



Minutes of the meeting of Darran Valley Community Council on Thursday, 3rd July 2025, at 6.30 pm (Deri Library)

Attendance

Present

Cllr E Blanche
Cllr R Chapman
Cllr J Gibbings
Cllr M Gibbings
Cllr D Johnson (Chair)
Cllr T Johnson
Cllr D Nicholas
Cllr J Roberts

Absent and Apologies

None

In Attendance

Ms. A Pallister (Clerk)

37 - Members of the public

No members of the public attended.

38 - Declarations of interest

There were none.

39 - To approve and confirm the June 2025 minutes of the meeting

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

40 - Matters arising from the June 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.

UPDATE FROM THE JULY 2025 MEETING

Still no update regarding the site visit. The Clerk will chase the contractor.

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.

UPDATE FROM THE JULY 2025 MEETING

The Clerk e-mailed M Iles but hasn't received a reply yet.

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.

UPDATE FROM THE JULY 2025 MEETING

Cllr D Nicholas asked the Clerk to contact the CCBC Electoral Services Manager for clarification. The Clerk received a response from D Beecham, explaining that how a council fills a Councillor vacancy depends on when it occurs.

- If the vacancy dates to the last all-out elections, the council can choose to co-opt a new member or leave the seat vacant.
- If the vacancy arises during the council's term, it is considered a casual vacancy. In this case, the council must advertise the vacancy. If 10 electors request an election, one must be held. If not, the council must co-opt to fill the seat.
- Since the last election, Darran Valley Community Council has followed the correct protocol for filling Councillor vacancies by advertising them as casual vacancies. This ensures transparency and gives electors the opportunity to request an election, in line with the guidance provided by CCBC Electoral Services.

41 - To receive Community Council Correspondence

41.1 – Request for a member of Council to represent Darran Valley Community Council at the One Voice Wales Area Committee Meetings.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

Cllr D Johnson volunteered to represent the Community Council. The Clerk will notify One Voice Wales and share Cllr Johnson's email contact with them.

42- Planning Applications

There were none.

43- Darran Valley Community Council Crime Update

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

Recorded Crime

Ward	May 25'	June 25'	+/-
Moriah	71	36	-35 crimes
New Tredegar	35	33	-2 crimes
Twyn Carno	39	24	-15 crimes

Pontlottyn	25	15	-10 crimes
Darren Valley	11	15	+4 crimes
Total	181	123	-58 crimes (32%)

- The Rhymney Section has experienced an overall reduction in crime in June.

Recorded ASB (Nuisance)

Ward	May 25'	June 25'	+/-
Moriah	5	8	+3
New Tredegar	5	7	+2
Twyn Carno	3	0	-3
Pontlottyn	1	3	+2
Darran Valley	4	2	-2
Total	18	20	+2

- The Rhymney Section has experienced a slight increase in ASB in June.
- Following reports of fires on Beddlywn Road, Phillipstown and ASB / Criminal Damage / Theft at Fochriw Primary School & Fochriw allotments in June the team have conducted increased foot patrols in these areas in attempts to deter the issues and as reassurance to residents.
- The team have also recently increased patrols in and around the vicinity of The Whitbread Centre, Rhymney following reports of damage. 3 Local youths have been identified and are progressing through the ASB process as a result.

Increased Police Patrols in the Area

#CaerphillyNorthNPT have been patrolling #Phillipstown tonight following recent reports from residents of anti-social behaviour and fires in the area.

• If you see anything suspicious or would like to report anti-social behaviour in your area, please get in touch via:

📞 101 or 999 in an emergency situation
 🌐 Online at <https://orlo.uk/VFSk2>

#PCSO242 #PCSO524 #PCSO528 #CommunitySafety #NeighbourhoodPolicing



Police Visit to Allotments Following Reports of Theft and Damage

Last night, Police Community Support Officers from #RhymneyNPT visited #Fochriw Allotments after receiving reports of theft and damage in the area.

Several plot holders have reported damage to their plots and theft of vegetables, as well as fire damage caused to sheds when trees outside the allotments were mindlessly set alight.


• During our visit, we met with allotment users and the Chairman of the Allotment Committee, assessed the damage, and offered reassurance in relation to previous incidents.

🔍 If you have seen anything suspicious or have any information, please get in touch via:

📞 101 or 999 in an emergency situation
 🌐 Online at <https://orlo.uk/vN75o>

Let's continue working together to keep our community safe.

#PCSO242 #PCSO524 #CommunityPolicing #CrimePrevention



44- Community Council Payments

The Clerk presented a schedule of accounts for payment, detailing invoices received and payments due, totalling **£2,131.87**

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

45- Darran Valley Summer Events Poster

The Clerk shared the event poster, which was approved for circulation through local schools, social media, and the Darran Valley Community Council website. Cllr D Johnson kindly offered to print copies for children to take home before the summer holidays.

46- Support to fund the community defibrillator pads – Cllr R Chapman

Cllr R Chapman raised concerns that the defibrillator pads in the villages are nearing expiry. As these devices are vital for saving lives, he requested that the Council urgently cover the cost of replacing the pads. Each set costs approximately £72 and lasts for 3 years, while the batteries have a lifespan of 5 years.

- Cllrs R Chapman and D Johnson receive notifications when the pads are due to expire.
- Cllr D Nicholas expressed reservations about setting a funding precedent, the Council agreed—given the urgency—to fund the replacement pads on this occasion. It was also agreed that the Council would explore potential grant opportunities to support future replacements.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

Cllr R Chapman will arrange for the invoices to be forwarded to the Clerk for payment.

47- Quarter 2 budget update

Key Activities

Quarter 2 included delivery of the Council's largest annual community programme.

Major expenditure included:

- Summer Scheme provision and associated activities (£5,131.20).
- Summer Scheme backpacks and resources (£500.00).
- Wind Turbine Grant funding (£1,996.45).
- Community grants (£600.00).
- Telephone and broadband costs (£250.00).

Quarter 2 Position

By the end of Quarter 2, expenditure on events and activities had exceeded the original budget allocation. ~~This reflected Council decisions to expand community opportunities and invest additional resources into the Summer Scheme, which attracted significant local participation.~~

48 -Date of the next meeting

- The Council does not hold a meeting during August.
- The next meeting will be on Thursday, 4th September 2025, at 6.30 pm (Deri Library).