



**Minutes of the meeting of Darran Valley Community Council on Thursday,
21st May 2026, at 6.30 pm
Annual General Meeting
Microsoft Teams**

Attendance

Present

Chair:

Cllr J Gibbings

Cllr M Gibbings

Cllr D Johnson

Cllr T Johnson

Cllr D Roberts

Cllr D Nicholas

Cllr R Chapman

In Attendance

Ms. A Pallister (Clerk)

Apologies

Cllr E Blanche

10 - Members of the public

No members of the public attended.

11 - Declarations of interest

There were none.

12 - To approve and confirm the April 2026 minutes of the meeting

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

13 – Matters arising from the April 2026 meeting

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.

December 2025 meeting – no update to report.

January 2026 meeting - no update yet on the library legal challenge

February 2026 meeting – no update.

March 2026 meeting – no update.

April 2026 meeting – no update

May 2026 meeting – no update

05- 01 CCTV in Fochriw

- Follow-up on correspondence from Caerphilly CBC.
- A response had been submitted.
- No further update received, but assumption is the CCTV remains operational.

117 - OAP Trip to Wells

- Coach hires fully booked, paid, and confirmed.
- Participant numbers:
 - Deri: ~42 attendees
 - Fochriw: ~38 (+ a few additional)
- Remaining spaces opened to others (£15 contribution to council funds).
- Trip arrangements progressing well.

14 – Condolences for Cllr Jill Roberts

The Council expressed its sincere condolences following the recent passing of Councillor Jill Roberts. Members acknowledged and appreciated her dedicated service, commitment, and valuable contribution to the Community Council and the wider Darran Valley.

The Council wished to formally record their gratitude for her work and the positive impact she made. Heartfelt condolences were extended to Cllr Dennis Roberts and the family, with members offering their support during this difficult time.

15 - To receive Community Council Correspondence

The Clerk confirmed that there was **nothing of importance requiring discussion.**

16 - Planning Applications

There were none.

17 - Darran Valley Community Council Crime Update

- Crime reduced from **16 (March) to 11 (April).**
- **No antisocial behaviour (ASB)** reported.
- Community engagement:
 - Easter event well attended (egg distribution).
 - School visit delivered by CSOs (community safety awareness).
 - Theft-prevention sessions delivered locally.
- Query raised about **recent helicopter incident and 3 arrests (May):**

- Not in April data.

Action: PCO Adam South to investigate and report back.

18 - Darran Valley Community Council Payments

There were none.

19 - Declarations of interest (register of members interests) 2026-27- review and refresh

Members reviewed and refreshed the **Register of Members' Interests** for the 2026–27 year. Existing declarations were confirmed as largely accurate, with a small number of updates made to reflect current roles and responsibilities (e.g. changes to committee memberships and additional positions held).

It was noted that:

- Any potential conflicts (e.g. roles in community groups or governance bodies) were clearly identified.
- Members would **withdraw from discussion or decision-making** where a conflict arises.
- Outstanding declarations (e.g. for absent members) would be completed **offline**.

Overall, the register was **updated and confirmed as current for the year**, subject to any final additions.

20 - Council payments – consideration of a debit card and signatories

The Council discussed the introduction of a **dedicated debit card** to improve financial processes and accountability, noting that the Clerk currently makes purchases personally and reclaims costs.

Members broadly agreed that:

- A council debit card would provide **better financial governance and transparency**.
- The use of **signatories** should be considered to strengthen oversight.

Key considerations raised:

- Whether to have **one or two signatories**.
- Concerns about the **administrative burden of changing signatories annually**, with a preference expressed for more stable arrangements.

Outcome:

- Agreement in principle to explore the option.
- The Clerk will **investigate requirements with the bank** and report back, including recommendations on signatories and process.

21 - The appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair – for noting as this took place at the April 2026 meeting

The appointment of the **Chair and Vice Chair for 2026–27** was noted, having already been agreed at the **April 2026 meeting**.

- **Cllr J. Gibbings** was confirmed as **Chair**.
- **Cllr D. Johnson** was confirmed as **Vice Chair**.

22 - To determine the Council's representatives to the various bodies

The Council considered and confirmed representation for the forthcoming year as follows:

- **Caerphilly CBC & CC Liaison Sub-Committee:**
 - No new appointment formally confirmed – current arrangements to continue / to be confirmed if required.
- **Town & Community Councils Liaison Committee (2 representatives):**
 - No changes agreed – existing representatives to continue / to be confirmed.
- **One Voice Wales EGM:**
 - **Cllr J. Gibbings** was appointed as the Council's representative.

23 - To consider the appointment of the Council's internal auditor for the financial year ending 31st March 2026

The Council considered the appointment of an internal auditor for the financial year ending **31 March 2026**.

It was agreed that **Harris Bassett** be appointed to undertake the Council's internal audit for the year. The Clerk noted that a **full audit would be required**, reflecting the Council's activity and ensuring appropriate oversight and compliance.

No further action was required at this stage.

24 - Community Council Budget 2026-27

The Council considered and reviewed the proposed **budget for the 2026–27 financial year**, including anticipated income and planned expenditure across key service areas. The budget was agreed in principle, reflecting the Council's commitment to **supporting community activities, maintaining services, and ensuring financial sustainability**. The budget was balanced, with total expected income of £27,100 and expenditure of £24,475, resulting in a planned surplus of £2,625 allocated to the General Reserve.

Members agreed that the Council's annual VAT reclaim (estimated at approximately £1,500 per annum) would be allocated each year to build up a financial reserve. This reserve will be used to support future commitments and to ensure that sufficient funds are available to meet potential election costs when required. This approach allows the Council to spread the cost over several years and avoid placing pressure on a single year's budget.

Approved Expenditure

Budget Heading	Approved Budget (£)
Clerk Salary & PAYE	5,600.00
Councillor & Chair Expenses	1,650.00
Training (One Voice Wales & other)	300.00
ICO Data Protection Fee	50.00

Insurance	600.00
External Audit	350.00
Administration & Office Costs	500.00
Website & IT	250.00
Telephone & Broadband	300.00
Out of Office Provision	300.00
Room Hire & Meeting Costs	300.00
Section 165 – Community Grants	1,500.00
GAVO Wind Turbine Grants	2,000.00
Christmas Activities & Events	2,000.00
Summer Scheme	4,500.00
Over 65's Bus Trips	1,500.00
Utilities & Energy	200.00
Bank Charges	75.00
Election Reserve	1,500.00
General Reserve	2,625.00
Total Approved Budget	24,475.00

Income

Source	Amount (£)	Status
Precept	20,000.00	Confirmed
Wind Turbine pot 1	3,800.00	Estimated
Wind Turbine pot 2	1,800.00	Estimated
VAT Reclaim	1,500.00	Estimated
Total Expected Income	27,100.00	—

25 - Chairperson payments to cover expenses 2026-27

The Council approved payments to cover expenses for the 2026–27 year.

It was noted that the following Councillors each received the standard **£150 Councillor allowance**:

- Cllr E. Blanche
- Cllr D. Nicholas
- Cllr M. Gibbings
- Cllr D. Johnson
- Cllr T. Johnson
- Cllr D. Roberts

This amounted to a total of **£900.00** in Councillor expenses.

In addition:

- **Cllr J. Gibbings**, as Chair, received the **Chair's allowance of £300.00**.

It was also noted that:

- **Cllr R. Chapman declined to receive the allowance.**

Total Approved Payments

- **Overall total: £1,200.00**

26 – Hybrid Meetings

The Council considered the use of **hybrid meetings** to support member attendance.

The discussion was prompted by the circumstances of **Cllr E. Blanche**, who is currently unwell and concerned about missing meetings. Members also noted broader accessibility considerations, including travel difficulties and adverse weather.

Agreed position:

- The next **two meetings (June and July)** will remain **face-to-face** at the usual venue.
- **Hybrid attendance may be used in exceptional circumstances**, such as illness or severe weather.
- The Council agreed that the approach to hybrid meetings will be **reviewed again ahead of the winter period**, when travel conditions may become more challenging.

It was also confirmed that:

- Cllr Blanche will not be penalised for absence due to ill health, as this constitutes **exceptional circumstances**.

Overall, Members supported maintaining **face-to-face meetings as standard**, with flexibility where appropriate.

27 - Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday, 4th June 2026, at 6.30 pm (Deri Library)