

Cambrian Railway Partnership



PARTNERIAETH RHEILFFYRDD Y

CAMBRIAN

RAILWAY PARTNERSHIP

Annual Report 2021-2022

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Welcome to the Partnership Annual Report April 2022

Despite the challenges we have all faced in the past year, the Cambrian Railways Partnership has been in a position to undertake a number of activities throughout the year as you will see in this report.

Two extremely pleasing projects progressed by our Rail Officer, Claire, has been the post Covid Community Resilience Grants and the contributions to the 'Wales on Rails' tourism project. Both of these have seen the Cambrian interact with a far greater stakeholder group that we've previously enjoyed.



I am very much hoping that this year will see an uninterrupted period where we can build on these new connections and promote and expand the finest railway in Wales!

Finally, a thank you to our Partnership representatives, and Train Operating Companies who support us, Transport for Wales and Avanti for your continued support.

With Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Williams', with a long horizontal line underneath.

Stuart Williams, Chair of the Cambrian Railway Partnership

Rail Officers Comment

2021 continued to be as challenging as previous year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which saw the country spending the majority of the year in various “lock downs”. Rail services were significantly ‘cut back’ across the board - out of necessity due to the pandemic and associated restrictions and Transport for Wales became the operator. These services are now scheduled to be reinstated in the May 2022 timetable change and the CRP will continue to work with rail industry, Welsh Government, local authorities and community partners to secure an hourly passenger service frequency between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury.

Despite these challenging times for the first time in living memory a new railway station at Bow Street - previously closed in 1965 - was opened in February 2021 after many years of campaigning and development and a project. The project saw the Cambrian Railway Officer being the equality & diversity lead on behalf of the Welsh Government. The partnership was also actively involved and organised many of the local community engagement events on behalf of the Welsh Government and then later on in the project Transport for Wales.



Despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the station which incorporates a bus interchange and associated active travel facilities and is proving very popular.

The CRP continues to engage with the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Railway Committee and the Cambrian Coast Liaison Committee ensuring we understand the challenges communities and passengers are facing allowing us to work collaboratively to best represent the communities that the line represents.

The CRP attends regular meetings with Transport for Wales and the Transport for Wales North and Mid Wales Transport Forum. We provide reports and updates to all of these bodies and have the opportunity to inform local communities of national or regional developments that are relevant to the Partnership.

OVERVIEW OF THE PARTNERSHIP

The Partnership has been in existence for over 20 years and has a wide range of Member organisations and funding partners:

- Transport for Wales Rail Services (Financial Contributor)
- Shropshire County Council (Financial Contributor)
- Ceredigion County Council (Host Authority & Accountable body for the partnership)
- Gwynedd County Council
- Powys County Council
- Great Little Trains of Wales
- Welsh Government Departmental Representatives
- Community Rail Network
- Network Rail
- PAVO (Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations)
- Open Newtown
- Avanti West Coast (Financial Contributor)
- Various Tourism Agencies
- CAVO (Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations)
- Mantell Gwynydd



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As the current host authority, Ceredigion County Council employs a Community Rail Officer on behalf of the partnership who works to deliver an agreed annual Business Plan that is funded by partners. Ceredigion County Council also acts as financial management authority for the Partnership.

The overall aim of the Cambrian Railway Partnership is to connect local communities with their railway, delivering social benefit and increasing rail use within this area by strategic activities whilst aligning with the seven well-being goals from Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and also the four pillars from the UK Department for Transport's Community Rail Development Strategy. Which:

- provide a voice for the local community and increase community involvement;

- promote rail as a sustainable, accessible and healthy means of travel through good integration with other forms of transport so that rail services meet the needs of local people, businesses and visitors while providing value for money for passengers and taxpayers, as well as benefitting the environment;
- bring together a diverse and inclusive range of communities as confident rail and public transport users
- Support the social, economic and tourism potential of rail travel through attractive station facilities and visitor attractions and social enterprise development.

We are also members of the Community Rail Network, who are the membership body for nearly 70 community rail partnerships and represents over 1000 station adoption groups. They support their members to be effective in benefiting their communities and railways, socially, environmentally and economically.
www.communityrail.org.uk



COMMUNITY RAIL ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is formal recognition by the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Welsh Government that a community rail partnership (CRP) operates to a high standard and with objectives and activities that are supported by Government.

The accreditation system is administered by Community Rail Network (CRN) and applies to those CRPs operating in England and Wales.

The DfT shall be the accrediting body for those CRPs based in England with the Welsh Government having responsibility for those CRPs primarily operating within the Wales and Borders Franchise.

The Cambrian Railway Partnership was the first Partnership submitted its application in April 2019 and was the first CRP to receive this status within the UK and it was awarded by the Welsh government.



New Cambrian Railway Partnership Logo & Map

In early 2019 prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the partnership decided to go back to using the old website address of www.thecambrianline.co.uk instead of www.walesonrails.com as it was commonly being mistaken for a holiday and tourism company and not a community rail partnership. With this decision in mind, the Partnership also decided to rebrand the logo and map of the Cambrian Railway Partnership that was a better and truer representation of the lines.



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To get a real “community” representation 10 logos were published on the partnerships social media channels with a voting capacity for people to choose their favourite logo. From this the final three with the most votes were then re-publicised on Facebook with members of the public being asked to choose their winner.

The response was overwhelming, with a huge organic reach of 4462 people with over 1200 people actually voting for their favourite logos.

The winning logo had over 90% of the votes.

With the Cambrian Line Map, the Partnership felt that it needed a map of the railway line that showcased the various points of interest along the route, showing where the line is located geographically and all the main stops and associated historical places of interest along the line.



Newtown (Powys) as an Active Travel Destination

In 2020 the CRP also partnered with Open Newtown and the train operating company Avanti to work collaboratively within the project “Making Newtown an Active Travel Destination”. With help from the Avanti Community Fund we applied for a grant on behalf of Open Newtown with some match funding from the partnership for a bike hub.



With a green roof and its own solar power supply - power that charges the electric bikes - it is unlocking several initiatives including, a base for hire bikes (that are now linked to caravan sites around town to make Newtown a low carbon destination for

tourists), a base for electric bike trials (as part of welcoming Sustrans to town as a partner).

With the support of Avanti the Bike Hub has been completed at the point where the town’s retail centre now meets its green parks, cycle tracks and river. It sits adjacent the newly completed Town Play park, within a stones-throw of the £1.5 million Riverside Venue (due for opening spring 2022)



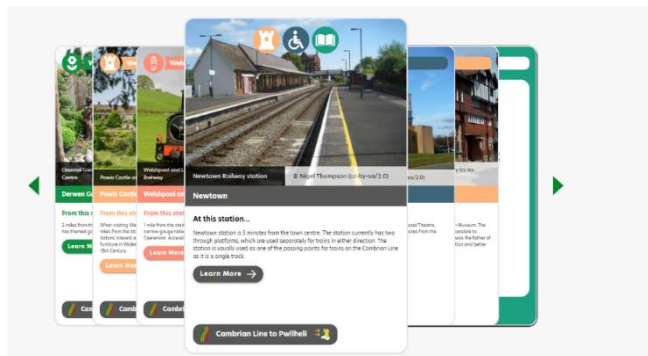
Wales on Rails Project

The CRP has been closely involved with the [‘Wales on Rails’](#) project, which was a Welsh Government funded project led by the Great Little Trains of Wales consortium.

The group of 12 narrow gauge heritage steam railways successfully bid for £74k of TPIF funding to promote sustainable tourism travel throughout Wales.

The six community rail partnerships throughout Wales were approached to see if the project would be something we could add to, in order to fulfil our joint tourism briefs – and all parties agreed and contributed towards the project – thereby increasing it in scale.

The website features a card for each station or bus stop, with additional cards for attractions, things to do and stories for each station or bus stops. The cards are the jewel in the crown of the website, on a mobile or laptop you can flick through the cards and be inspired by all the amazing images and stories



that Wales offers. There are hundreds of cards available to choose from, giving more freedom and choice to the traveller. The map includes all of the GLTW rail routes, the CRP mainline routes and connecting bus routes. Each route has a further map which shows all the stations or bus stops and connecting routes.

The project launch was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, but finally went ahead in April 2022 with a ministerial event in Cardiff Central, attended by Vaughan Gething MS, James Price from TFW, TV Railway historian Tim Dunn and representatives from the CRP’s and GLTW.



Tywyn Station Building

The partnership was also a key partner and stakeholder collaborating with TfW on the upgrade of Tywyn Station building and working with the community to find new tenants. Following numerous community meetings and via Zoom, meetings and discussions, the Community Council agreed to take the lease on for the building at Tywyn Tywyn and that Menter Môn would be a sub tenant who will be delivering various sessions for the community.



The building has been fully refitted and redecorated internally.

Part of the building has been let to Ffrij Tywyn who are a community fridge dedicated to reducing food waste. They are not a food bank and all food is surplus & re-distributed to the community for free.



FFRIJ TYWYN

COMMUNITY
FRIDGE



Now Open
at our
NEW shop on Tywyn Station!

10 - 12 PM

TUES, THURS & SATURDAYS

- community & volunteer led organisation
- committed to reducing food waste
- bringing communities together
- food is provided to the community for free.
- not a food bank or a charity
- anyone is welcome to use the Ffrij.

If you would like to know more about using the Ffrij or becoming a volunteer contact us on our Facebook page Ffrij Tywyn or via email tywyncommunityfridge@gmail.com

Cambrian Railway Community Support Fund

Due to the Covid-19 worldwide pandemic, we realised that many community organisations, throughout the length of

the line were struggling to keep their groups functioning due to being unable to hold any fund raising events. So with that in mind, to help these communities the partnership decided to try to support as many organisations as we could so we launched with the help of PAVO, CAVO, Mantell Gwynedd and Shropshire Rural Community Charity we launched the Cambrian Railway Community Fund.



The project received a total of 52 applications totalling £23,150.19 being applied for. The funding available was £10,000 so we were more than double subscribed.

Following a panel meeting, £10,463.00 was awarded to 24 groups. These small grants have made an invaluable difference to these groups.

Three of the groups that were awarded funding were:

1. Powys Talking Newspaper – Awarded £500

Powys Talking Newspaper were awarded £500 for 10 USB sticks which have allowed more Blind visually impaired people able to access their local news and information regarding local services on a weekly basis. Listeners are of various different ages and who live in a variety of care settings (individual homes, sheltered housing and care homes).



People with visual impairments have an increased risk of depression, decreased mobility, and higher rates of poverty than in the general population. Independently and combined these factors have a detrimental impact on both mental and physical health and consequently quality of life. These factors may alone increase anxiety among people with visual impairments in relation to being exposed to Covid-19.

Moreover, older people with a visual impairment are more likely to experience poor relationships with spouses, children and friends. This may put them at higher risk of detrimental health outcomes as a result of self-isolation and shielding.



2. St John's Ambulance Aberystwyth – Awarded £491.84

St John's Ambulance in Aberystwyth applied for funding for 2 new resuscitation dolls, one of which is baby / child doll, plus resources for the Badgers division of St John's. These are specifically designed to simulate a real life situation, where there is the need to provide life-saving first aid.

The current dolls at Aberystwyth are old and out dated and these new ones will ensure they can deliver the best training experience for all our local volunteers.

Specifically, there was a need for baby 'Anne' and child 'Anne' training doll. These are different to the adult version, not only because size, but because there are different techniques that need to be taught to save a life if the casualty is a baby or child. This will give volunteers the full exposure to a real life situation, regardless of whether they are saving the life of a baby, child or adult.



The St John's "Badger" youth programme is for children aged 5-10 years old and is all encompassing and is linked to the Welsh curriculum. They emphasise learning through play, creativity and collaboration. The grant has allowed them to purchase a range of resources for the badger programme. This is particularly important so that they can offer all our young people the same opportunity, without having to impose a cost.

Over 50 volunteers along with the badgers division youngsters have benefited from this funding plus anyone benefitting from the need for administration of first aid.

3. Little Stars Baby Bank, Shropshire – Awarded £500

Little Stars is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation who help families across Shropshire. Everything they do at Little Stars is focused on supporting parents with essential baby items from 0-5 years. Pre-loved but immaculate, these are donated by members of our wonderful community. They operate on a referral basis by working with a wide range of organisations which include midwives, family services and domestic abuse charities. Together, they're helping parents to get on their feet and to give their little ones the very best start in life.



Little Stars received £500 for marketing materials to provide to organisations who would benefit from their service and to help provide the families they support with essential items for 0-5 years. The marketing also included what their service offers and how it helps and supports families who need it most.



Social media is a quick medium to use and someone can view an organisations post but forget your name when they come back to it later. A health visitor can use the service but may not have the opportunity to tell colleagues about it, physical leaflets allowed them to give one out with each bundle so they could pop it on a wall in public areas as well as their offices. The impact of this marketing material has helped Little Stars become a known organisation within the county, when we launched they had 2 referral partners, they

now have 19 referral partner and this continues to grow. The amount of families they're helping across the county has increased. Before they received the funding for the marketing materials for the period January 2021 – March 2021 they had 16 referrals for the same period January 2022 – March 2022 they have had 59 referrals.

Closing Comment

2021/22 was a productive year despite the continuing impacts ('aftershock) arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Partnership looks forward to delivering its 2022/23 Business Plan and supporting the rail industry and partners to enable rail passengers to return safely and with confidence and to build on the successes of the Partnership under what have been very challenging circumstances.