

NORTH & MID WALES ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS



NORTH WALES & CAMBRIAN TRANSPORT LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of a meeting of the North Wales Coast and Cambrian Lines Committee's

held on **Friday 28th July 2023 at 10.30am**
by Zoom

Record of attendance

Present were

Cllr Ian Hodge (Chair)

Cllr Trevor Roberts

Anne Alias

Cllr Vivienne Blondek

Cllr Colin Brooks-Williams

Cllr John Ellison

Cllr Eryl Jones-Williams

Anne Lloyd-Jones

Cllr Peter Morton

Lorraine Rathbone

Cllr Robert Saxby

Cllr Andrew Wallbank

H Willcocks

Cllr Dylan Wilson-Lewis

Cllr Michael Williams

Robert Robinson (Secretary)

Holywell Town Council

Cambrian Line

Ceredigion County Council

Buckley Town Council

Carno Community Council

Gwynedd County Council

Gwynedd County Council

St Asaph City Council

Railfuture (North Wales Rep)

Caersws Community Council

Penmaenmawr Town Council

Rail Future (Cambrian)

Powys County & Machynlleth Town Council

Llanfair Caereinion Town Council

Apologies received from

Gail Jones

Nick Smith

Cllr Norma Davies

Angus Eickhoff

Jeff Smith

Transport for Wales

Avanti Trains

Flint Town Council

SARPA

Aberystwyth Town Council

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Cllr Paul Hinge

Ceredigion County Council

Cllr Andrew Wood

Abergele Town council

Cllr Carol Holliday

Prestatyn Town Council.

Cllr Barry Mellor

Rhyl Town Council

David Taylor

Rail Future

Cllr Alun Williams

Ceredigion Council & Aberystwyth Town Council

1. Welcome by the Chair

The meeting received a welcome from the chair Cllr Ian Hodge.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The meeting considered and approved the minutes of the last Cambrian meeting. Proposed by and seconded by. The vote was unanimous.

3. Actions since last meeting

The meeting received an update on actions taken since the last meeting.

4. Transport for Wales – All Wales meeting 21st June 2023 & general report

The meeting received an update on matters relating to Transport for Wales as follows:

- i) Due to a shortage of trains (due to the withdrawn class 175 units) there is likely to be more 150 class trains on routes which are slower, sometimes do not have facilities and are not suitable for longer journeys. Cllr Trevor Roberts informed the meeting that it was likely that this situation would continue for another year.
- ii) The delivery of the new class 197 trains is slower than expected with under half the trains now in service. (last figure given recently was 13 out of 57).
- iii) The meeting supported the proposal to seek that all 197 units used on the Cambrian, the borders and North Coast be fitted with ERTMS.
- iv) The issue of guard training in the use of the train information systems was raised again.
- v) The issues identified with the class 197 units continues with direct evidence of members relating to disability access, the step up the trains being excessive alongside a gap between the platform and train).

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- vi) The three toilet emptying units were due to be installed before the new trains came into service on the Cambrian Lines and the Marches section of the line between Shrewsbury and Chester. Such units to re-enforce the existing ones were to be installed at Pwllheli, Chester and Shrewsbury. It now appears that doing this turns the areas into 'class C depots' and therefore will take much longer to complete. This could have an impact on toilet reliability on the new trains of which there is only 1 on each two-car unit.
- vii) Transport for Wales has confirmed that the Cambrian Cost is to have 4 car units during at least the summer months. This is particularly good news. How this is going to work with the connection at Machynlleth is yet to be identified. This new service starts on Monday 31st July 2023.
- viii) Transport for Wales have confirmed that there are not plans to close any operating booking offices in Wales.
- ix) The issue of trains not stopping at stations when trains are running late or overcrowded was noted.
- x) Cllr Trevor Jones and Cllr Ian Hodge will be invited to join the secretary to meet with Russell George (Senedd), Chief Executive of Transport for Wales along with other senior offices to take forward the wishes of this meeting.

5. Avanti trains

The following were discussed:

- i) The promised improved level of London services has not been delivered.
- ii) The current services are not only poor but also unreliable with trains often cancelled.
- iii) Avanti have confirmed that on strike days there will be no trains from the north coast to London Euston. On these days only 4 services will operate passing through Crewe.
- iv) A concern was expressed that when HS2 links to Crewe at some point in the future that direct trains from the north coast to London may cease. A matter to be monitored.

6. Network Rail

The notices of rail closures have been passed to members with particular regard to the Cambrian Coastline between September and December 2023.

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7. New timetables December 2023

The meeting considered aspects of the new timetables due to come into effect in December 2023. In reality the new timetable is not likely to be fully implemented until May 2024.

The points of note are:

- i) The Cambrian Lines are due to have a full hourly service early in 2024. In practice this will mean that the existing Birmingham International service to Holyhead will now divide at Shrewsbury with two cars progressing along the Cambrian Line and two cars to Holyhead. Currently the Shrewsbury to Holyhead service is 4 cars. Due to this information the rail surveys being completed in August will now include this line from Shrewsbury – Chester – Shrewsbury.
- ii) There is to be a review of timetables in the autumn for Welsh Government and the surveys maybe needed to support any case to retain services.

10. Station Audits

The meeting received an update on station audits (both dementia and general):

- i) Newtown (Powys) and Flint stations are to have an improved footbridge with lifts installed over the next 12 months.
- ii) The other refurbishments taking place along the north coast are not all being completed to dementia standard with colour schemes not being of those in dementia guidelines.
- iii) The audits issued by this group in the last few years have been presented to the rail improvements group of Transport for Wales and are being considered when works progress.
- iv) Prestatyn Town Council has asked if the group would support the installation of a toilet facility at the station there. The nearby toilets have been closed so there is no nearby facility. The meeting agreed to take this suggestion forward.

10. Bus travel

The meeting noted the new ticket arrangements for buses in North Wales whereby you only one ticket to cover your journey even if you are changing buses on route.

It was noted that it appeared changes have been made since 2014 with little or no consultation or information, initially due to operators losing their licence and then Covid but we should be getting back to 'normal' now. We are aware that there were problems with operators and late registration of the recent changes but the date

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could have been put back so that it could be done with proper notice. – For the next meeting agenda. Cllr E Jones-Williams will take this up in Gwynedd and the secretary with Arriva Buses.

11. Surveys

The rail survey planning is completed. The paperwork and equipment have been issued to both North Wales groups (1 and 2), Cambrian main line and also for the Cambrian Coast. The paperwork and equipment for the Shrewsbury to Chester route will be ready for implementation.

All surveys are to be completed during August.

The full survey report will be ready for the October meetings.

12. Disability project

A disability report is to be prepared for comment and then issue to TFW.

The particular points to be included are:

- i) Dementia issues.
- ii) The access to trains from the platforms (both onto and between the train and platforms)
- iii) Support on trains by staff
- iv) Changing trains at Chester in particular.
- v) Health and Safety issues with boarding trains.
- vi) Access to trains by ramp – clarify how this works.

13. Greenfield project – Flintshire

The Chair updated the members on the above.

Well Tag 1 has been completed.

Well Tag 2 has only been 70% completed.

The Chair is monitoring progress.

14. Dates of future meetings

The meeting noted the dates of the next meetings as follows:

North Wales Transport – Friday 6th October 2023 at 10.30am by zoom.

Cambrian Transport – Friday 13th October 2023 at 11.45am

North Wales/Cambrian Transport – Friday 10th November 2023 at 10.30am to consider the survey reports.

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15. Actions to be taken forward

The following actions are to be taken forward from the meeting:

No	Item
1	Publish minutes on the website
2	Letter to TFW regarding support for toilet facilities at Prestatyn Station
3	TFW to confirm the details of the Cambrian Coast train service which is now to be 4 car units.
4	Report on disabled issued on the railway to be completed and circulated for comment before issue to TFW and Avanti.
5	Suggest to TFW that the class 197 trains being fitted out in South Wales that have been delayed by fitted out to address the complaints about these trains.
6	Complete surveys as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Cambrian Coast – Cllr Trevor Roberts ii) Cambrian Main – Robert Robinson iii) Shrewsbury-Chester – Robert Robinson and Cllr Vivienne Blondk. iv) North Coast group 1 – Cllr Ian Hodge and Cllr Norma Davies. v) North Coast group 2 – Cllr Helen Roberts and Cllr Alyn Ashworth
7	Complete disability report for circulation
8	Seek to have more class 197 trains fitted with ERTMS
9	Gain clarification as to what happened at the meetings regarding the Welshpool footbridge.
10	Contact TFW regarding car park use and enforcement at various stations along all lines.
11	Raise issue of guard announcements on trains with TFW
12	Involve Welsh Government with the relevant issues raised by the members
13	Buses – issues over consultation and late changes announcements – consideration after more information and to be on next agenda