

MINUTES

of the

LICENSING COMMITTEE HEARING

held on 28th November 2025 at 11am

Present:

Councillor D. Clark (Chair of Hearing)

Councillors H Clark, J. Frasca, R. Lee and L. Mascot

1. **Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

2. **Declaration of Interests**

All Members were reminded to declare any interests where appropriate in any items of business on the meeting's agenda. None were made.

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the hearing held on 3rd November 2025 were approved as a correct record.

4. **Licensing Act 2003 – Application for a Premises Licence – The Pavillion, Wilvale Rangers Football Club, Chancellor Park, Chancellor Avenue, Chelmsford, CM2 6WS**

The Committee considered an application for a new premises licence made under Section 17 of the Licensing Act 2003 and had regard to the representations made during the consultation period. These related to the promotion of the below Licensing objectives.

- a) The prevention of crime and disorder
- b) Public safety
- c) The prevention of public nuisance
- d) The protection of children from harm

The Committee were informed that the application had sought permission for alcohol sales on Monday to Friday from 16:00 to 22:00, Saturday and Sunday from 13:00 to 22:00 and Bank holidays 13:00 to 22:00; and provision of recorded music Monday to Friday 16:00 to 22:00 and Saturday and Sunday from 08:00 to 22:00.

It was also noted that this would be for the general purpose of providing refreshments for club members and additional inclusion of occasional fund raising events.

It was noted by the Committee that there were three options namely;

- Grant the application, on the terms and conditions applied for.
- Grant the application, on the terms and conditions applied for, modified to such extent as considered appropriate to promote the licensing objectives.
- Refuse the application in whole or in part.

The below parties attended and took part in the hearing:

- Applicant
- Members of the public who had made representations

Officers informed the Committee that in response to the application, 14 representations had been received from members of the public. No representations were made from Responsible Authorities.

The applicant explained that the licence was sought to allow the sale of alcohol and recorded music (mainly as background music), primarily to provide a welcoming environment for players and families. The applicant emphasised that the premises would only operate when volunteers were available, with strict safeguarding measures in place. Alcohol would not be sold during matches, and closing time would be capped at 10:00pm. Volunteers were DBS checked and trained in safeguarding. Measures to mitigate public nuisance included limiting music to background levels, keeping doors closed, and working with the Council to improve soundproofing.

In response to questions it was confirmed that:

- to alleviate traffic issues, walking, cycling and car-shares were encouraged, and parking stewards would be considered for busier periods.
- Safeguarding guidance would be upgraded in line with other similar establishments.

The Committee heard the representations made by members of the public.

Representations were heard from local residents who raised concerns about noise, parking, and safeguarding. Residents expressed worries about late-night disturbance, increased traffic, and unsupervised children in the car park. In response, the applicant clarified that the club was not exclusively for under-16s, that alcohol would only be consumed indoors, and that the premises would not be hired out for external events. The applicant agreed to consider a cap on the number of special events per year and confirmed that music would remain indoors only.

Residents raised concerns about noise from the pavilion operating until 10pm, particularly due to its proximity to housing. They questioned the appropriateness of a bar and music at a football club and highlighted issues with unsupervised children in the car park. Parking and traffic congestion on match days were also cited as significant problems, with fears that a licence would increase vehicle numbers.

The applicant clarified that the club catered for open-age football and operated on a membership basis. The pavilion was described as a community facility, and the bar was intended to raise funds, which was common among similar clubs. They stated that the premises would only open during club activities and occasional fund-raising.

In relation to safeguarding, Members queried previous reports of unsupervised children, and the club confirmed that a safeguarding policy was in place, volunteers were DBS-checked, and processes would be reviewed if the licence was granted. It was noted that no formal safeguarding complaints had been reported.

Questions were asked about hiring the venue, outdoor drinking, and music. The applicant confirmed that the venue would not be hired externally, alcohol would only be consumed indoors, and no speakers would be placed outside.

The applicant shared that they would not be opposed to a cap of approximately four to five events per year if Members considered it necessary. It was shared that doors would be closed during events. Temporary event notices were acknowledged but considered unlikely to be used.

Members noted that in theory any licence would be transferable to new management under legislation, although the reality was that the Council itself was the owner/landlord of the premises and safeguards within the council's lease to the club could alleviate risks. The applicant reiterated that the club was community-led and aimed to operate responsibly without creating issues for residents.

The Committee thanked the attendees and officers for their input and advised that the decision would be made during the deliberation after the meeting. It was noted that due to the remote nature of the meeting, the decision would be circulated to all parties within a few working days via email.

The Committee gave careful consideration to this application for a premises licence and to all relevant representations both written and as expanded on in the course of the hearing. In addition, the Committee had due regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 and to the Council's own Licensing Policy.

RESOLVED that the Director of Public Places be authorised to grant the application on the terms applied for.

Reasons for decision

- (1) in determining the application, the Committee was mindful of the fundamental requirement (as set out in paragraph 9.43 of the section 182 guidance and reiterated by case law) that any determination made by it had to be evidence based and justified as being appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives. Furthermore, if any limitations and/or conditions were to be imposed on the grant of a premises licence they too had to be justified on the evidence and also be proportionate.
- (2) The Committee was also bound to give due weight to the fact that none of the Responsible Authorities (e.g. Essex Police, Environmental Health, or Child Protection Services) had objected to the application or otherwise made representations in relation to the application.

- (3) Viewed objectively and in context, this was a small scale application, made on behalf of a local community based non-profit making organisation, namely Wilvale Rangers Football Club. In the course of the hearing, the club had assured the Committee that the primary purpose behind seeking a premises licence was to allow the sale of alcohol to enhance a welcoming environment for club members and their families and guests. The recorded music would generally be provided as low level background music. Late evening social events involving the sale of alcohol and the playing of recorded music would be limited to several per year (e.g. quiz nights) and would be put on for the purpose of raising funds.
- (4) The sale and consumption of alcohol and the playing of recorded music would take place within the relatively small social room located within the Pavillion, as shown on the application plan. There would be no consumption of alcohol, nor the playing of recorded music, outside this room. The physical constraints of the application premises reinforced the argument put forward by the club that this was a small scale application and that the proposed licensed use could not be compared with, say, the licensed activities of a nightclub or pub.
- (5) Whilst concerns had been raised by some local residents about the potential for noise nuisance, especially in the evenings, a balance had to be struck and taking into account all the circumstances the Committee did not consider that there was sufficient evidence to indicate that there would be a likelihood of public nuisance if the licence were to be granted. Furthermore, the Committee was of the view that there was no justification, at this point in time, to cap or limit the number of evening events that could take place at the premises. To do so would not be proportionate measure.
- (6) Parking and traffic considerations, for the most part, fell outside the statutory remit of the Committee. The Committee recognised and accepted that there were, from time to time, parking issues caused by people using Chancellor Park, and especially on match days. However, this was a highways issue and the club itself could not be held at fault. Furthermore, there was no evidence to indicate that if a licence were to be granted and implemented this would result in a significant increase in parking of vehicles.
- (7) The Committee had listened carefully to concerns about unsupervised children playing the car park. However, in general this was not a matter that fell within the proper legal remit of the Committee to deal with. It was important to note that with licensing applications under the 2003 Act the Committee could only intervene if, on the evidence, it could be demonstrated that there was a prospective clear causal link between (i) the use of the premises for the sale/consumption of alcohol and the playing of recorded music and (ii) children being put at risk of harm. There was no such evidence before the Committee in this case. Furthermore, the Committee was satisfied that the club was fully committed to the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people taking part in club activities and using its facilities and would do its best to ensure that parents using

the bar or attending licensed events kept their children under appropriate supervision. Ultimately, however, there had to be a limit to the club's responsibilities in this regard and a point reached at which parents themselves had to take responsibility for the supervision of their own children. This was especially the case when it came to children accessing outside areas, such as the car park, which were not part of the licensed premises.

- (8) In all the circumstances, the Committee considered it appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives that the application be granted as applied for.

The meeting closed at 12.01pm

Chair