

MINUTES OF CHARLTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 2 DEC 25

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF CHARLTON PARISH COUNCIL Held on Tuesday 2 December 2025 at 7pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Tom Blanden (Chairman), Philip Baffour, Jonathan Branton, Liz Garforth-Bles, Hannah Piet; M Bromley Gardner (Clerk); Wilts Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall; 12 members of the public; 4 representing Gem Festival.

1. Apologies. Cllrs David Rawlings, Marion Adkins, Philip Thompson. Absent - Lord Suffolk.
2. Public Questions/Points. Any questions/points about Gem Festival would be taken in Item 6. Any others would be taken now. There were none.
3. Declarations of Interest. None.
4. Urgent Items at Chair's Discretion. None.
5. Last Minutes. The Minutes of the PC meeting of 6 Nov 25, having been circulated in advance, were approved and signed.
6. Gem Festival Licence Application. The Chairman started by explaining how the item would be handled. There was a short briefing on the Wilts Council process on representations. Then Gem Festival presented their plans, followed by public questions; included in their briefing was that they had made some changes. After a lengthy session Cllrs then discussed their views. The decision was:
 - Charlton PC objected (by a 3-2 majority) to the licence application;
 - but it would accept it if it were amended to be a single-year licence with the 1am music finish time that Gem had intended for next year:
 - this would give Gem Festival the opportunity to show that it could run a festival that the village generally could live with.
 - A problem earlier this year had been that there were 2 festivals in Charlton Park on the same weekend. The other festival had a music end-time of 4am compared with Gem's midnight. This confused the judgements about excessive noise. Meanwhile Gem are making efforts to ameliorate the noise next year, and also to put right the various other problems. A one-year licence would allow us to see whether they can get it right.
 - The reasons for the objection:
 - with regard to the licensing objective of prevention of public nuisance – the noise of the music earlier this year had been reported by many village residents as exceptionally intrusive;
 - with regard to the licensing objective of public safety – the festival had been unsafe due to some people being reported as walking home from the festival after music stopped at midnight along the B4040 from the 'Unleashed' gate and others crossing the road inside the village (perhaps having come from the Park Street gate, though this was unknown) apparently in an inebriated (or drug-affected?) state.
7. Councillors' Observations/Points for the Next Meeting. None.
8. Dates of Next Meetings. 22 Jan, 5 Mar, 7 May, 2 Jul, 3 Sep, 5 Nov.
The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Chairman