

[National Assembly for Wales](#)

[Enterprise and Business Committee](#)

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

Evidence from Dr S C Martin – WBF 71

Dear Dr Phillips

I have recently had the article on this subject, in the Carmarthen Journal of 7th August, drawn to my attention. Having had family in Tregaron / Llandewi Breifi and also recurring visits to mid-Wales in connection with my work with the Duke of Edinburgh's award I hope an extra opinion on the re-opening of this railway line may be of some value.

Firstly there would appear to be a general economic argument for improved transport and communications links to the benefit of both residents and businesses in the general locality. Only last month, while travelling on the road from Tywyn to Dolgellau, a large lorry came within inches of doing major damage to the minibus in which I was a passenger. Every time two substantial vehicles meet near Fairbourne on this, the only A-road in the area, everything grinds to a halt. I know that this is a specific example, but in general journey times in mid-Wales are desperately slow compared with arrival at the Welsh border from England. Admittedly such roads are picturesque, but as the sole access to considerable communities, this must have a constricting effect on both the lives and livelihood of a substantial population which may be alleviated to some extent by the re-introduction of appropriate rail services.

Secondly, a number of historical railway routes which were closed under the Beeching plan long ago as uneconomic, now seem to fill substantial trains (not just single coach rail-cars) as a working tourist attraction. With some enterprising marketing, new business may be generated as well as providing a local service: history shows that continually squeezing a dowdy and run down set-up only perpetuates a cycle of decline. There are plenty of examples both on the national system and on preserved railways where

entrepreneurial imagination and quality generate interest, traffic and revenue.

Although I have spoken in generalities, I hope that both arguments will add a little to the debate regarding this particular railway and eventually other appropriate example of like kind also.

Thank you for your attention in this matter. I am

Yours sincerely

Dr S C Martin