

Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association

12:30 Saturday 12th April 2025

Railway Inn, Borth.

Present: John Appleford, Dennis Bates, Mair Benjamin, Rona Dalton, James Davies, Angus Eickhoff, Sarah Harvey, John Oates, Dave Purdon, Bill Redfern, Cllr Jeff Smith, Thomas Wheeler^(r), Roger Whitehouse.

Apologies: Barbara Fuller, Robert Knight, Gareth Marston.

The Chair welcomed everybody.

Minutes of March Meeting:

Thomas stated that though he did try to join the meeting remotely this wasn't successful.

Roger Whitehouse proposed and it was agreed that the minutes be accepted.

Matters Arising from the Minutes:

John Oates queried the reliability ranking of the new 197 trains. When making comparisons it is necessary to compare diesels with diesels and not electric trains.

John Oates also said that the item about GBR and the privatised railway was very political for a group that is not political. It was agreed that this last bullet point in the minutes (re GBR) be recorded as a matter of opinion of some members at the Newtown meeting and is not a SARPA position.

James Davies said that we do have concerns that the introduction of the new 197s trains could be a negative step backwards in terms of reliability, user experience and single toilet.

Sarah said that she had heard back from Russel George regarding a meeting with James Price, with Russel suggesting we would have to work round James so probably a remote working involving SARPA representatives rather than attendance at an ordinary meeting. Angus suggested that a face to face meeting would be best if possible.

Officer's Reports:

The Chair reported that there hadn't been much this month.

The Treasurer said that the accounts were being prepared for the AGM. We have now used up the pre-purchased stamps and are therefore experiencing the effect of increased postage.

The Webmaster reported the site is up to date.

The Newsletter Editor stated that the closing date for submissions for the next Newsletter was 22nd June. Bill and Sarah will provide an obituary for Roger Goodhew.

Cambrian Lines News and Issues:

Network Rail have completed engineering works with much remaining jointed track replaced with continuous welded rail. It was noted that there remains some jointed track some very old.

TfW issued a press release regarding the opening of the new lifts and footbridge at Newtown, however it was noted that the lifts have currently been placed out of use.

It was noted that the cleaning at Welshpool is now good, it appearing that the ownership issues over the bridge have been resolved.

General discussion:

It was noted that the footfall article in the Newsletter indicated that Cambrian usage was increasing and had recovered from the pandemic. This despite the reliability problems. This removes the justification for the cuts and highlights the need for more trains. It was agreed that the Chair should issue a press release.

Roger Whitehouse stated that he and Bill had today come to Borth because of the late cancellation of the 11:25. It was shown has running late last night, but had disappeared this morning. John Appleford said it wasn't shown as cancelled, just disappeared which is very unsatisfactory.

Mair raised the issue of insufficient capacity to cope with Aberystwyth Graduation week etc and asked if anything would be done about it.

Jeff said that the 08:30 from Aberystwyth should be running from May.

Rona stated that Borth Railway Museum was open and they would be willing to have copies of the SARPA Newsletter from us.