



**Minutes of the meeting of Darran Valley Community Council on:
Wednesday 3rd May 2023 at 6.30 pm (Fochriw Community Centre)
This was the Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

Present

Cllr. D Johnson (Chair)
Cllr. D. Nicholas
Cllr. M. Gibbings
Cllr. R. Chapman
Cllr. J. Gibbings

Absent and Apologies

Cllr. D. Hardacre
Cllr. E. Blanche

In Attendance

Ms. A Pallister (Clerk)
A representative from Gwent Police

011 Members of the public

No members of the public attended.

012 Declaration of interest

There were none.

013 To approve and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 5th April 2023

The minutes of the meeting were approved as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

014 Matters Arising from the meeting of Council on 5th April 2023 not already included on this agenda.

Summer Scheme 2023

Item 009 - Councillor attendance at meetings

The Clerk raised concerns about so many meetings being missed by Cllrs B Edwards and D Hardacre. Although there is an understanding that meetings sometimes must be missed due to ill health, family and work commitments, there is a concern when several meetings are not attended. Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 states that when a Councillor does not attend any council meeting for six consecutive months, (s)he ceases to be a member of the council. It was also noted that attendance at council meetings is an official summons.



RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: The Clerk to contact Cllrs B Edwards and D Hardacre to express the concerns raised by the Chair and to find out if they are still able to commit to representing the local community as Councillors.

Update from the May 2023 meeting – The Clerk informed Councillors that Cllr B Edwards decided to stand down as a Councillor due to other commitments. The Clerk thanked Cllr Edwards for his contribution and service as Councillor for the Darran Valley.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: The new Chair (Cllr D Johnson) will visit Cllr D Hardacre to find out if he is still able to commit to Councillor duties and attend the meetings regularly.

Item 007.01 – The Chair (Cllr D Nicholas) received a letter from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) regarding the potential closing of Meddygfa Cwm Rhymni surgery at Riverside Walk in Deri. Cllr Nicholas was deeply concerned about this. The local community has praised the great care they receive from the surgery and a number of patients are elderly and would struggle to access the care they need if they have to find transport. The transport links in the area are unreliable and this is likely to put some residents off travelling to get the care they need, likely having a catastrophic effect on any underlying illness if not diagnosed. There are also concerns about the consultation questionnaire, as it's been designed in a way that is loaded with questions that will not evidence the cause and effect of the closure.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: The Clerk will write to ABUHB raising concerns about the potential closure, and Emily Janes will write an article in the Caerphilly Observer.

Update from the May 2023 meeting – The Clerk wrote to ABUHB raising the concerns outlined above and received the following reply:

'Hi Amanda

Thank you for informing ABUHB and the surgery of the concerns raised at the April 2023 Councillors meeting. Your concerns will be included in the report that will be presented to the Branch closure panel due to be held in June.

Kind Regards
Joanna Norman
Service Development Manager'



015 Crime Update

A representative from Gwent Police attended in person. The representative will also chase the action below from a previous meeting and report back. The following will be carried forward to the next meeting when Gwent Police are in attendance. *'There was a wider discussion regarding the setting up of a pilot in Rhymney to start a youth hub for ages 13-17. This will target young people who are not interested in attending youth clubs and include drinks, a pool table etc. The Police are building up a good relationship with the young people in Rhymney and asked if we could think of a way of setting this up in the Darran Valley. **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:** Discuss further at the April meeting to think of how this could work in this area and the best ways of engaging with young people in the Darran Valley Area. Direct engagement with the youth clubs and feedback on what worked and didn't in Rhymney will also be fed back via the CSO's.'*

Gwent Police reported they have been doing some engagement in regard to damage to the memorial in Deri, and have been dealing with off-road bike incidents.

016 Planning Applications

There were no planning applications.

017 To receive Community Council Correspondence

Gerald Jones MP wrote to the Clerk about a funding information day taking place on Friday 19th May 2023 at 10 am at Dowlais Community Centre. The posters will be put up on local notice boards, and the Clerk will advertise on the website.

018 Approval of Community Council Payments

The following payments were approved.

BACS	£375.00	Clerks Salary May 2023
BACS	£150.00	Grant for the Darran Valley 55 Club
BACS	£600.00	Cllrs 2023-24 expense/allowance to E Blanche, J Gibbings, M Gibbings and D Nicholas.
BACS	£300.00	Chairperson expense/allowance for 2023-24 to D Johnson.
Total	£1,425.00	



RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: There was also a discussion around recognition for grant funding events and other items to local organisations. Councillors and the Clerk to ensure those in receipt of funds promise to acknowledge where some or part of an event/item is subsidised by a Darran Valley Community Council grant. The Clerk will also add this to the form and ask GAVO to ensure this is clear when allocating Wind Turbine Funding. There was also a discussion around the current grant rates – Councillors voted to remove the smaller grants amount and increase it to one higher rate of £150. This considers the current financial climate/cost of living crisis.

019 Declarations of interest (register of members' interests 2023-24 – review and refresh

The Clerk worked with the Councillors to update the list and will post it on the website once updated.

020 Appointment of a Chairperson for the ensuing year.

The current Chair (D Nicholas) personally thanked everyone for their support and hard work over the year.

Cllr R Chapman also thanked the current Chair (Cllr D Nicholas for all his hard work and commitment and covering as Chair for the last 2 years). All in attendance agreed.

Nominations and a vote resulted in Cllr D Johnson being announced as the Chair for 2023-24.

021 Appointment of a Vice-Chairperson for the ensuing year.

Nominations and a vote resulted in Cllr M Gibbings being announced as the Vice-Chairperson for 2023-24.

022 To determine Council's representatives for the Town and Community Councils Liaison Committee.

Cllr E Blanche and M Gibbings will continue in this role.

023 To consider the appointment of the Council's internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2023 and the conclusion of audit 2021-22.

Council will continue to use Harris Bassett Chartered Accountants.

The Clerk received the conclusion of audit for the financial year ended 31st March 2022. There were no recommendations except:

'Other matters arising and recommendations.

Expenditure under section 137 Local Government Act 1972 The Council discloses in its notes to the accounts that it spent £14,061 using the power set



out in section 137 (s137) of the 1972 Act. S137 allows the Council to spend up to £8.41 per elector which in the Council's opinion is in the interest of the area or its inhabitants. However, the powers granted by other existing statutes must be used in the first instance. Much of the expenditure disclosed in the note is covered by other statutory provisions which take precedence over section 137. We recommend that the Council reviews its classification of expenditure and only discloses under s137 that which s137 properly applies to. There are no further matters that I wish to draw to the Council's attention'

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: The Clerk will ensure only S137 expenditure is covered under this disclosure for future audits.

024 Community Council Budget and Financial Reconciliation 2023-24

The following budget was discussed and approved – except for the OAP trip (costs to be investigated by Cllr D Johnson / J Gibbins before the next meeting). Likely coach prices have increased.

Expenditure Heading	Budget
Clerks Salary	£4,500.00
Chairpersons allowance	£300.00
Out of office	£250.00
Town and committee liaison	£100.00
Telephone & broadband	£200.00
Room hire	£200.00
Insurance & subscriptions	£600.00
One Voice Wales membership	£398.00
Stationery & postage	£100.00
Website hosting & maintenance	£840.00.
Section 19 - 137 grants plus amount leftover from 2022-23	£2,000.00 plus underspend 2022-23
Wind Turbine Grants	£4,777.46
Section 137 – OAP trip	Deferred to June 2023 meeting
Christmas lighting / Pantos / Santa on a Fire Engine	£6,000.00
Audit	£600.00
Cllr expenses/allowance	£1,350.00
Summer scheme	£5,000.00
ICO Data protection	£35.00
Election costs	£1,000.00
Remembrance Sunday	£400.00

Account balances as of 31st March 2023

Treasurers account 1 = £13,177.40

Treasurers account 2 = £381.15



Business Account - £1,893.89

025 Summer Scheme 2023

The Clerk has been planning with Sports Caerphilly. A budget of £5000 has been allocated.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: Cllr J Gibbings passed on concerns that in a previous year, there was a shortage of staff, and therefore members of Deri Community Centre had to assist. The Clerk will raise this with Sports Caerphilly.

026 Councillor Vacancies

Council voted to advertise by co-option.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: The Clerk will organise, design, and advertise the posters.

027 Date and time of the next meeting:

The next meeting is to be held at Fochriw Community Centre – Wednesday 14th June 2023 at 6.30 pm.