



Lôn Las Môn

For the attention of Mr Ross Davies
Dirprwy Glerc, Y Pwyllgor Deisebau, Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Deputy Clerk, Petitions Committee, National Assembly for Wales

P-05-913 - Pwyllgor Deisebau 21.01.20 / Petitions Committee 21.01.20

Date 17th February 2020

Dear Sirs, Madam

We would like to respond as follows to the letters & enclosures from Isle of Anglesey Council & Mr Ken Skates AM as follows:

1. Letters from Isle of Anglesey Chief Executive Annwen Morgan, Huw Percy Head of Highways are rather disappointing as they do not even offer an opinion as to the merits or not of the creation of a Multiuse Path across the island & the potential benefits it could bring, from health, fitness, disabled & adaptive cycling & many other uses other than just tourism, which at best the Heritage Railway can only offer a very narrow benefit to the island. It is rather at odds that the Anglesey Local Access Forum (a subcommittee of the Council) who we presented our scheme to in November which gave Lôn Las Môn a unanimous vote of approval. As have three Community Councils along its route. As this is a scheme to be run by Lôn Las Môn CIC, we are not looking for Isle of Anglesey to run or manage the project, we just need their support and not to oppose clearly what would be a benefit to the island and a whole.
2. We are aware of the consultation between Network Rail & the Welsh Government on the proposed lease of the railway in June 2016 with an associated 3 month rolling termination provision. Currently Anglesey Central Railway Ltd (ACRL) have a licence to clear sections of the railway which comes to an end in April 2020. ACRL are in discussions with Network Rail over a long-term lease & we believe they may have gone to the heads of terms stage (than could be confirmed by Network Rail)
3. The Minister makes mention of "safeguards in place, the Welsh Government supported this proposed lease arrangement in light of the potential contribution to tourism in North Wales" this indicates that it is only tourism that is of the greatest importance here, Lôn Las Môn offers a greater range of benefits to the population of Anglesey more than just "tourism". We have previously touched on the health benefits apart from the fitness, wellbeing & being active side of things & we have attached an open letter from Dr Dyfrig ap Dafydd Cluster Lead for Anglesey Cluster. If we are to improve the health of Wales, then taking on board what Dr Dyfrig says is bound into the principle behind Lôn Las Môn.
4. We have put a proposal to Network Rail with advice from Greenways & Cyclepaths <http://www.johngrimshawassociates.co.uk> a leading consultant in the creation of cycle-paths & greenways for Lôn Las Môn to be granted a Licence similar to the lease with a 3-month rolling termination clause. This would allow access to the full length of the railway to allow the clearance of dense scrub & restoration of fences & means of enclosure, uplifting of the rails & sleepers. Then over topping of the ballast with a suitable surface for walkers, runners, leisure cyclists, horse riders & adaptive cycling & disabled users. In taking this approach although the rails & sleepers are removed the trackbed is maintained should some form of rail need to return. We cannot just leave the line as it stands presently as an overgrown & forgotten railway.

5. We have read the Williams Rail Review & we do not believe there is any economic case to support a commuter service returning to the line as it does not support a large enough population in Amlwch or Llangefni. A far greater benefit would be investment in electric or similar busses to serve the villages & towns on the island with greater connectivity to Holyhead, Amlwch, Llangefni & Menai Bridge. As a single rail line, the frequency of services to & from Gaerwen to Amlwch would be at best every two hours & there are no stations left along its route that are not in private ownership.
6. In response to the station assessment process that was announced in 2019 we were aware of the fact that Llangefni had not been selected in favour of other potential stations serving a greater Pauli's such as Deeside. As stated, there is a very weak case to reopen Llangefni if financial and economic assessments are used. The station like all the others along the route of the railway are in private ownership & would require compulsory purchase to reacquire for rail use.
7. Isle of Anglesey do not have a fully integrated network map of the entire island & have only published maps in relation to the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 which places duties upon local authorities in Wales to map, plan for, improve and promote opportunities for active travel. At present this only covers circular travel (cycling & walking) in Amlwch, Holyhead, Llangefni & Menai Bridge. No consideration has been given to connectivity between these centres that Lôn Las Môn would bring from Amlwch though to Llangefni & the growing business, technology & industry centre of Gaerwen.
8. There is no mention in the Ministers response about the environmental benefits that a Multiuse Path / Greenway could provide. There are a number of schemes on the island that have parallels in the creation of a green corridor: Wild Pathways - Cwllwn Seiriol <https://www.mentermon.com/en/priosectau/cwllwn-seiriol/> Long Forest Project / Cynnal Cymru <https://www.cynnalcymru.com/about-us/> & others. As Lôn Las Môn is an uninterrupted 18 mile traffic free route that passes two large bodies of water & nature reserves such as Gors Dryga, it's potential as a Green Corridor is enormous to biodiversity and wildlife connectivity from North to South on the island.
9. If we have not already reiterated there are many user groups who are supporting this project & see the benefits over and above tourism: HSBC British Cycling Breeze Rides <https://www.letsride.co.uk/breeze> 18 miles of traffic free path that would encourage women to take up or return to cycling, Pedal Power Wales <https://www.cardiffpedalpower.org> (adaptive cycling) similarly giving a truly traffic free environment, Horse Riders, historically a lack of any formal Bridleways on the island, they could make use of a greater part of Lôn Las Môn a safe traffic green environment.
10. Schools Potential, 7 secondary & junior schools lie along its length & could provide a conduit for an uptake in safe cycle to school for both pupils & teachers. We have already presented to half of the schools and all the pupils saw the potential benefits to green school travel. Our scheme fits in with Keep Wales Tidy's Eco Schools Curriculum Training 2020 <https://www.keepwalestidy.cymru/Event/eco-schools-and-the-curriculum-for-wales-training-2020>
11. Tourism Potential; one running group has approached us with the view to running a Metric Marathon along its length 26km as opposed to 26 miles, no road closures needed as route travels through a number of villages. Start of end being in Amlwch which in itself would be a boost to the town. Increased footfall from walkers & hikers wanting a more level path than the coastal path, this includes better provision for wheelchair users holidaying on the island. Increase leisure cycle use & hire, small enterprising cafes popping up along the way.
12. Business Potential: Cafes & Pubs along its route: Y Ring Rhosgoch <https://www.theringrhosgoch.co.uk> Steision Llan Café Llanerchymedd, Siop Paget Rhosybol, CycleWales Bike Hire Llangefni <https://cyclewales.net/cycle-hire/> Coffee Hut Llangefni, Holland Arms Garden Centre Gaerwen are just a few, no one big employer but all bring something to the economy.

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Lôn Las Môn

Too many have assumed for too long that it would be another preserved line. The objective now is to get the line in use for all. 30 years of decay and no one has benefited. With the Welsh Assembly's current consultation on fresh guidance on Active Travel <https://gov.wales/active-travel-guidance> Lôn Las Môn should be used as an exemplar scheme for TrafficFree - ActiveTravelPlus. "Greenways are traffic-free routes connecting communities to all kinds of destinations for commuting, everyday journeys or leisure and recreation".

Yours Sincerely

Adrian Williamson
For and on behalf of Lôn Las Môn

List of Appendices;

Appendix 1 – Dr Dyfrig ap Dafydd – Health Statement

Appendix 2 – List of UK wide former Railways converted into Rail Trails, Railway Paths, Greenways and Multiuse Paths

Appendix 3 – Community Council support

Appendix 4 – Organisations letters of support