

Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association

Saturday 9th July 2022, 11:15

Royal Oak, Welshpool

Present: Martin Bemment^(r), Angus Eickhoff, Roger Goodhew, Sarah Harvey, Tony Harvey, Robert Knight, Ivor Morris, Bill Redfern, Jeff Smith^(r), Thomas Wheeler^(r), Roger Whitehouse, Cllr Michael Williams^(r).

^(r) – remote.

Apologies: Dennis Bates, Rod Jones, Gareth Marston.

Minutes of Last Meeting (11th June):

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted, with minor corrections.

Note in the list of planned meetings that the 10th December meeting is in Aberystwyth.

Matters Arising from the Minutes:

Roger Whitehouse confirmed that the Slater Room at the Tallylyn Railway Wharf Station, Tywyn is available and booked for our 10th September meeting.

Thomas Wheeler stated that the information concerning HST sets was incorrect, it is a private charter and not TfW proposing to run to Llandrindod.

The Chairman has written to TfW regarding the return of cash payments for trolley refreshments and understands that our query has been passed on to the catering manager. Regarding the provision of some trains on the south section of the coast line during the Barmouth bridge works, confirmation of bustitution details is yet to be done.

General Discussion:

Angus had hoped that we would of seen some Facebook users attending the meeting.

The Line Liaison meeting has been postponed again. It is hoped that it will take place in 4 to 6 weeks time, the delay being to reach agreement with TfW.

Angus to write to the chair of the liaison committee informing him that he is now our representative on that committee and urging a meeting to take place. Jeff stated that it looked like TfW wanted to change the remit. Bill stated that SARPA is, and should remain, independent. Angus suggested inviting Trevor Roberts to our next meeting.

Robert Knight queried that since we have limited the newsletters to 3 a year then the next should be no sooner than September, which would allow it to include information on the timetable change.

Cambrian Lines News:

Robert stated that there have been far too many recent cancellations. This also applies to short formations and (Shrewsbury) cross platform swaps. Many trains have been significantly overloaded. These factors easily put people off travelling by rail. The chair took an action to ask TfW for the service statistics.

Thomas reported that on the 13th June he had 2 158s from Birmingham, but a cross platform swap at Shrewsbury.

Roger Whitehouse said that it boils down to stock management. Angus said that leasing is a nightmare. Thomas stated it looks like the new 197 trains will also be on lease.

Angus stated that locomotive haulage was more flexible, but it won't happen. Roger Whitehouse stated that we shouldn't suggest it since it could jeopardise the important through working with the coast line.

Electrification is the best idea, and Robert stated that relatively it doesn't look too difficult, with the route being single track with few overbridges. Jeff pointed out that electrification lies with Network Rail not TfW. Angus said we have been told that we will be getting hydrogen. Robert stated that hydrogen is actually highly inefficient.

Regarding North-South Wales travel the subsidy to the air service has been withdrawn. There are now 3 'Gerald' services each way.

Tony asked if anyone had encountered problems with 'buy before you board'. Roger Whitehouse pointed out that there aren't any ticket machines along the coast line. TfW put it in every press release. Robert Knight had noticed queues at Shrewsbury. Tony stated that you only need to upset somebody once and they stop using rail, put off forever. Roger Whitehouse stated that buy online was age discriminatory. It was suggested that we inform the Older Peoples Commissioner. Tony proposed and it was agreed that the chair should write. Thomas said this should also include the lack of toilets on the new trains.

Roger Goodhew stated that the peak Shrewsbury – Wolverhampton services had been withdrawn by West Midlands trains. Roger Whitehouse said that we should check which services had gone. The extra services were semi-fast. Jeff said that this invalidated the reason for fewer 197s.

Roger Goodhew stated that he was pleased that we now have 6 live meetings booked ahead.

Correspondence:

We have received copy correspondence sent to TfW from a person complaining about unreliability and overcrowding and suggests the use of top and tailed class 97 locomotives. The chair will ask if a response has been received from TfW.

There was also correspondence from someone who would of joined SARPA but found the Newsletter to be too left wing. Robert stated that the Newsletter should carry a disclaimer that it was the views of contributors, not the Association. Angus said that he would respond pointing out that the Association was pro rail and represented all rail users etc.