail matters.
To complete survey and other consultation works to support TFW and Network Rail.
To lobby both Parliament and the Welsh Government with regards to rail matters.
All discussions should be meaningful and allowing some influence in the subject.

10.2 Membership

To consider the membership of the committee's bearing in mind centralisation of them by TFW.

Cambrian Lines (both Cambrian Main Line & Cambrian Coast Line)

Community Councils within 10 miles of a station serving their community.

County Council representatives.

The Members of Parliament.

Senedd Members.

SARPA

Rail Future

Transport for Wales

Network Railway

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North Coast Lines (Main Line, Conway Valley)

Community Councils within 10 miles of a station serving their community.

County Council representatives.

The Members of Parliament.

Senedd Members.

Rail Future

Transport for Wales

Network Railway

Joint Committee Meting

Members of both committee memberships.

10.3 Funding

The committees do a lot of work with surveys as well as bringing together representatives to support the user groups. It was considered that as an official user group that a contribution towards the cost of running the group should be considered by TFW. Robert is to draw up a proposal for discussion with TFW.

10.4 STIG transport meetings Shrewsbury

The meeting was invited by Julie Buckley MP to send a representative to the Shrewsbury STIG meetings. The meeting agreed that Robert Robinson should attend for the Association.

11. Thanks

The meeting thanked Gail Jones (TFW) for all her work in aiding this meeting with TFW.

12. Dates for 2026 meetings

The dates for the meetings in 2026 are as follows:

Cambrian Transport – Friday 24th April 2026 at 11.15am at Aberystwyth Town Council and by zoom

North Wales Coast Transport – Friday 10th April 2026 at 10.30am by zoom.

Joint Cambrian and North Wales Coast – Friday 3rd July 2026 at 10.30am in person in Shrewsbury.

Cambrian Transport – Friday 2nd October 2026 at 11.15am at Aberystwyth Town Council and by zoom.

North Wales Coast Transport – Friday 9th October 2026 at 10.30am by zoom.

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Appendix - Actions to be taken forward from the meeting

Ref	Item	By whom
1	Prepare and circulate minutes	Secretary
2	Post minutes on website	Secretary
3	Prepare proposal for committee remit/membership/funding	Secretary
4	Gain update from Network Rail on the Deganwy crossing	Secretary
5	Arrange for a representative to attend the STIG meetings in Shrewsbury	Secretary with Julie Buckley MP
6	Arrange meeting between IH/TR/RR and Gail Jones of TFW to follow up any TFW matters	Secretary
7	Review with TFW markings on platform 5 at Shrewsbury	Secretary with TFW
8	Add new trains to the July joint meeting agenda	Secretary
9	Meeting with Colin Lee to be taken forward regarding the hourly train service paths on the Cambrian/Holyhead services.	Gail Jones TFW
10	Chase up painting and ramp situation at Welshpool Station.	Robert Gravelle
11	Replacement bus services at Welshpool to be discussed further offline.	Secretary with TFW
12	Update on bi-lingual announcements on the Cambrian Line to be clarified.	Gail Jones
13	Investigate if smart signage can be installed at other stations on the Cambrian line – like that at Porthmadog.	Gail Jones
14	Level platform boarding to be monitored.	Secretary with TFW
15	Integrated map of rail/bus services to be discussed further.	Secretary with TFW
16	Bob Saxby and Ross Rondel to make contact over buses.	Bob Saxby and Ross Rondel
17	Monitor bilingual announcements on the Cambrian Line when class 197 trains are in service.	All
18	Arrange for 3 rd July meeting of the joint groups to meet in person at Shrewsbury.	Secretary with Gail Jones