

[National Assembly for Wales](#)

[Enterprise and Business Committee](#)

[Inquiry into the future of the Wales and Borders Rail](#)

Evidence from **Oakdale Links** – WBF 34



11<sup>th</sup> September 2013

Rail Travel and New housing in Lydney, Forest of Dean

Rachel Reeves

### 1. The Oakdale Development

The Oakdale Development is set to increase the size of the town of Lydney up to a third of the current size again, so has significant impact both on the town, which is close to the Welsh border and the Forest of Dean. Phase one is well underway, with more than 104 occupied dwellings and Phase two (by a different developer) will follow shortly, as planning permission has just been renewed at the District Council.

## 2. Oakdale Links

Oakdale Links ([www.oakdalelinks.org.uk](http://www.oakdalelinks.org.uk)) is a residents' association representing all three housing sectors on the development. Most families are working and the overall picture is one of a workforce that commutes out daily. One member of our steering group commuted daily during weekdays for a year before a colleague joined his company and offered to car share. Whilst we do not have figures for the whole development and it is in any case changing daily as more families move in and more housing is being built, we can assume that many people work outside of Lydney. Even with a car share in place, our steering group member uses the train service on days when his colleague isn't at work. Like many families on the development, his family have one car and it is needed for the school run (the closest school being oversubscribed due to the new housing). Oakdale Links' Environment Policy promotes the use of sustainable transport and we believe that this should be a valid and reliable option for anyone in Lydney, not just the residents here.

## 3. Train times

One problem currently is the lack of trains back to Lydney from Gloucester at the end of the working day. Our member, who works in Gloucester, starts work at 8 am and finishes work at 5 pm, but then has to wait for an hour or so in Gloucester for a train if the car share scheme is not available. This has an adverse impact on family time as he has a young son.

## 4. Commuting parents

For working single parents, or partners in a relationship who have been the main carers for their pre-school children, finding work and doing the school run as well as trying to commute out of Lydney for work proves to be impossible. We know of at least one family where the parent, who is a trained nurse, has given up working due to the difficult logistics. We believe that people should have choices about careers and be able to apply for jobs outside of the area, even if they do not have cars. Some choose not to drive, some

cannot afford to learn or to run a car (or second car) and some are not able to drive due to disability. Healthy communities are diverse communities, so we would like the rail service and bus services to be more flexible, with more trains at sensible times to attract people including those mentioned above onto our development.

#### 5. Safety and children who commute

Safety, especially of the more vulnerable members of our community is also an area that needs addressing. Please take our views into account and make sure that the rail service for Lydney continues, is made safer, with safeguards such as a 24/7 staffed signal box and an alternative route, e.g. the underpass, to stop the current practise of school children walking across the rails in front of waiting trains. This was brought up by a Councillor at the last meeting of the Lydney Town Council on the 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2013.

#### 6. Further research

We are happy to help by asking members for their views and also in helping to design a survey of the current commuting pattern of the community and the reasons that they may/ may not use the rail service. Please contact us if you would like to discuss this further.