

Proposal to rename North Llanrwst railway station

Purpose

This paper sets out a proposal to ask Transport for Wales (TFW) to change the name of North Llanrwst railway station to “North Llanrwst and Trefriw” in the 2023/4 financial year.

Background

The Conwy Valley train line runs from Llandudno to Blaenau Ffestiniog and the current station of North Llanrwst has been operating since 1863.

From c1884 the station was named “Llanrwst and Trefriw” to cater for the popular tourist village and spa at Trefriw, reverting to “Llanrwst” as recently as 1974. It was renamed again as “Llanrwst North”, and later “North Llanrwst”, following the opening in 1989 of the newer “Llanrwst” station closer to the centre of the town. The North Llanrwst station building is now Grade II listed.

Discussion

We are seeking to change the name of North Llanrwst station to “North Llanrwst and Trefriw” for the following reasons:

1. The new name would reappropriate the heritage of the station, as for a majority of its time in operation “Trefriw” was part of the station’s name. Making this change would support TFW’s value of community partnership: be good neighbours and work closely with our local communities;
2. Incorporating “Trefriw” in the station name would raise the profile of our village, providing a boost to local businesses and accommodation providers;
3. Trefriw is already popular with walkers, cyclists, Duke of Edinburgh Award groups, and tourists. Changing the name of the station would promote more sustainable travel options by making clear its relative proximity to the village - this is not obvious at the moment. This would attend to TFW’s culture of Active Travel: to inspire people to travel more sustainably. It would also support Conwy County Borough Council’s focus on Active Travel: reducing car use and traffic congestion by promoting viable and more sustainable alternatives;
4. North Llanrwst station is approximately 1.1 miles from the village of Trefriw. No new access infrastructure is required: the station and Trefriw are already linked by Gower Road - a flat, well maintained metalled foot / cycle path (including a pedestrian suspension bridge over the River Conwy).
5. There is already a precedent on the Conwy Valley line for naming stations not in the centre of a settlement. The prominent example is Dolgarrog: the village lies approximately 1.3 miles from the station, which is accessible from the B5106 via an unpaved footpath / bridleway. Inclement weather renders this access difficult, and the fact it is unpaved makes it unsuitable for wheelchair users, pushchairs, and those with limited mobility.

Stakeholders

There are a number of key stakeholders we intend to seek support from for this proposal. These include:

1. Llanrwst Town Council
2. Conwy County Borough Council, via C Cllr Liz Roberts (Betws y Coed and Trefriw ward)
3. Janet Finch-Saunders, AM Aberconwy
4. Robin Millar, MP Aberconwy
5. Conwy Valley and North West Wales Coast Line Community Rail Partnership
6. Betws y Coed and District Tourism Association

Costs and timescales

The costs / work required for this name change are thought to be low: signage at North Llanrwst station; updates to routemaps, posters, timetables etc at future reprints; and updates to electronic and aural information on relevant TFW services / stations. We would expect these costs to be borne by TFW as a Welsh Government body, given the opportunities the name change represents for promoting sustainable travel and the community of Trefriw. The next timetable change in 2023 would seem an opportune time to make this station name change.

Jasmine Kelly, Vice Chair, Trefriw Community Council, February 2023