

## Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association

Saturday 17th May 2025

11:45 Talyllyn Railway, Slater Room, Tywyn.

### Annual General Meeting followed by Ordinary Meeting

**Present:** Kate Day, Angus Eickhoff, Barbara Fuller, Sarah Harvey, Stephen Hughes<sup>(r)</sup>, John Oates, Bill Redfern, Thomas Wheeler<sup>(r)</sup>.

**Apologies:** John Appleford, Dennis Bates, Steve Boulding, James Davies, Tony Harvey, David McKeever, Dennis Onions, Robert Knight, Cllr Jeff Smith, Roger Whitehouse.

The start of the meeting was delayed because of train service delay and serious overcrowding of the train with passengers left behind.

Angus Eickhoff chaired the meetings.

#### Annual General Meeting:-

Angus proposed and it was agreed that in the absence of a quorum (10 for an AGM) that the AGM business be carried out but be subject to ratification at the next quorate meeting.

It was agreed that the minutes of the 2024 AGM (sent out last June, and available at the meeting) be accepted as read.

Angus read the Chair's report provided by Jeff Smith: *The year has been dominated by campaigning against the cuts to services, including media coverage, attending meetings, responding to consultations and getting politicians and local councils on board with the campaign. On the positive side, roughly half of the proposed cuts were reversed due to the sheer weight of public pressure, which was markedly stronger than the outcry seen on other TfW lines. This campaigning has also helped to bring in passionate campaigners from along the coast line and therefore strengthen our representation from the Coast line quite significantly.*

*There has also been the usual work of calling for a full hourly service on the main line, calling for additional services and strengthening and calling for better reliability, as we have been doing for a number of years.*

*In my view, the group has been very active this year and has been crucial in reducing the impact of cuts and attempting to improve the rest of the services.*

Jeff stated that he was willing to continue as Chair. It was agreed that all officers and committee be reappointed en block. Stephen Hughes will provide minutes for meetings he attends. It was noted that Roger Goodhew, Liaison Officer, passed away during the year. Angus attendees Main Line Liaison meetings, Bill attendees Coast Line Liaison meetings, it's unclear if the Shrewsbury Rail Forum is still active.

Robert Knight is stepping down as Distribution officer, Bill will continue to provide address printing and will arrange envelope stuffing. Committee to review copies to politicians and organisations. Sarah will distribute additional copies to Welshpool and Newtown. Angus will look after additional copies for Machynlleth.

The Treasurer presented the financial report:

Copies of the balance sheet had been distributed by email and copies were available in the room.

The situation is an improvement on last year because of the increase in the subscription fee, pre-purchase of postage stamps and use of free meeting rooms where possible.

Barbara stated that she had received a paper copy of the Newsletter but was happy with an electronic copy. Bill stated that it was current policy to send the Newsletter to all members with the aim for copies to be passed on, so spreading our message. With the increased cost of postage Bill said that he would look at this again.

The financial report was accepted by the meeting.

### **Ordinary Meeting:-**

Attendance as above, with the exception of Stephen Hughes who had to leave.

### **Minutes:**

The minutes of the April meeting were accepted.

Sarah said that regarding the 197s, she travelled yesterday and people got on at Shrewsbury with a lot of huge luggage. She didn't see how how 197's will accommodate large luggage. John Oates stated that the 197s have much more overhead luggage space but fewer luggage racks.

### **Chair's report:**

Angus read report from Jeff:

*Following the last meeting, 7 questions were raised with Gail via email. As part of her enquiries, she would like to see photo evidence of where exclamation marks are part of the Bow Street text on customer information screens on the platforms of Cambrian Line stations. Please send in any photographs of this in order to help get the problem fixed.*

*As agreed at the last meeting, a press release was also sent out and has gained considerable traction from outlets including Nation. Cymru and the County Times.*

John Oates said that it was difficult to photograph because of the flicker.

Regarding the press release could they be emailed out to members? It was agreed that this should be the case if future.

### **Officers Reports:**

Mostly covered by AGM.

Bill reported that Tony Harvey is investigating alternative meeting rooms in Welshpool due to issues with noise for the oak table at the Royal Oak. Angus will update web site with venue when known.

Angus reported that the web site is up to date.

### **Meeting with James Price:**

Sarah reported that she had received an email from Russell George MS regarding a meeting with James Price (Chief Executive TfW).

We have been offered an online meeting at 2pm on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> June. Not what we wanted but all that we will get. Bill said that we need to think about who should attend; they need attendees names and will then send out link. He suggested Jeff Smith, Angus Eickhoff Bill Redfern and Barbara Fuller. It was suggested that we should have a pre-meeting. Key issues are that people are being put off using the rail service because of: Poor reliability; Inadequate Winter service; Insufficient capacity. We need to avoid talking about things like the 197s that are implementation detail.

Angus said that it is well known that TfW have a reliability problem. John Oates asked if we were sure. Bill said the suspicion is that it's a lot to do with rolling stock. John Oates stated that the new timetable starts tomorrow, lets see how they do.

Barbara can set up Teams meetings and suggested that we should have 2 'practice sessions' prior to the meeting with James Price.

Sarah said that Jeff should be updated and Bill said that he would do that.

### **Future Timetable:**

Thomas said that the timetable still showed services through Shrewsbury, rather than changing to 197s. John Oates said the it might not show up in the timetable. Thomas said they should make it clear if they're not through journeys. Bill said that we've

known for some time that there would be a break of journey at Shrewsbury while the 197s were introduced, but it was expected that this would be for a short period which is not the case if the introduction of 197s to the Cambrian are being pushed out.

Barbara said that she had seen a high level meeting with Peter Hendy and Nick Millington where it was stated that the introduction won't be before December 2026.

It seems to have gone very quiet regarding next Winters timetable.

Barbara was very annoyed that when he raised the issue of the cuts in the Senedd Mabon ap Gwynfor MS used an example of impact from Facebook involving tourism which played into Ken Skates hands. This despite him being provided with many detailed instances of impact on locals and businesses.

John Oates suggested that we should put out a press release to say we noted the mention and give some better examples of impact.

Thomas stated that he had found the TfW service requirement (TSR3) had been updated to 8 trains on the Coast Line, i.e. the first service as gone, but no mention of seasonal changes. He also found from a FOI request that the 158s are leased until December 2027.