

Sarpa Meeting

Tuesday 12th November at Newtown Council Chambers

Present: Patrick Adams, Angus Eickhoff, Phil Ellison, Janet Farahar, Roger Goodhew, Sarah Harvey, Gareth Marston, Bill Redfern, Jeff Smith, Cllr Richard White, Roger Whitehouse, Michael Williams

Apologies: Denis Bates, Tony Harvey, Robert Knight, Ifor Morris, Trevor Roberts, Thomas Wheeler

Jeff opened the meeting and Cllr White explained the procedures in the event of fire.

Cllr White asked if Minutes could be sent out earlier. Sarah explained delay. Gareth asked that his contribution to the Newsletter should not be attributed. That needs to be passed on to Denis. Sarah read e-mail from Denis asking for news of the line and Chairman's report.

Angus asked if the Newtown venue would continue to be the Council Chambers. Roger G asked if 7pm is the right time for these meetings.

It was agreed that meetings should be in the Council Chambers. Roger G will organise the venue for Shrewsbury.

Although Lowri Joyce had been expected at the Newtown Meeting Roger G had spoken to her and she was not able to attend. Roger W asked about her role: she is stakeholder manager.

Sarah said Lowri is very good at keeping Sarpa up to date with events affecting the line.

A problem was raised concerning the Shrewsbury to Chester line. There seems to be conflict between TfW and the Welsh government with rescheduling causing trouble. Patrick informed the meeting that it is as quick to get from Newtown to Wrexham by train as by car.

Michael said that because more students are opting to go to Shrewsbury for sixth form studies the College has changed its timetable to suit. He called this a huge success for Shrewsbury Sixth Form and Chester University!

Angus said Coleg Powys had been “flattened” and Michael that it would have gone if not for NPTC Group of Colleges.

Patrick referred to the board at Caersws station then to flooding at Black Bridge saying floods will get worse.

Officers’ Reports:

Chairman’s Report:

Jeff has written to Network Rail about the Black Bridge and has receive a letter saying they will hold a meeting with senior colleagues. Gareth said this is a big issue as Welshpool was out of reach in the recent flood. There is a need to look at the infrastructure – the whole picture. Roger G spoke of an accident in 1987 when a train went into the river. Rules introduced since then have ensured more caution. Roger G said that Stephen Hughes is involved in working on upland drainage. Roger W reported that awareness of flooding on the line had not been recorded in the past 20 years. There had been temporary speed restrictions.

Gareth explained that because of the wet August the 1st flooding event since affected Black Bridge. Roger W said the reply sent to Jeff re a meeting is encouraging; Angus asked whether they will come to us or do we go to them.

Some of the problems we have been struggling with for the past 2-3 months have been related to ERTMS and 8 people have been allocated to this full time. There have been similar problems in France; SMCF solutions may help. Gareth explained the failure as happening because the system gets permission but doesn’t recognise that it has.

Bill thought that 8 people might be dealing with more than one problem and that up until last year the system had been very reliable.

Jeff spoke of the regional hubs: Neath, Carmarthen and Shrewsbury and said that connections are needed between buses and trains.

TfW has started work on a bus interchange at Welshpool Station. Work is starting at Bow St Station with Park and ride and connections with local buses.

Gareth said that the Council has repainted the bus places at Newtown Station. Local buses are the responsibility of the local council. Traws Cymru buses, now Welsh government, will be TfW. The Town Council took over the town service in Welshpool. Patrick said he was told by a town councillor that town buses would be cut but next year buses would be saved by the Welsh government. He did not think the government is interested. Angus said they have to be told, Gareth that apart from local ones the buses are deregulated.

Roger G added that companies say it is not economic. Michael said Lloyds run commercial services to Aberystwyth.

Treasurer's Report:

Bill reported very little change.

Balance in the Current Account: 774.07 Deposit Account: 277.20

From January 2020 the interest rate on the Deposit Account will drop from 0.2 to 0.1%.

Angus asked if anyone had joined from Facebook. Bill replied, "No". Newtown Station Travel is the official address for Sarpa.

Michael referred to an attempt to get Welsh pronunciation right.

Angus asked Bill about setting up Pay Pal but Bill said it is impossible as it's not digital. Angus responded that he would have to do a bank transfer.

Performance on the Cambrian:

Gareth indicated that there would be improvements. Roger G had attended the Line Liaison Meeting with Michael when it was announced that less carriages would be taken out of service.

Roger W asked about 130s and Angus about 128s. Bill maintained we need a reliable service: 158s could be the answer. Roger G has been on the 195 which seemed like the 198; it had less cushioning, lower seats, good light, good acceleration, plenty of space, not so many seats.

A.O.B.

Angus said nothing has been done about publicity.

Gareth spoke of the Business Plan for Claire Williams which has not been done.

Jeff read a document from Stuart Williams.

Gareth said footfall figures will be out shortly; a drop is expected.

Angus agreed to deal with correspondence from Trevor Roberts and the Reverend Morris.

