

MINUTES OF CHARLTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 2 JUL 26

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF CHARLTON PARISH COUNCIL

Held on Thursday 2 July 2026 at 7pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Tom Blanden (Chairman), Marion Adkins, Philip Baffour, Liz Garforth-Bles, David Rawlings; M Bromley Gardner (Clerk); Wilts Cllr Elizabeth Threfall; and 26 members of the public.

1. Apologies. Cllrs Jonathan Branton, Hannah Piet, Lord Suffolk and Philip Thompson.
2. Public Questions/Points. Attendees were told that questions on the Item 7 subject would be invited at the start of that item. There were no other questions.
3. Declarations of Interest. None.
4. Urgent Items at Chair's Discretion. None.
5. Last Minutes. The Minutes of the PC meeting of 4Jun 26, having been circulated in advance, were approved and signed.
6. Finance. The account stood at £21,008. The following payments were approved:
 - 2026.7.1, Countrywide Grounds Maintenance, £150, for verge cutting on 15 Jun.
 - 2026.7.2, to the Clerk, £58, for 50% of his SLCC annual subscription.

After these payments the balance would be £20,800.

7. Interim Review of Festivals. The purpose of the item was to review the 2 festivals in Charlton Park that had already taken place while other festivals were still to come, and to consider whether any action was needed.

a. The item began with questions and points from the attending public. Of the 25 people attending 7 were from neighbouring areas outside Charlton (Burton Hill, Milbourne, Murcott, StPMWPC, Hankerton). Some points were about the recent private wedding in Charlton Park; these were noted but were outside the scope of this item since not about festivals. Most of the points were about Gem festival, with only one about Shindig. Clearly the points raised were strong complaints about the noise suffered by residents not just in Charlton but in neighbouring areas. Key points were:

- i. Most of the problem was simply the noise, unbearable to so many people, caused by the preponderance of the base beat, combined with the noise volume ie the loudness. It caused inability to sleep, inability for mental work, inability to open windows although the weather was hot, inability to enjoy being outside in the garden.
- ii. It was said that the 11 stages were independently run, and that with so many stages it was difficult for the Sound Management Team to properly control them.
- iii. The locations of the sound monitoring points having not changed since WOMAD need review.
- iv. There were complaints about the traffic management. Apart from incompetence by the engaged traffic management company (which Gem Festival say they are aware of), the key point was that traffic signs at traffic lights must not be positioned so that traffic on receiving a green light have to pull out towards the centre of the road to move on – if the lights are also green for the head-on traffic ,

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- v. Could local PCs get together in opposition.
- b. Cllrs then debated the issue. Key points:
- Gem had their chance to produce an acceptable festival but couldn't take it.
 - PC should consider asking for a licence review.
 - Decision must not be rushed. Must have legal representation – the festival will have it.
- c. Decision. PC decided that the Chairman should contact neighbouring PC Chairs to find out if they would join in a coordinated approach to Wilts Council, with a view to seeking a licence review. **Action: Chairman**
8. Bench for The Street. Cllrs expressed doubt that against a main road with much lorry traffic was an appropriate place for a bench. Decision – first find a suitable location. Philip Baffour volunteered to identify a location and bring it back to the next meeting. He was encouraged to liaise with the 2 residents who had requested the bench, also to inform Cllrs well in advance of the next meeting so each Cllr could view the suggested location for themselves. **Action: Philip Baffour**
9. PC Start Time. The PC decided that 6pm may be too early for working people, both Cllrs and residents who might want to attend a meeting, so decided to leave the start time at 7pm.
10. Highways Update. Our Local Highways Engineer was off on long-term sick leave, as was a neighbouring officer, so no action had been possible. Item deferred.
11. Annual Risk Register Review. The Clerk identified that the insured value of assets such as the bus shelters did not automatically increase annually so needed close attention. He also said he would contact individual Cllrs personally concerning their Register of Interests entry. No Cllrs had any other comment on the Risk Register. **Action: Clerk**
12. Rights of Way Update. The entrance to the footpath opposite Vicarage Lane needed strimming – requested as a task for the Parish Steward. Gate on Bridlepath CHAR 7 – farmer planning to replace with a Bristol 2in1 gate, a 10 foot gate with a self-closing pedestrian gate insert built in – but not fully suitable for horses. Options were installing a hunting gate alongside – would the PC pay for the gate if the farmer would install it – but also to raise it as a request to LHFIG. Next step – to discuss with the landowner. The Footpaths Group Leader mentioned some issues he was progressing. A resident had contacted the Clerk about bridlepath CHAR 9 (which becomes HANK 15) which runs up the concrete road to the electricity substation, which was being treated by SSEN as a construction site; the Clerk had said Rights of Way were the people to contact and had offered to do it, but the resident had thanked him for the advice and said he would do it.
13. Planning. Report on Planning Applications:
- Current applications:
 - Journeys End, Moor Lane – certificate of lawfulness.
 - Considered by the PC since the last meeting: none
 - Decided by Wilts Council since the last meeting (all approved):

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- Lype Fields Farm, variation of condition, internal layout. Approved.
- Turnpike Cottage, 2-storey rear extension. Refused.
- Land off Pond Lane – variation of condition for BESS (layout, updated equipment). Approved, with a condition on the colour.
- (Charlton Park solar farm – lawful development started. Approved.)
- Not yet decided at Wilts Council (no objection by CPC except where stated):
 - Charlton Park Estate – demolition of some existing barns, erection of 2nd car storage building.
 - 7 and 10 Park St, retrospective LBC replacement of windows.
 - Land to west of Bullocks Horn Lane, residential curtilage. No objection but recommend Permitted Development Rights now removed.
 - Minety Solar Farm, variation of conditions. Objection to change of timings.
 - (Oakley Farm, agricultural field gate - withdrawn.)

14. Councillors' observations and items for the next meeting. The Clerk announced that we had 30 free tickets to Naadagama festival in Charlton Park (Sat 11 Jul) which he would advertise on the Facebook Hub.

15. Dates of Next Meetings. 3 Sep, 5 Nov. **Afternote:** we needed to change the next meeting to 10 Sep – the Clerk would email Cllrs.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

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Annex to Charlton PC Meeting Minutes 2 Jul 26 – Complete record of points made from the floor.

1. Complaint hotline details must be available on hard copy noticeboards for those with no internet access.
2. Complaints about noise from the private wedding in the Park on 20/21 Jun under a Temporary Event Notice (TEN).
Comment This subject was not on the agenda so no further discussion is recorded.
3. Couldn't work from home. Son doing GCSEs had to move away to continue revision.
4. Concern for impact on wildlife.
5. Traffic control
 - a) Complaints about both directions on the B4040 having green at the same time.
 - b) This was worsened by some of the traffic control signage being on the road not on the verge, thus when the light turned green waiting traffic had to pull out in order to set off, and found the head-on traffic, which had also started, bearing down at them.
Comment It is surely perfectly normal for both directions to receive a green light at the same time. The problem at b) is the real problem here.
Comment There were other traffic control problems not mentioned in this meeting, eg early Monday am the exit lights at the South Lodges were red to both directions on the B4040 when no traffic was even approaching the exit. This was simply operator incompetence. Gem have already acknowledged that they felt very let down by their traffic control contractor and would be engaging a different firm for next year.
6. Noise levels – people who recorded their own noise levels ie at their home found it was over the limit.
7. There were 11 stages which made it difficult for the Sound Management Team (SMT) to work out which stage/s were the offenders.
 - a) Only 3 had sound monitoring.
 - b) The 11 stages were independently run.
 - c) 7 pointed north, 2 west, one south, one east.
 - d) The independent sound consultants apparently admitted to multiple people that the sound had breached the limits on a number of occasions. (**Comment** this would be reported by the independent consultants to Wilts Council and would give the latter the opportunity to take some action.)
8. Allegations that stages turned their sound back up after being turned down by SMT.
9. Why was a higher decibel limit than last year agreed to by Public Protection?
(**Comment** Gem have explained that 65db is the norm, and that they were limited last year to 60db because, being late to the party, they were held to the existing limit that had been set for Existence, which was itself low because Existence had broken their limit in the previous year.)
10. Not the best sound monitoring points, set by Public Protection and apparently unchanged since WOMAD.
11. Shindig – there had been a sudden blast of noise at 11pm. (**Comment** this was the only complaint specifically about Shindig. We should be aware that the changes in location and the specific atmospherics may have benefited Charlton this year but simply moved to noise to other parishes.)
12. The problem is the base notes. (**Comment** which it seems clear Gem is all about.)
13. Some antisocial behaviour experienced in the village.
14. Consistent use of the Park St gate (meant to be blue-light vehicles only) and the sporadic presence of security at that gate.
15. We should petition or sue Wilts Council.

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16. Bylaws disallow chainsaws to be used on a Sunday.
17. Could sue the Estate for causing a nuisance. (**Comment** I don't believe the PC has the power to act in this way – am checking.)
18. Could local PCs get together over this.
19. A resident who has applied under FOI for various documents agreed to share these with the PC once obtained.