



Minutes of the meeting of Darran Valley Community Council on Thursday, 5th June 2025, at 6.30 pm (Deri Library)

Attendance

Present

Cllr J Gibbings (Chair)

Cllr M Gibbings

Cllr D Nicholas

Cllr R Chapman

Cllr D Roberts

Cllr J Roberts

Absent and Apologies

Cllr D Johnson

Cllr T Johnson

Cllr E Blanche

In Attendance

Ms. A Pallister (Clerk)

27 - Members of the public

No members of the public attended.

28 - Declarations of interest

There were none.

29 - To approve and confirm the May 2025 AGM minutes of the meeting

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

30 - Matters arising from the May 2025 AGM meeting

81.00 – Planning for Christmas events.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

- Cllr J Gibbings would like four large posters for both events next year.
- Councillors would like the Clerk and Cllr R Chapman to investigate the possibility of installing additional lights in Deri for 2024. The council has previously investigated adding further lights, but the lampposts have been deemed unsuitable. It was noted that other community councils with similar lampposts have added extra lighting.

- At the December 2023 meeting, there was also a discussion about ensuring the posters had been signed off on before being advertised to the general public.

UPDATE FROM THE JANUARY 2024 MEETING:

The Clerk has contacted the relevant agencies, requesting that they investigate the possibility of adding extra decorations in Deri for 2024. The Clerk will report back once there is news. Councillors reported the events were a big success yet again. The Santa on a Fire Engine event in Fochriw was not as well attended as last year, but this was due to a clash with another local event. The Deri events were exceptionally well-attended, and numbers were up from the previous year. The engagement and response were magnificent.

UPDATE FROM THE FEBRUARY 2024 MEETING:

Keep on matters arising until resolved.

UPDATE FROM THE MARCH 2024 MEETING:

This was discussed again. Upgrading street lampposts may be the only route to adding additional lighting, but it's doubtful Caerphilly CBC will have the budget to undertake this work. Cllr M Gibbings suggested planting a Christmas tree in Groesfaen and offered to look into where it could be placed. Cllr E Blanche suggested upgrading to LED lighting.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

The Clerk will investigate the upgrade to LED lights in Deri. Cllr M Gibbings will look into putting up a Christmas Tree in Groesfaen. Cllr M Gibbings will send the Clerk the GPS location of the lamppost needing LED lights.

UPDATE FROM THE JUNE 2024 MEETING:

The Christmas 2024 Pantomimes have been booked as follows

- Saturday, 28th December 2024, 12:00 pm – Cinderella at Deri Community Centre.
- Sunday 29th December 2024, 1:00 pm – Rapunzel at Fochriw Community Centre

UPDATE FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2024 MEETING:

The Council voted to use the services of Elsbury Platforms again for the 2024

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

- Christmas lighting. The Clerk was also asked to contact Elsbury as follows:
- Instruct them to switch the Christmas lights on at the end of November (Friday, 29th November 2024).
- Council would like to purchase some new, longer LED lights for the tree in Deri.
The Council is also planning to put up a Christmas tree in Groesfaen and would like to request a site visit with Elsbury and Cllr Mark Gibbings to plan the location of the tree. The lights in Deri, which LED is replacing, can be used on the new tree in Groesfaen.

UPDATE FROM THE OCTOBER 2024 MEETING:

- The Clerk is still waiting for a reply from Elsbury regarding the LED lights for the Groesfaen Christmas tree. Cllr Mark Gibbings has been looking at options for the tree in Groesfaen.
- The Clerk informed the Council that Rhymney Fire Station is unable to do 'Santa on a fire engine this year due to staff shortages.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

The Clerk contacted Aberbargoed Fire Station to find out if they would consider visiting Fochriw and Deri with their Santa Sleigh instead. Cllr Mark Gibbings said if that's not a viable alternative, the Mountain Rescue Team may be able to organise something instead.

UPDATE FROM THE NOVEMBER 2024 MEETING:

- The Clerk is waiting for confirmation from Aberbargoed Fire Station regarding visits to the community centres in Deri and Fochriw on 3rd December (Santa on a sleigh). Once there is confirmation, posters and other activities will be organised.
- There won't be time to arrange lights for another Christmas tree in Groesfaen. This will be discussed again at the January 2025 meeting. The Clerk will obtain the costs for discussion and agreement thereafter.

UPDATE FROM THE DECEMBER 2024 MEETING:

- The feedback from the Santa on Sleigh events was exceptional. The Aberbargoed Fire Station and Police did an excellent job, as did the local community centres and Councillors. There was a big turnout, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Councillor Jan Gibbings said it was one of the best events they've ever had in Deri.
- ACTION: Councillors would like the clerk to thank Aberbargoed Fire Station formally.
- Councillor Eddy Blanche informed the Clerk that one of the lights in Fochriw, located by the shop, is not working. ACTION: The Clerk will inform Elsbury Platforms.
- Councillor Jan Gibbings also reported an issue with the Christmas tree lights in Deri, as he was informed that nothing could be fixed until after the adverse weather, and they are still erecting lights in other areas. Councillor Dennis Roberts believes this issue has been resolved, but Councillor Gibbings stated that a fault remains.
- Councillor Robert Chapman also reported an issue with the lights in Pentwyn (Fochriw end). ACTION: The Clerk will report to Elsbury.
- The clerk has designed the poster and tickets for the pantomimes. These were approved at the meeting: two large posters for both villages, as Cllr Duncan Johnson kindly offered to print for the schools, and most advertising is now done via social media.
- 180 tickets for Fochriw
- 120 tickets for Deri due to room size and fire regulations.
- There were issues with residents having tickets but not attending the previous year due to unforeseen circumstances, such as illness and weather.
- Councillor Chapman suggested asking for a £1 deposit, which will be returned at the pantomime. This will be discussed in January and considered for next year.
- Cllrs Dennis Roberts and David Nicholas will distribute the tickets in Deri.
(December 14th and 15th at Deri Community Centre).
- Cllrs Robert Chapman and Eddy Blanche will distribute tickets in Fochriw on Saturday.
- Cllrs Duncan and Tracey Johnson will distribute tickets in Fochriw on Sunday.
- There was a suggestion of distributing the tickets at the beginning of December next year.

UPDATE FROM THE JANUARY 2025 MEETING:

Pantomimes

- Cllr Robert Chapman recommended adding a warning re: strobe lighting to the pantomime tickets and posters.
- The pantomimes were a phenomenal success again. Community members commented on how expensive pantomimes are, and they wouldn't be able to afford to go without the free events provided by the community council.
- Cllr Dennis Roberts updated the Clerk on the number of tickets in line with fire regulations (100).

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

- The Clerk is to book the pantomimes for 2025 and ensure a warning re: strobe lighting is added to tickets and posters.
- Lights - Disappointment was expressed regarding the lights – WD24 wasn't working and requires a repair or replacement. The light by Groesfaen was also faulty.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

The Clerk is to contact the contractor, asking them to test and repair the item before returning it to storage. Ask them to advise regarding repair or replacement.

ACTIONS FROM THE FEBRUARY 2025 MEETING

Cllrs M Gibbings and R Chapman will contact Elsbury and arrange a site visit to discuss the above.

UPDATE FROM THE MARCH 2025 MEETING

Cllrs M Gibbings and R Chapman are in the process of arranging.

UPDATE FROM THE MAY 2025 MEETING

- This is currently on hold, as the contractor has received hospital treatment. The company will contact the Clerk when there is an update.
Pantomimes:
 - ❖ **The Little Mermaid on Saturday 20th December 1 pm at Deri Community Centre.**
 - ❖ **Snow White on Sunday 28th December at 4.30 pm at Fochriw Community Centre.**
- Councillors would like the pantomime tickets printed and ready by the beginning of December.

UPDATE FROM THE JUNE 2025 MEETING

Still no update regarding the site visit.

71.2 - Potential closure of Deri Library

Councillors are highly concerned about the potential closure. The County Councillor (R Chapman) is in close discussions with Caerphilly CBC regarding this and will provide an update as soon as there is news. In the meantime, the other Councillors asked the Clerk to send a response from all Darran Valley Community Councillors expressing concern and objection to the proposal.

UPDATE FROM THE DECEMBER 2024 MEETING:

As mentioned above, Councillor Rob Chapman stated that the consultation on the potential closure of the Deri Library has now concluded, and a decision is expected sometime in January or February 2025.

UPDATE FROM THE JANUARY 2025 MEETING:

Cllr Chapman informed the council that there is no decision or update yet, as the consultation period has only just finished.

UPDATE FROM THE FEBRUARY 2025 MEETING

Cllr R Chapman noted it's in the second stage of the consultation period.

UPDATE FROM THE MARCH 2025 MEETING

Still no update.

UPDATE FROM THE APRIL 2025 MEETING

Still no update.

UPDATE FROM THE MAY 2025 MEETING

Still no update.

UPDATE FROM THE JUNE 2025 MEETING

Cllr R Chapman confirmed a decision has been made by Caerphilly Council Borough Council (CCBC) to close the library in Deri. Although this is disappointing news, CCBC's Early Years team is planning to retain the building to expand 'Flying Start' funded childcare places later in 2025/26. The team anticipates being able to work with the community to develop community provisions for families and also offer a Library Outreach service from the site.

14.1 - Wales Tidy's Local Places for Nature grants are BACK 🌸

Do something amazing for your school, community group, or organisation by letting nature move in and transform your unused space with a free garden pack.

Whether you want to:

- 🥕 Grow your own fruit and veg
- 🌸 Create a green community space
- 🦋 Support local wildlife and biodiversity

We've got a variety of packages to choose from! Visit our website to find out more and to apply:

👉 2,314 gardens transformed. More packs to give away! - Keep Wales Tidy

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

Councillors are interested and would like the Clerk to explore this further.

UPDATE FROM THE JUNE 2025 MEETING

The Clerk informed Councillors that landowner permission would be required for the proposed project and requested that they identify suitable locations where such a project could potentially be approved. Additionally, the Clerk was asked to contact Parc Cwm Darran to explore the possibility of establishing a partnership or link with the site.

18 - Declarations of interest 2025

- Cllr Rob Chapman – Governor of Fochriw and Deri Primary Schools, Chairperson for Fochriw Community Centre and the County Councillor for Darran Valley. To be checked as not in attendance.

UPDATE FROM THE JUNE 2025 MEETING

Cllr Rob Chapman was in attendance and confirmed this is correct.

- Cllr David Nicholas – Committee member of Deri Community Centre. To be checked as not in attendance.

UPDATE FROM THE JUNE 2025 MEETING

Cllr David Nicholas informed the Clerk that he has no declarations of interest to report for the current year.

19 - Councillors' processes, including appointment of new Councillors, training and meeting etiquette

The Clerk reiterated the new processes agreed at the May AGM.

UPDATE FROM THE JUNE 2025 MEETING

- The Clerk to update the CCBC Electoral Services Manager.
- A discussion took place regarding the possibility of holding an election this year for the currently co-opted Councillors. However, it was resolved that, given a scheduled election is due in two years and considering the financial implications, it would be more prudent to defer until then.

24 – Chairperson and Councillors' payments to cover expenses 2025-26

Councillors R. Chapman and D. Nicholas were unable to attend the Annual General Meeting held in May, during which decisions regarding the allocation of expenses for the 2025–2026 financial year were made. Councillor R. Chapman subsequently declined to claim the costs, while Councillor D. Nicholas confirmed acceptance.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

The Clerk is authorised to issue a payment of £150 to Councillor D. Nicholas to cover approved expenses for the 2025–2026 financial year.

23 – Community Council Budget update 2025-26

As it has now been confirmed that the Community Council will not be proceeding with the asset transfer of Deri Library, the two OAP trips previously placed on hold will now resume. However, the Wind Turbine Grants will remain on hold until September 2025, pending the outcome of the bank reconciliation.

31 - To receive Community Council Correspondence

31.1 Dear Amanda and Councillors,

I would like to request that the following item be added to the agenda for the next Community Council meeting:

Agenda Item Request:

Consideration of using Wind Farm funds to support the Deri community asset (library). Whether this proposal will be communicated to the wider community, particularly those who may not yet be aware of this potential opportunity.

Personal Comment for Context:

I believe the Deri Library asset has the potential to serve both Deri and Fochriw communities, supporting a wide range of groups and age demographics. While this may involve reallocating some funding from age-specific initiatives, it could result in broader benefits for all community members. There are also several avenues through which the asset could be made financially self-sustaining.

If I am not permitted to raise a question directly for the agenda, I would appreciate guidance on how best to have this matter formally noted and minuted.

Kind regards,
Paul Roberts

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

Clerk to inform Paul Roberts that CCBC's Early Years team has indicated plans to retain the building for the expansion of 'Flying Start' funded childcare places later in the 2025/26 financial year.

In addition, the Early Years team anticipates working collaboratively with the community to develop some level of community provision for families. They also intend to offer a Library Outreach service from the site, ensuring continued access to some library resources.

There were none.

The Police were unable to attend, but submitted the following update via e-mail:

Recorded Crime

Ward	April'25	May 25'	+/-
Moriah	69	61	-8
New Tredegar	31	32	+1
Twyn Carno	36	31	-5
Pontlottyn	14	23	+9
Darran Valley	26	11	-15
Total	176	158	-18

Community concerns or patterns to note.

Tragic circumstances of the Fatal RTC reported in the press early hours of 31.05.25

Remains subject of an investigation by the Murder Investigation Team.

Both Subject and Victim reside outside of the Caerphilly North area with nothing to link them to our area at this time other than the stretch of the A465 where the impact occurred.

We continue to monitor the local concerns with off-road bikes across the section, causing noise, nuisance and damage to green in each area. We significantly increased foot patrols with the addition of our new PCSOs, we continue to receive intelligence reports from the community via QR codes and in person/calls. Need details of houses and garages where they are stored.

At the beginning of the month, we continued to experience protests in Fochriw, however the calls have been reduced towards the end. Inspector and a member of the MOSOVO (Management of Sexual and Violent Offenders) team met with community representatives This has helped alleviate some of the community concerns and no protest since the 07.05.25.

Recorded ASB (Nuisance)

Ward	April 25'	May 25'	+/-
Moriah	3	3	-
New Tredegar	4	2	-2
Twyn Carno	0	2	+2
Pontlottyn	1	1	-
Darran Valley	4	4	-
Total	12	12	No change

Engaged communities



34 – Community Council Payments

The Clerk presented a schedule of accounts for payment, detailing invoices received and payments due, totalling **£1,514.88**

It was resolved that the accounts as listed be approved and authorised for payment by Members.

35 – Darran Valley Audit 2024-25

The Clerk confirmed that all required documentation for the 2024–2025 financial audit has been completed. Prior to submission, the Clerk thoroughly reviewed the paperwork and verified the financial figures to ensure accuracy. The completed audit file has now been submitted to the independent auditors, Harris Bassett Accountants, for examination.

36 – Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday, 3rd July 2025, at 6.30 pm (Deri Library).