

RANGEWORTHY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE ASSEMBLY HELD ON FRIDAY 18th APRIL 2023 AT 7.30PM IN THE KING GEORGE V MEMORIAL HALL

Those Present

Parish Councillors: Miss. W. Moody (Chairman) Miss. L. Haigh Mrs. M.J. Steer
Mr. K. Livall Mr. D. Moore

SGC Councillors: Cllr. C. Young, Cllr. T. Clark, Cllr. J. Lean
Mrs. P. Evans (Clerk)

Five members of the public were present.

Prior to the start of the meeting Cllr. Moody introduced all of the Parish Councillors and Clerk.

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies were noted.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the 2022 Annual Assembly

The Minutes of the 2022 Annual Village Assembly were adopted without alteration. Proposed Cllr. Steer, seconded by a resident. All Agreed.

3. To receive Report from the Parish Council Chairman- Cllr. W. Moody

The Chairman of the Parish Council read out her report, a copy of which is appended to these minutes.

4. To receive Report from SGC Representatives

SGC Cllrs. circulated a copy of their report – a copy is appended to these minutes.

Discussions and questions arising out of the report were as follows.

Settlement Boundaries – Because SGC had not regularly reviewed the settlement boundaries they were deemed by the Planning Inspector to be out of date. SGC would be embarking of a review of boundaries. It was evident that planners were not in tune with community needs.

DRT system – residents present advised of their recent experiences of the new DRT system – one good experience and one not-so-good experience.

Thornbury Park Farm Application – a question was raised about whether the recent approval of the development of 500 new houses was sufficient to take SGC over the five-year land supply. Essentially, yes, it would have done. Residents present queried why there was no standard criteria for the calculation of a five-year land bank. It would appear that developers, SGC and the Planning Inspector using different calculations.

Residents queried exactly where the green belt was, what it covered etc. There is an interactive map – South Gloucestershire Policy Map that could help.

The Chairman wished to thank all three SGC Cllrs for the effort, diligence and dedication to Rangeworthy parish over the past four-years. Their advice and support had been very helpful.

5. To receive the Financial Report from the Parish Clerk

The Clerk circulated a copy of her financial report which is appended to these minutes.

6. To receive reports from Parish Organisations

Hall Management Committee – appended to these minutes.

Jubilee Committee – The Jubilee Committee is busy with arrangements for the forthcoming Coronation. On Sunday 7th May there would be a church service at 9.30am with tea, coffee and cakes served afterwards. There would also be a display of Coronation artwork from the children at the primary school. Between 1.00pm and 4.00pm there would be a family picnic held at the recreation ground and Rose & Crown pub with music, horse and cart rides, an ice cream van and hopefully some children's games. A village photograph would be taken at 3.00pm. On Monday 8th May between 2.00pm and 4.00pm there would be a self-guided walk around the village to see how many crowns could be found (there will be a small gift for every child that takes part). And to round things off, there would be a Coronation Café in the village hall serving tea, coffee and cakes. A grant from SGC had been applied for to help pay for the village celebrations. The Jubilee Committee also arranged the Children's Christmas Party each year.

WI – Current membership is twenty with meetings held on the second Wednesday of each month in the village hall at 7.30pm. Visitors are always welcome, even the men. Every year the WI raise money for a charity by serving refreshments at the Vintage Fares that are held in the hall. This year the nominated charity is Billy Chip, a project for the homeless living on the streets. Rangeworthy WI has also given money to the village primary school for new books. The WI hosted the Annual Flower Show, entered the Hawksbury show – last year Rangeworthy came joint second, but have also won it several times. For the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, members made a wall-hanging, which is now on show at the back of the Hall, along with a previous wall-hanging made by the WI. We try to have interesting monthly speakers and recently had a talk on cybercrime. We have also had trips to the theatre, but this is not so easy to do now due to transport costs when going to Bath or Bristol. One of our members runs a monthly craft club with anyone welcome to attend.

Primary School – Currently the school had a total of sixty-five enrolled pupils. In September of last year, they had an intake of twelve which was two over the PAN (Published Admission Number) however all of these pupils were siblings and the Local Authority made an exception for this. In September of this year, they expect to be at or just below their PAN.

The school had a significant amount of change during the year, four teachers and the head teacher had left over the past twelve months for various personal reasons. As a governing body they had taken significant steps to ensure the least amount of disruption had occurred during that time and the children remained happy and content with an attendance higher than the national average. They currently have temporary heads supporting the school whilst a permanent head was recruited to start in September. The local MP had helped to support the school with the local authority around some of the challenges they had faced but were moving forward positively with the support of Castle School Education Trust with a new curriculum and learning aids. They are also looking for governors, if anyone was interested in supporting the school.

Our A&S Beat Officer PC Simmons had approached the school governors about participation in a school Speedwatch scheme. This idea was to be developed.

Parochial Church Council – The church is regularly used with anyone and everyone welcome to join the services. The church was open most days and the burial ground was active. The church was very grateful to Murray Hire and parishioners who help with the maintenance of the burial ground to help keep it looking clean and tidy. Weekly services are at 9.30am on a Sunday and are in the main informal services led by members of the congregation. Rangeworthy church was part of a wider benefice of churches led by Rev. David Russell and Rev. Rick Williams (in

Charfield). Rev. Russell was due to retire after 25 years of service to the parish and no doubt his retirement would be marked in a suitable manner. The church had always had close links with the primary school who provide wonderful drawings for events like the recent Platinum Jubilee and the forthcoming Coronation. A member of the PCC sits as a governor at the school. The church gets quite a lot of regular visitors as it is part of the Jubilee Way walking route. It was not uncommon to find ramblers sitting in the church porch having their lunch. The church also supports the production of the Parish Magazine and had a wonderful group of volunteers who distribute it around the parish – thank you to them. The PCC also have a food box in the porch to receive donations of food which are in turn taken to the foodbank in Thornbury. The Church also had an annual parish meeting on 22nd May 2023 at 7.30pm in the church – everyone was welcome to take part.

7. Open Question Time

There were no further questions.

8. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 20:48 hrs.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman of the Annual Village Assembly)

Parish Council Chairman's Report – Annual Village Assembly 2023 Presented by Cllr. Miss. Wendy Moody

The financial year 2022-23 saw the Parish Council return to normal meetings and transactions after the disruptions of the COVID-19 restrictions.

I can report the Parish Precept for the forthcoming year is £13,000, no change from the last year. It is the only item on your council tax bill showing a 3.9% reduction for a Band E property with a charge of £47.57, nearly half of the average parish precept in South Gloucestershire of £90. The Precept for each household is calculated by dividing the total number of properties into the Precept budget and with more houses in the parish this works out at slightly less cost for everyone. With the availability of Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 monies for capital spending projects such as the playground, defibrillator for the hall and tree planting, with careful management and looking for best value we have been able to keep the Precept for the normal day-to-day expenditure of grass cutting, pavilion running costs, insurances, dog bin emptying and Clerk's salary the same. Further information about the powers and duties of Parish Councils can be found on the PC's website, www.rangeworthyparishcouncil.org.uk.

Highways – I am pleased to announce Patch Elm Lane will be repaired between now and the end of June. The road will be closed for two weeks with a banksman controlling traffic, so patience and tolerance will be required as there are few passing places, but I am sure all residents will welcome the work being done after some seven years of waiting.

The volume and often excess speed of traffic through the village continues to give cause for concern and Cllr. Moore has been working hard to recruit volunteers for a speed watch group. Although it is impossible to get inside the head of drivers who speed and the reasons why they do it, it is always worth doing something to make them aware there is a 30mph limit through the village and on the side roads. Anyone interested in participating in Speedwatch can contact the Clerk for more details.

The Park and Ride facility at Yate was flagged to be the gateway to public transport. Sadly, there is plenty of parking but not a lot of riding to be done as many bus services have been axed. In the village the 626 workers early morning bus and evening return from Wotton Under Edge to Bristol has gone, as has the 622, Cribbs Causeway Mall to Chipping Sodbury service which was our regular link to Yate for shopping and medical appointments. These services have been replaced for a two-year trial period by Demand Responsive Transport, or DRT. You may have noticed a new information card at the bus stops. There is a QR code that can be scanned with a smart phone or if that is not possible there is a Bristol telephone number to call. Transport can be arranged up to 24-hours ahead and you will be given a pick-up time from a nearby bus stop, and a return journey can be booked at the same time. This new service has yet to prove its reliability and practicality, there is currently a shortage of drivers so time will tell the efficiency of this new system.

Planning – With the cost of borrowing money increasing it is no surprise planning has been quiet over the past year. Some months we have had no planning applications to consider and most of those that have arrived have been for routine household extensions. However, two appeal defeats in the district have had a major impact on speculative planning applications. One at Old Sodbury for 36 houses outside of the settlement boundary was allowed on appeal because the Government Inspector said the settlement boundary hadn't been reviewed for thirty years, therefore it was out of date. Secondly at Thornbury, an application for over 500 houses was allowed because the Appeal Inspector determined the housing land supply was 4.77 years and therefore falling short of the 5 years required.

These decisions have not only moved the goal posts, but pulled the rug from under the feet of parishes who try to oppose speculative applications using the existing planning policies. Within weeks of these appeal decisions there have been two more planning applications in Rangeworthy on green field sites off Wotton Road. With the new Local Plan not being expected to be adopted until 2025, it is anticipated there will be many more of these applications across the district.

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee only, we have no vote or influence on the planning committee although we hope our local knowledge is helpful to the powers that be. I will quote the Acting Chairman of SGC's Planning Committee "and yet one individual woman comes along and changes everything that was voted on democratically. I dislike it, but I can do nothing about it".

Big Spring Clean – The Big Spring Clean took place on 25th March this year and with a weather forecast of sunshine and showers the ten volunteers were lucky to enjoy mostly sunshine. With most of the main thoroughfares of the village litter free, the team could be deployed to the further reaches of the parish and

returned to base with a good haul of rubbish including the most bizarre item ever found – a child's buggy pushchair. Thanks to all those who helped on the day and everyone who continues to litter pick throughout the year. I feel at long last your efforts are succeeding and the village looks clean and tidy.

Public Rights of Way – There have been no reported blockages of Public Rights of Way and the small bridge across the ditch into the recreation ground has been repaired. This was done by a team from SGC who visited us for a week during the autumn and carried out small maintenance jobs such as litter picking, clearing of brambles and ivy, tree pruning and planting, all free of charge. This was a new initiative from SGC to help small parishes and we were very happy with the results.

Recreation Ground – Since the start of the pandemic the recreation ground has been woefully under-used. Rangeworthy Football Club can no longer raise a team of young players to compete in the Bristol & District League and now only field a team of veterans for a handful of games per year. The Parish Council has done its best to support them by halving their fees when they were down to one team, waiving the fee entirely during lockdown and now they pay on a match-by-match basis for the small number of games they do play which it is probably fair to say are more of a social occasion rather than being fiercely competitive.

The Parish Council has always agreed the recreation ground should be self-funding from rental income, so as we emerged from COVID, it was evident we needed to find a new tenant. With Rangeworthy FC playing their veteran matches on Sundays, this leaves Saturdays free for other teams. As we were pondering this problem, we had an approach from Iron Acton FC who are currently playing at Sunnyside Yate with three teams. The first team is in the Bristol Combination League and the other two teams in the Bristol & District League. They currently have more than sixty players signed and are run by a young and enthusiastic committee. They have started to outgrow their current home at Sunnyside which is a shared facility and would like to establish the club in a permanent facility. The configuration of changing rooms at the pavilion are not up to the standard for clubs playing in the Combination League and it would need considerable investment to upgrade these for both players and match officials. Section 106 money could be used for pavilion improvements along with a grant from the Football Foundation. Talks are at a very early stage and one of the first stumbling blocks that has been identified is inadequate parking provision as with two teams playing every Saturday, there could be up to thirty cars, far too many to be accommodated at the recreation ground carpark. There are many avenues to be explored before any decision can be made but it is hoped Saturday afternoon sport can return to Rangeworthy.

Woodland – The woodland is bursting into leaf once more at this time of year and during January and February there was a good display of snowdrops as they gradually spread. During the autumn planting season, a community orchard of heritage variety apple trees was planted, consisting of cooking and eating apples, dual purpose apples and also plum and greengage trees. It will be some years before they bear fruit, so a prospect for the future. And while I'm on the subject of trees, I must thank Cllr. Haigh for watering the Jubilee Grove in the recreation field all through the drought conditions of last summer. Thanks to her hard work we look forward to these Silver Birch trees growing into a fitting memorial to the late Queen as they have been accepted into the Queen's Gren Canopy register.

Community Library – The Community Library or Bookswap is now in its seventh year. Thanks to our dedicated volunteers the library opens on Friday afternoons from 2.30pm to 4.00pm. Some of our helpers have had to step down due to illness or family circumstances so if anyone would like to volunteer, please contact myself or the Clerk. It would involve just 1½ hours of your time every other month. We continue to attract new readers as well as our regular visitors and we often receive generous book donations to keep our stock fresh and interesting.

Finally, thanks to our District Councillors for attending our meetings each month, keeping us informed about SGC and especially planning matters which are a great help to our deliberations.

Our defibrillator guardians deserve a special mention and thanks. They check the units each month to see they are working correctly. It is the one facility in the village we hope we never have to use but reassuring to know it is there.

Another group of volunteers who are often overlooked is Murray Tool Hire who keep the grass mown and neatly trimmed in the cemetery. The company have been doing this task for years at their own expense and I feel it is something we take for granted. So, job well done, and thank you to them.

Our Clerk Paula, is the glue that holds the PC together. If she was working for a business, she would be heading six different departments. Multi-tasking is her daily routine and making sure we receive correspondence and information to facilitate our decisions. Parish Council activities are reported on the website and in the Parish Magazine and residents can contact the Clerk by email, letter or telephone. On behalf of all the Parish

Councillors, thanks to Paula for guiding us through the last four-year term which has been one of the most challenging with half of that time overlaid with COVID restrictions.

As I have just said, we have come to the end of our four-year term of office and I must thank my fellow councillors for their determination to keep the council functioning through difficult times, and also dealing with their own illnesses and returning to the debating table as soon as they are able.

I can reveal the Parish Council election is, disappointingly uncontested once again. Cllr. Moore has decided not to seek re-election so we thank him for his time. With his financial background he has been very adept at scrutinising our spending and helping us to keep within budget. This leaves us with a spare seat. So, if anyone is interested in being a parish councillor, please contact the Clerk for further details.

District Councillors' Report

Planning Appeals - This year South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) has suffered two significant appeal defeats – Land South of Badminton Rd, Old Sodbury and Land West of Park Farm, Thornbury – that are likely to have a significant impact until the next Local Plan is submitted for public examination.

In the former appeal the Planning Inspector ruled that, as SGC has not carried out a methodical review of all defined settlement boundaries within the authority in 30 years, those boundaries should be considered to be out of date. In the latter appeal a different Inspector determined that SGC can only demonstrate a housing land supply of 4.77 years rather than 5 years as the government requires. Both Inspectors independently concluded that the spatial strategy set out in SGC's adopted planning documents, the *Core Strategy* and the *Policies, Sites & Places Plan*, are out of date and that the tilted balance set out in paragraph 11d) ii) of the *National Planning Policy Framework* should be applied. This states there should be a presumption in favour granting planning permission unless "**any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits**".

There is a strong likelihood that SGC, as a Local Planning Authority, is going to have to start regularly applying the tilted balance when arriving at planning decisions. Even if SGC, in the coming months, can continue to demonstrate that its housing land supply is over 5 years the tilted balance will still come into play due to the settlement boundaries being out of date. This is unlikely to change until the new Local Plan is in what is termed "an advanced stage" (i.e. it has been formally submitted for public examination). As the *Local Plan Delivery Programme* only envisages submitting the draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State for examination in August 2024 there is likely to be an increase in speculative applications and appeals in the intervening period. There are strong incentives for developers to pursue this path rather than wait for the Local Plan to be adopted. Land outside of the Green Belt but close to the current settlement boundaries is particularly vulnerable.

Rangeworthy, like Wickwar and Charfield, is unfortunately vulnerable to such speculative application; two have already been submitted this year. Cotswold Homes have applied to build 14 dwellings in the field south of Harford Close (P23/00377/F) whilst Alexander Homes is seeking outline permission to build an additional 9 dwellings (P23/01179/O) to the south west of 7 dwellings they already have planning permission for (PT17/3260/F & P19/13683/RM). Both sites are outside of the defined settlement boundary of Rangeworthy but not within the Green Belt. It is not impossible for these speculative applications to be refused but the appeals will make it harder for SGC to defend any refusals at appeal.

Bus Service Withdrawals and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) - In the last year, following the withdrawal of the financial support the government provided bus companies during the pandemic and its aftermath, we have seen swingeing cuts to bus services across the West of England. This has been driven by sharp increases in the cost of fuel, lower passenger numbers due to unreliable services, as well as a chronic shortage of drivers due to better contracts being available in the haulage industry. At times there have been over 200 vacancies for bus drivers across the region in the past few months.

The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) has been forced to cut the number of supported, commercially unviable bus services from the start of the 2023/24 financial year. This is because the budget from the transport levy, provided by the three constituent local authorities (South Gloucestershire Council, Bristol City Council and Bath & North East Somerset Council), has not kept up with the high rate of inflation in the public transport sector. The Stagecoach 622 and 626 services, as a consequence of this, were withdrawn on 2nd April. The parishes of Rangeworthy, Iron Acton and Tytherington no longer have access to any regular bus service.

For a two-year period, from 3rd April, the West of England, working in partnership with Via and WeDRT, will be trialling Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) under the name WESTlink. This minibus trial is being funded from £105m of funding awarded to the West of England and North Somerset Council, by the Department for

Transport, for their *Bus Services Improvement Plan* (BSIP). Due to the conditions attached to the BSIP funding it must be used to fund new services and cannot be used to support existing bus routes. Under DRT residents will book a journey, either through an app or by telephone, and be given a pickup time from a nearby bus stop. Journeys can be anywhere within one of WESTlinks DRT zones and passengers are able, at the same time, to book a return journey later in the day. DRT is not allowed to compete with existing services nor will journeys follow a fixed route. They will, however, connect rural villages to major transport hubs (e.g. Yate, Thornbury, etc.) and facilitate longer journeys across the West of England.

There have been calls for WECA to explore bringing the regional bus network back under public control via bus franchising. Last year Bristol City Council passed a motion calling for franchising to be examined. A report before the Cabinet of Bath & North East Somerset Council this week recommends formally asking Dan Norris, the West of England Mayor, to commission an independent review of options for bus franchising in the West of England. Franchising would take years to establish nor would it, by itself, resolve the driver shortage but the collapse of the regional bus network underlines the vital importance of such a review.

Report from Fionna Vosper, Chairman Rangeworthy Hall Management Committee

The past last year has seen a return to normal operation following the disruption caused by Covid. There was a gradual return of both our regular weekly and less frequent hirers, some of whom we had not seen for 2 years. Some hirers, such as Yoga who joined us during the Covid pandemic because they wanted a larger hall to assist with social distancing, have stayed on and continue to book with us.

We are sad to have lost other regular hirers, firstly Priory Auctions, the operator of which has recently passed away. We were also very sad to learn of the winding up of the Court Players, who have booked a regular Tuesday slot for many years. The Court Players are in the process of removing their costumes and scenery from the hall, but have kindly donated their lights and other equipment to us, in case it is useful for future amateur dramatic groups, or other shows, and for this we are very grateful. These changes mean that we currently have regular booking slots available. Please contact the Booking Secretary Emma on rangeworthyhall@gmail.com for details.

We have an ongoing programme of maintenance and refurbishment at the hall and have recently upgraded the floor of the Committee room, main entrance and kitchen lobby, replacing the old worn tiles and carpet with a modern hard-wearing floor covering. We also replaced the old hexagonal tables in this room with more versatile square tables allowing a range of layouts and greater seating capacity. This year we are also planning to refurbish the floor of the main hall.

There is also a new decorative wall hanging in the main hall, sewn by members of the WI. Many compliments have been received and it is a lovely addition to the hall to mark a historic event.

The hall has also recently launched a new website www.rangeworthyvillagehall.org.uk and Facebook page 'Rangeworthy Village Hall', and through these we hope to raise our profile and generate more business.

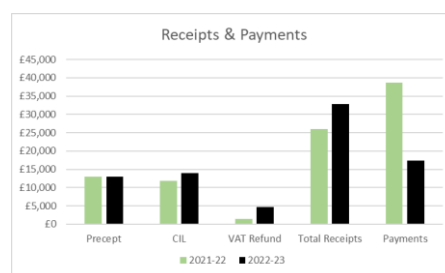
We have a dedicated and hardworking committee of 9 people who each perform a valuable role in contributing to the running of the hall, for which, as Chair, I am very grateful. We meet as a committee on the second Monday of each month at 7.30 in the Lister Room and would always welcome offers of help from the local community if anyone wishes to contribute some of their time to help run the hall. Any tasks that can be carried out by volunteers save us money in purchasing these services and increase the overall financial viability of the hall.

Please contact us via the Facebook page / website / email Rangeworthyhall@gmail.com or by phone Fionna on 227445 for further information.

FINANCIAL REPORT FROM THE PARISH CLERK

I am pleased to report that Rangeworthy Parish Council's financial position remains robust with healthy reserves. Rangeworthy Parish Council has kept the 2023-24 Precept at the same amount as 2022-23 - £13,000. This is despite being advised by various contractors and service providers of a marked increase in their costs because of pressures in the supply chain and increase in fuel costs.

In financial year 2022-23 Rangeworthy Parish Council had receipts of
Annual Village Assembly – 2023



£32,775 (including £14,001 worth of CIL) and payments of £17,397. The rise in receipts was due to an increase in the amount of CIL received, together with a VAT refund of £4,711 (compared to £1,436 the previous year). The Parish Council funded capital projects 2021-22 amounting to £19,156 which artificially inflated the payments for that financial year.

The table below details the total amount of CIL spending for Rangeworthy Parish Council to date. This includes an amount of £1,612 for the purchase and installation of the new defibrillator and external cabinet for the Memorial Hall. There is an amount of £2,442 worth of CIL that must be spent by the end of FY 2023-24. Rangeworthy Parish Council has offered to purchase some bike racks for the Memorial Hall Car Park.

Rangeworthy Parish Council Community Infrastructure Levy Receipt & Payments Summary							
CIL Funds can be spent on:							
1. The provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or							
2. Anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on it.							
3. Spend all CIL Funds within five years of receipt or return them to SGC when requested to do so.							
Collected by SGC During FY	Received by PC Financial Year	Amount Received	To be Spent By	Amount Spent	FY in which spend occurred	Balance Remaining	Notes on Expenditure
2016/2017	2017/2018	£2,926.02	30th April 2022	£2,926.02	2018/2019	£0.00	Memorial Hall Car Park Refurbishment
2017/2018	2018/2019	£245.16	30th April 2023	£245.16	2018/2019	£0.00	Memorial Hall Car Park Refurbishment
2018/2019	2019/2020	£23,535.88	30th April 2024	£21,093.67	2021/2022	£2,442.21	£6,223.67 - New Boiler; £12,933 new play equipment; £325 Bus Shelters 2022/23; £1,284 Defib; Defib Fit £328
2019/2020	2020/2021	£7,870.70	30th April 2025			£7,870.70	
2020/2021	2021/2022	£11,806.05	30th April 2026			£11,806.05	
2021/2022	2022/2023	£14,001.87	29th April 2027			£14,001.87	
						£36,120.83	