Minutes of the meeting of Darran Valley Community Council on Thursday, 1st October 2026, at 6.30 pm

Deri Library

Attendance

Present Chair:

Cllr J Gibbings

Cllr E Blanche

Cllr M Gibbings

Cllr R Chapman

Cllr D Johnson

Cllr D Roberts

In Attendance

Ms. A Pallister (Clerk)

Apologies

Cllr T Johnson

Absent

Cllr D Nicholas

59 - Members of the public

MS. C Roberts-Lloyd

60- Declarations of interest

Councillors **J Gibbings** and **D Roberts** declared an interest in relation to the **Fochriw Ward interview vacancy** and were therefore unable to participate in the vote on this item.

61 – Interview – Fochriw Ward Vacancy

The Clerk reported that one application had been received for the vacant Fochriw Ward Community Councillor position from **Claire Roberts-Lloyd**, a resident of the Darran Valley. Members noted the applicant's extensive record of community involvement, including volunteering with local community groups, schools, youth organisations, Welsh language groups, and cultural activities. Her application also highlighted experience working in education and supporting both younger and older members of the community.

The applicant was interviewed by Members using the agreed interview process. The following questions were asked:

1. What interests you most about becoming a Community Councillor for Fochriw, and what skills or experience would you bring to the role?

2. What do you see as the main issues or priorities facing Fochriw over the next few years?
3. Can you give an example of a time when you worked with others to solve a problem or improve something in your community, workplace, or voluntary activities?
4. Community councillors are expected to attend meetings and represent local residents. How would you balance these responsibilities and engage with the community?

Following the interview, the candidate left the meeting to allow Members to discuss the application and responses in private. Councillors **J Gibbings** and **D Roberts**, having declared an interest, did not participate in the vote.

Resolved: That **Claire Roberts-Lloyd** be appointed to the vacant Fochriw Ward Community Councillor position following a successful interview.

62- To approve and confirm the September 2026 minutes of the meeting

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

63– Matters arising from the September 2026 meeting

51.1 – Mrs Margaret Jones

Members considered correspondence received from Mrs Margaret Jones regarding Councillor Robert Chapman's social media post relating to the proposed Cae Glas Colliery development. The correspondence raised concerns about reliance on Facebook as a means of communication, particularly for residents who do not use social media, and suggested that alternative methods of communication should be considered. Mrs Jones also expressed views regarding the planning application and suggested that a public meeting organised by the Community Council may provide an opportunity for residents to discuss and raise concerns about the proposal.

Update (September 2026): Members noted the correspondence. As the majority of Fochriw Ward Councillors were not in attendance, it was agreed that consideration of the matter be deferred to the next meeting on 1 October 2026 to allow for full Fochriw Ward representation during discussions. Members present raised no objections to residents organising a public meeting to discuss local issues.

Clerk's Response

The Clerk informed Mrs Jones that her correspondence had been considered at the Community Council meeting held on 10 September 2026. Due to the absence of the majority of Fochriw Ward Councillors, Members agreed to defer the matter to the next meeting on 1 October 2026. The Clerk also advised that Councillors present had no objections to residents organising a public meeting regarding the matters raised. In relation to concerns about the notification of planning applications, Mrs Jones was advised that any formal complaint should be directed to Caerphilly County Borough Council Planning Department, as responsibility for planning application administration and publicity rests with the Local Planning Authority rather than the Community Council.

Update (October 2026): Members received an update regarding a planning objection that had been submitted by **Cllr Eddy Blanche** in his capacity as a Community Councillor. The objection related to Planning Application 26/0546/COU for a proposed waste transfer facility at Caeglas Colliery and raised concerns regarding traffic, noise, air quality, drainage, ecology, lighting, residential amenity, and other environmental impacts.

Members noted that the objection had originally been submitted directly to the Planning Authority following consultation by the developer and that the Planning Department had interpreted the objection as being made on behalf of Darran Valley Community Council rather than solely by Cllr Eddy Blanche.

Members noted that Cllr Eddy Blanche had submitted the objection and that an urgent vote had subsequently been conducted by email due to the consultation deadline falling before the next scheduled Council meeting. Responses received recorded four votes in favour of supporting the objection as a representation from Darran Valley Community Council, with one abstention.

It was further noted that Cllr Robert Chapman, as a member of the Planning Committee, was unable to express a view on the merits of the application or participate in the Council's decision, as doing so could have prejudiced his position when considering the application at Planning Committee. Had he expressed a view, he would have been required to declare a predetermined interest when the application came before the Committee.

Resolved: The Council formally endorsed the objection submitted by Cllr Eddy Blanche and confirm that the representation should remain as an objection submitted on behalf of Darran Valley Community Council.

Discussion on Planning Representations by Community Councillors
Members also discussed the distinction between comments submitted by an individual Community Councillor and those submitted on behalf of Darran Valley Community Council.

It was noted that where a Councillor provides views in their capacity as a Community Councillor, there can be ambiguity as to whether those views represent the opinion of the individual Councillor or the formal position of the Council. Members agreed that clarity is required to ensure representations are correctly interpreted by external organisations and regulatory bodies.

Resolved: Following discussion, Cllr M Gibbings advised that he would seek guidance from Dave Beecham regarding the appropriate approach and any relevant governance requirements. Cllr Gibbings agreed to report back to Council with advice and recommendations at the next meeting.

56- Road Closure in New Tredegar (impact on the village of Deri)
Cllr D. Nicholas raised concerns regarding the planned long-term closure of the A469 between Pontlottyn and New Tredegar, which forms part of a major engineering scheme to address ongoing ground movement issues. The project is anticipated to require a road closure for approximately two years.

Members noted that a previous incident affecting the route had resulted in significant disruption within the Darran Valley, with satellite navigation systems diverting traffic, including heavy goods vehicles and articulated lorries, through local villages. Concerns were expressed that a prolonged closure could have a similar impact on local communities, road safety and traffic congestion.

Cllr D. Nicholas requested that Cllr R. Chapman raise these concerns with the relevant authorities and seek clarification on what mitigation measures could be implemented to minimise the impact on local villages. Cllr R. Chapman advised that he had requested a drop-in centre meeting to enable residents and stakeholders to receive

further information and discuss the proposals and associated traffic management arrangements.

Resolved: That the concerns raised be noted and that Cllr R. Chapman seek further information regarding proposed mitigation measures and report back to the Council in due course.

Update (October 2026): Cllr Chapman advised members that a drop-in session will be held at the Community Centre prior to the planned road closure. The session will provide an opportunity for residents to raise any concerns, discuss the proposed works, and consider possible mitigation measures with the relevant parties. Members welcomed the opportunity for community engagement before the closure takes place.

64- To receive Community Council Correspondence

64.1 - **South Wales Police Youth Trust Fundraiser**

Members noted correspondence regarding the South Wales Police Youth Trust, a registered charity that supports projects and organisations working with young people to reduce involvement in crime, antisocial behaviour and substance misuse.

The Trust is launching its **"Steps Towards Brighter Futures"** fundraising challenge during October 2026, encouraging participants to walk, jog or run one mile per day throughout the month and raise a minimum of £30 in sponsorship. Councillors welcomed the initiative and agreed that details should be shared locally through community noticeboards and communication channels where appropriate.

64.2 - **Halloween Event Sweets Request**

Members considered a request from the South Wales Police Neighbourhood Policing Team seeking support for local Halloween engagement activities within the community.

Following discussion, Councillors voted in favour of the request.

Resolved: That the Clerk be authorised to purchase **£100 worth of sweets**, with **£50 allocated to each village**. Cllr D Johnson offered to receive the delivery on behalf of the Council and arrange for the sweets to be handed to the Police for distribution as part of the Halloween community engagement initiative.

65- Darran Valley Community Council Crime Update

Members received an update from the Caerphilly North Neighbourhood Policing Team. Recorded crime in the **Darran Valley** increased from 13 incidents in August to 16 incidents in September, while antisocial behaviour reduced from 3 incidents to 1 during the same period. Overall crime across the policing area fell by 40 incidents compared with the previous month.

Officers reported ongoing work to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour across the area, including action against prolific offenders, intervention with identified youths involved in antisocial behaviour, and targeted patrols in hotspot locations.

Following concerns raised by residents regarding speeding vehicles, officers attended **Pontlottyn** and carried out speed monitoring and reassurance patrols. A total of 120 vehicles were monitored, with an average speed of 22mph

and a highest recorded speed of 41mph. Officers advised that monitoring would continue and findings would be shared with the GoSafe team.

The Neighbourhood Policing Team also continued to work with partner agencies on issues including criminal damage, fly tipping and antisocial behaviour, and participated in community engagement activities across the wider area.

66- Darran Valley Community Council Payments

Payee	Description	Amount (£)
Fochriw Football Club	Hire of Fochriw Football Pitch for the Summer Event	92.44
Simply Sew	Community Grant Award	150.00
Total		**242.44**

Resolved: That payments totalling **£242.44** were approved for payment.

67- Planning Applications

Members considered Planning Application **26/0591/RET** relating to **Lakeside View Campsite, Parc Cwm Darran, Deri**, for the retrospective retention of a demountable campsite office.

The application seeks permission to retain a temporary campsite office building serving the campsite. Members discussed the proposal and **resolved to raise no objection** to the application.

Resolved: That Darran Valley Community Council offers **no objection** to Planning Application **26/0591/RET** for the retention of a demountable campsite office at Lakeside View Campsite.

68- Deri Primary School Closure Update

Members received an update regarding the proposed closure of **Deri Primary School**. It was reported that following significant community engagement and representations made to **Caerphilly County Borough Council**, the proposal to proceed with a consultation on the school's closure had been withdrawn. Cabinet agreed not to progress the consultation following feedback from the Governing Body, parents, local residents and elected members.

Members noted the contribution of **Cllr Robert Chapman**, who addressed Cabinet and spoke in support of retaining the school, describing **Deri Primary School** as "the centre of the village" and highlighting its importance to pupils, families and the wider community. Cabinet subsequently agreed to drop the proposed closure plans and continue working with the school to address its financial challenges.

Cllr Chapman advised Members that the successful outcome had been a genuine team effort involving the school, governors, parents, residents and elected representatives. He also wished to place on record his thanks to **Cllr J Gibbings** for undertaking a television interview in support of the campaign to retain the school and helping raise awareness of community concerns.

Members congratulated **Cllr Chapman** on his representation of the community and thanked everyone involved in securing a positive outcome for the village.

Resolved: That the update be noted and that the Community Council continues to monitor the school's position and any future developments.

69- Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday, 12th November 2026, at 6.30 pm (Deri Library)