



Minutes of the meeting of Darran Valley Community Council on Thursday, 9th October 2025, at 6.30 pm (Microsoft Teams)

Attendance

Present

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

Absent and Apologies

None

In Attendance

Ms. A Pallister (Clerk)

58 - Members of the public

No members of the public attended.

59 - Declarations of interest

There were none.

60 - To approve and confirm the September 2025 minutes of the meeting

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

61 – Matters arising from the September 2025 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.

UPDATE FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2025 MEETING

The Clerk has been having difficulty contacting Elsbury Platforms regarding the extra Christmas tree.

UPDATE FROM THE OCTOBER 2025 MEETING

Extra Christmas Tree

- The site visit was completed, and it was confirmed that there are no national grid underground cables at the location to support lighting for an additional Christmas tree.
- Cllr E Blanche added that modern tree lighting uses low-voltage LED systems, and will send Cllr M Gibbings the technical details to investigate.
Action: Cllr E Blanche to send the technical details to Cllr M Gibbings to investigate.

Deri Pantomime

- The Clerk informed Council that the pantomime in Deri had to be moved to Saturday 3rd January at 6.30 pm, due to staff shortages. Cllr D Nicholas raised concerns this maybe too late and young children could get tired.
Action: The Clerk to contact the company and see if there are other available dates at an earlier time and then check if there is availability to accommodate in Deri Community Centre.

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.

UPDATE FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2025 MEETING

Clerk has received no response from Parc Cwm Darran contact.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

ACTION: Cllr Mark Gibbings to follow up.

UPDATE FROM THE OCTOBER 2025 MEETING

Cllr M Gibbings spoke to Margaret Isles, who was supportive but has not responded.

Action: Monitor response; consider reapplying next year if missed.

52 – Library Closures

At the last meeting there was some uncertainty around the legal challenge of the Deri library closure. Cllr R Chapman clarified an appeal is in progress; and the library remains open. However, there are staffing shortages caused by staff moving to other roles.

62-To receive Community Council Correspondence

- There were none.

63-Planning Applications

- New application for a four-bedroom residential development on Bailey Street, Deri. Cllr Chapman confirmed receipt and review by planning.
- Cllr Nicholas raised concerns about church/community hall renovations without visible planning application.

64- Darran Valley Community Council Crime Update

The Police were unable to attend due to staff sickness, however they submitted the following written update:

Recorded Crime

- August: 8 incidents

- September: 13 incidents
- Change: +5 (Increase)

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

- August: 4 incidents
- September: 2 incidents
- Change: –2 (Decrease)

Key Issues

- Vehicle Crime & Garage Break-ins:
There was a noticeable increase in vehicle-related crime and garage break-ins in Deri and Fochriw during August and September.
- **Police Response:**
 - Increased patrols in affected areas.
 - Community Support Officers (CSOs) distributed Smart Water kits and provided crime prevention advice to residents.

65- Community Council Payments

- There were none to report.

66- Darran Valley Expenditure 2025–26 Budget Update

Darran Valley Expenditure 2025-26	Budget	Update
Clerks Salary & on costs	5,079.36	On target
Chairpersons allowance	300	On target
Out of office	250	On target
Telephone & broadband	250	On target
Room hire	200	On target
Insurance & subscriptions	487.36	On target
One Voice Wales membership	477	On target
Stationery & postage	272	Underspend – no stationery ordered yet
Website hosting & maintenance	200	On target
Section 19 - 137 grants	2,000	Underspend - £600
Wind Turbine Grants	2,200	Underspend - £185.05
Section 137 – OAP trip	1,800	Underspend – did not want Christmas trip offered
Christmas lighting / pantomimes / Santa on a sleigh	2,500	Underspend but likely to go over due to purchase of new figurines
Audit	500	On target
Cllr expenses / allowance	1,350	Underspend - £150.
Town & Community Councils Meeting	100	On target
Summer scheme	7,262.40	Overspend - £179.50

ICO Data protection	35	On target
Remembrance Sunday	100	Underspend £85 spent as poppies not available
Deri Library Costs (estimated)	4,500	Underspend – no longer needed as asset transfer not required
VE Day	1,000	Rolled over from previous financial year
Estimated Councillor training costs	860	On target

67-Date of the next meeting

- The next meeting will be on Thursday, 6th November 2025, at 6.30 pm (Deri Library).