

Conwy Council issued a press release on 9<sup>th</sup> February which said that the decision to cut the T19 service was because, “it’s a commercial service which the operator has said is no longer viable for them to run”. That, of course, is absolutely correct and I’m amazed that Llew Jones has managed to stick at it for so long as no one can continue to run a service at a loss, but I understand that Llew Jones has continued to offer alternative services but Conwy Council won’t discuss it.

So, let’s have a look at who is actually responsible for providing our “public transport”. Well, it looks like it’s Transport for Wales, which was set up in 2017 by the Welsh Government as a “not for profit” company, established to provide support and expertise to Welsh Government in connection with transport projects in Wales. TFW in effect took over running the rail franchise that Keolis Amey won when Arriva pulled out. In 2020 Welsh Government then withdrew its “Bus Service (Wales) Bill”, which would have provided local councils with the statutory powers to franchise the bus routes in Wales. They did this, they said, because they wanted TFW to become the main delivery body for the bus system, supposedly in return for local authorities becoming “part owners” of TFW, but it doesn’t seem that the local authorities are quite aware of that !

If that is the Welsh Government’s plan, then the responsibility for losing the T19 falls squarely upon the shoulders of TFW and the local authorities, yet they don’t even seem to be talking to each other. In fact, when this was raised in the Senedd, the government acknowledged the problem but said it wouldn’t be discussed until the next session, not very helpful really.

So, it seems now, that government owned TFW is responsible for everything, including the trains, although with buses, it’s normally in “co-operation” with other people. The Fflecsi service for the Conwy Valley for instance which was awarded to Alpine Travel, “in partnership with TFW and Conwy Council” – strange that Conwy Council as a partner can’t get the service to come to Dolwyddelan as yet !

As I said at the outset, the loss of the T19 is a lot more complex than it first appears and, it would seem, the ultimate responsibility lies with TFW, which, of course, is wholly owned by Welsh Government, who for some reason, don’t seem to know that North Wales exists.

Finally I think we should thank Llew Jones for trying over the past years to provide the T19 service, against all odds – thank you Llew Jones – you will be missed !!

Mike Skerrett