

## A new railway for West Wales?



Traws Link Cymru are  
campaigning to re-open  
the railway.

Between 1867 and 1965 West Wales had a train service for passengers, a train link between Carmarthen and Aberystwyth, which connected the rural towns and villages of West Wales to the valleys of South Wales and even the industrial towns of Manchester and Liverpool. Traws Link Cymru is the group campaigning for the railway line to be re-opened; they were founded in October 2013. Their aim is to build a 60 mph rail line between Carmarthen and Aberystwyth which would cost an estimated 500 to 750 million pounds. They believe that the railway would greatly benefit the lives of the 55,000 people who live along its route.

Traws Link Cymru believes that the railway would be beneficial because it would link Wales internally (North to South), provide a boost to jobs, be an alternative to bus transport, lead to increased tourism and reduce the number of lorries on the roads by transporting timber and freight. They suggest that the train link would be useful to many passengers; the Aberystwyth to Carmarthen bus route transported 250,000 passengers in the year 2013-14.

The “21<sup>st</sup> Century Railway” is not cheap, but Traws Link Cymru proposes that because rail travel is on the rise, that the benefits far outweigh the negatives. One of the challenges that the campaign group may face is the fact that some of the original track has been built on, yet they stress that this amount is remarkably small, at only 2.8%.

Plaid Cymru say that they’d support a full feasibility study of the railway which would connect Aberystwyth, Llandysul, Llanybydder, Lampeter, Tregaron, Llaninar and Camarthen by train. Professor Mike Walker, in a presentation to the Bro Pedr BBC School Report Group, said that a feasibility study is the next goal for Traws Link Cymru and would be necessary before any development of the railway. He also believes that to have enough money to build the railway, the Welsh Government would need to have infrastructure as a devolved power.

The questions raised and answered by the full feasibility study will decide the fate of the railway and along with it the environment and the lives of the people along its route.