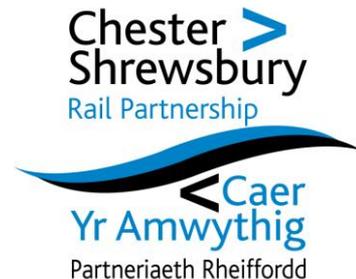


# The Importance of Connectivity to Wales

*...especially the rural bits, of which there are a lot*

Presented by David Edwards Heart of Wales Line  
& Sheila Dee Chester-Shrewsbury Rail Partnership



# 1. Background: who are we?

- The Chester – Shrewsbury Rail Partnership
- The Heart of Wales Line Forum
- The Borderlands Line
- Conwy Valley Rail Initiative
- Cambrian Lines Partnership
- All members of the UK Association of Community Rail Partnerships: ACoRP

## 2. Each Partnership....

- Is independent
- Based on a particular route
- Has a full or part time development officer
- Works to promote and support our own routes and also
- Works to promote public transport & its use as an aid to economic / social regeneration

# 3. We Link

- Local communities & individuals
- Local businesses
- National and local government
- The transport sector

## 4....and we ensure that

- We are the constant local focus for the line
- We ensure local issues, concerns and opportunities are not overlooked
- The bigger development agenda takes them into account
- We do a lot....for a little

## 5. ‘ No man is an island’

- By definition, we all need to be able to connect with each other, and with all manner of services
- Broadband is of increasing importance (and Wales has been slow to make it widely available)
- But people, goods & services need to travel, as well

## 6a. Why so important in rural areas?

- Sheer distance, and slow end to end journey times for all modes
- Progressive withdrawal of local services
- Population is thinly spread and ageing
- Low wage economy
- The politics of resource allocation

## 6b. Why so important: take Powys as an example

- Geographically, Powys is by far the largest county in Wales
- 54% Powys residents live in areas ranked within the worst 10% in Wales for access to services on foot or by bus
- Economic Gross Value Added per head in Powys, adjusted to Oct 2012 prices, fell from £13k/head in 2008 to £11.7k, 2009

## 7. Rural connectivity requirements, for:

- Healthcare (including mental health)
- Education and training
- Shopping & commerce
- Service delivery
- Entertainment
- Visiting friend and relatives
- Tourism

## 8. ‘Never on a Sunday....’

- Sunday: now the busiest day of the week for shopping and going out  
*but in real life.....*
- The Heart of Wales Line: 2 trains
- Cambrian Coast line to Pwllheli after Sept 8<sup>th</sup>: 1 train
- Powys: three bus services for the entire county (25% of Wales’ land mass)

## 9. The 5pm curfew (6pm by train)

- Tried travelling by bus to a rural destination in Wales after 5pm?
- Or getting back to e.g. Llandrindod from Manchester after a business meeting at 2pm?

# 10. The 2018 Wales and Borders Franchise

- ...seek to make best use of this opportunity

Heart of Wales Line:

- 'Local / Community Management'
- Better value for money
- An alternative model for local lines after 2018?

# 11a. What needs to happen?

- Protect what transport services are (still) available
- Ensure that they link up with each other
- See if they can be made more effective (Powys did this with buses in 2006 to good effect)
- Support & enhance innovative and cost effective schemes e.g. Community Transport, Bwcabus
- Find ways to provide better services , more cost effectively

# 11b. More of what needs to happen

- Joined up thinking: planning for buses, coaches train and taxis is done separately. Rail is done nationally, buses locally.
- We need to identify where the people need to go and when - not just where the trains and buses want to take them.
- Franchises need to be able to adapt to the passengers needs.

# The Importance of Connectivity to Wales

Questions?

