

## SARPA Meeting

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> February at the Unicorn Caersws

Present:

Patrick Adams, Angus Eickoff, Philip Ellison, Roger Goodhew, Sarah Harvey, Robert Knight, Gareth Marston, Bill Redfern, Jeff Smith, Dave Taylor, Roger Whitehouse, Michael Williams

Apologies:

Glynn Cook, Stephen Hughes, Claire Williams

Minutes of the Meeting held at Welshpool on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019

Jeff apologised for his absence from the January meeting. Sarah apologised for errors in sending out the minutes to members and thanked Angus and Bill for their help.

It was pointed out that the names Roger Goodhew and Roger Whitehouse had been confused in the January minutes apart from in the sentence beginning, "Corrections to the minutes."

Angus reported that the difficulties with the website provider had been sorted out. He informed members that he and the chairman decided the group should have a Facebook page and anything they wish to publicise can be put on this. Jeff thanked Angus for setting it up.

There was some discussion about the Newtown by-pass as its official opening is imminent. Michael Williams stated that money is to be spent by Powys County Council on other roads. He also told the meeting that there is a fund connected to the by-pass scheme which is making grants to benefit people in the Newtown area; he suggested writing to Alun Griffiths re the Community Fund. Roger Goodhew said there should be signs on the by-pass directing people to the Railway Station. Gareth said there are.

Re publicity Angus has not yet contacted the College about a logo design as he is waiting for donations.

Angus proposed the minutes be accepted. This was seconded by Robert.

Officers' Reports

Chairman's Report: Jeff said he had contacted Claire Williams for a Business Plan and she had sent her work plan.

Roger G had asked Ms Williams if Saturday suited her better than Tuesday evening to attend meetings: she had said ,”No”.

Gareth said Ms Williams is a useful contact to have. There was some discussion about the role Ben Davies had held.

Patrick Adams asked if the Regional Manager had contacted SARPA. Gareth said there is no Regional Manager: SARPA must contact whoever is in charge and it is the Welsh Government who specified what goes on. Bill said we need to use diplomacy and, if necessary, pressure especially about poor performance. Roger G said that on the day of the meeting the train destined for Aberystwyth went to Pwllheli. Gareth explained that the system is very complicated. Roger said no explanation was offered. Bill said the railway is under resourced. Patrick asked if there was a spare unit and Roger Whitehouse explained that it is used at certain times between Barmouth and Machynlleth. Bill referred to lack of resources leading to unreliability and said if Tfw allow the situation to continue we ought to complain. Gareth responded by saying if we do Tfw or the Welsh government will tell us to wait three years until 2022 when all changes come in.

Patrick asked who is responsible for accessing resources and Roger W said shortage of units is the problem; spare units are not available nationally. Angus said that as a result companies are keeping the price of units up. Roger W referred to the shortage of staff and said Tfw are recruiting. He emphasised the importance of Rest Days and the need for slack in the system in case of sickness. He said he was encouraged on the staff front at the (?) Line Liaison meeting he attended.

When Angus asked if the 769s are running the reply was not yet although the Beaver Rail in South Wales is being used for test runs. It was stated that electrification is dragging on and that Northern are not releasing 158s. Gareth said the plan for rolling stock for the next 10 years is already agreed adding that we must work with it. He explained that the problem before Christmas was not with our units but the fact that they were covering other areas.

Roger G described an item on overcrowded trains on “Midlands Today”. He said the Shrewsbury MP was involved as was Ken Skates. The latter has responsibility for the franchise in England. Gareth said from May there would be more trains between Birmingham and Shrewsbury – an extra train every

hour -3 per hour to take the pressure off. Another improvement would be 6 carriages on some trains at peak times.

The members were told that Ben Davies has retired. Jeff suggested inviting him to join SARPA, as an honorary member added Roger G. who said we should record our thanks to him. The person to contact now is James Nicholls.

#### Treasurer's Report:

Bill informed members that the transfer of bank details is still ongoing. SARPA has 41 paid up members (excluding those who have prepaid or paid electronically). Some members have given donations. The donations stand at £47.50. The Community account is £1,210.30 and the Premium account £276.78. Michael thanked the Treasurer for this.

Robert asked when the next Newsletter is due. Gareth said Tony Harvey is busy at present and Roger W said it is not due till April.

#### Publicity:

Gareth reported that the County Times had made a mistake re the venue Angus has used Broad Sheep for publicity. Gareth and Robert said people are taking the Newsletter but Gareth mentioned that this generates no new members. He suggested charging non-members who take Newsletters. Various incentives to membership were discussed including inserting a flier inside offering a discount according to when someone joined. All members agreed that fliers should go inside Newsletters and that if someone pays a full membership midway through the year they should be entitled to the first half year's membership and the following year. The Treasurer was delegated to work on this. Jeff suggested using direct- debit but this was not considered viable.

Roger G read out a letter he had sent to the person i/c of Shrewsbury station indicating that the March meeting of SARPA would take place on Tuesday 5th. at 17.45 and requesting use of the Cheshire suite.

Angus said meetings are advertised in the Rail Express.

### Design of Trains:

Gareth reported from a meeting of CAF that Finance arrangements are not in place. Roger suggested finance might be held over till the end of March. Robert asked about Newport factory. David Taylor and Angus asked about design of trains and Jeff responded. Members contributed to discussion about types of trains. There would not be 158s. Gareth said the plan was for multiple portions: he outlined the capacity of the units, sitting and standing. Jeff will be going to the Line Liaison meeting and hoped he could allay Robert's concerns.

Roger G said it may be better if the Cambrian line is in the Borders Unit rather than in one of the Welsh Units. Michael W apologised in connection with a report. Jeff said North Wales now has a major English component. Roger W will find out about the Unit and who is the relevant officer.

Michael Williams informed members that the result of the meeting between Tfw, Network Rail and the Welsh government would be available at the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Line Liaison meeting on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> February.

Gareth said that he was waiting to have a discussion about the new trains when the finance was available. Angus expressed concern that no extra provision would be made to what is available to commuters.

### Correspondence:

Sarah read an e-mail from Patrick Adams concerning connections with Shrewsbury-Crewe services suggesting amalgamation of Aberystwyth-Shrewsbury services with Shrewsbury-Crewe services. Gareth said this will not happen and explained the impossibility of executing it because of cost-cutting and long-term remodelling.