

Dear Dr Phipps,

I have been a resident of Aberystwyth for over forty years and am a regular user of the Cambrian Line. I need to visit London frequently to help with family child care and to attend meetings. I also depend on the train service to get me to Birmingham airport when I have to travel abroad. The train is vital too as a means of visiting elderly and sick relatives and for special shopping trips to Shrewsbury and Birmingham.

The steady decline of services at Bronglais Hospital in Aberystwyth makes improvement of public transport even more important. My friends are now mainly over seventy years of age and many can no longer drive more than a few miles, yet more and more appointments are being made for them in Carmarthen, Swansea and Cardiff (sometimes even Telford) and no transport is provided. The bus journey is far too long, too inconvenient and too uncomfortable, with inadequate 'comfort stops'. They, and I, depend more and more on the train service.

At present the train service is inadequate and does not meet the needs of passengers. The number and frequency of train services must be increased and, at known peak times, extra carriages must also be provided. An hourly service, linking Aberystwyth with Birmingham International, has long been promised and the electorate of mid Wales will watch very closely the actions of the decision makers in the National Assembly for Wales. Obviously the growing number of elderly residents would benefit greatly from the improved service, but so would all the university students and holiday makers who at present often have to travel in appalling, overcrowded conditions. In the recent hot weather, in addition to the dreadful overcrowding, there was no functioning air conditioning and no windows that could be opened. I heard the Arriva train being described as 'the sweat box torture train' by one desperate passenger.

The Cambrian Line is Aberystwyth's life-line. Please ensure that it is improved to meet the demands of the twenty-first century at a time when we are all being encouraged to make greater use of public transport and to reduce the number of car journeys we make.

Kind regards,

Kay Edwards

(Mrs K B Edwards)