



POLICY ON RECORDING PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Introduction

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 has amended section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to require Councils to permit any person (including the press) who attends a council (or committee) meeting to report on the proceedings of the meeting except where the Council has resolved to exclude the public. The new provisions address the existence of different means of reporting, including the use of social media.

By law, meetings of the Parish Council and its Committees must be open to the public and press except where publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. In these circumstances, the Council may, by resolution, exclude the public and press from the meeting, whether during the whole or part of the proceedings. The resolution must state the reason for exclusion and any such exclusion must apply to all except that the Council may invite individuals to speak at the meeting when it is in private session (e.g. solicitor, other professional advisor, particular staff members).

However the Council is not required by the regulations to permit oral reporting or oral commentary on a meeting as it takes place if the person reporting or providing the commentary is present at the meeting (e.g. running a verbal commentary while filming) which could be disruptive.

Policy

1. Members of the public wishing to film, photograph or make a recording are encouraged to contact the Clerk in advance so that every effort can be made to accommodate them. Meetings of the Council take place at premises that are managed by organisations outside the Council's control. Within the limitations of the size of meeting room accommodation and facilities installed at the premises, the Council will take reasonable steps to ensure that people attending public meetings are able to film, audio-record, take photographs or use social media.
2. Persons wishing to film, photograph or make a recording will be asked to do so from a designated area. Recordings should take place from a static point to avoid disruption to the meeting and should be clearly visible to anyone attending the meeting.
3. A person may not orally report or comment about a meeting as it takes place, if they are present at the meeting, as this would be disruptive to the good order of the meeting.
4. Other members of the public present at the meeting but not wishing to participate may object to being filmed, photographed or recorded and should make this known to the Clerk

or Chairman. Within the limitations of the accommodation they will be allocated seating in a separate part of the room.

5. Those recording must not act in a disruptive manner, which could result in being excluded from the meeting, in accordance with the Council's Standing Order number 2. Disruptive behaviour could be any action or activity which disrupts the conduct of meetings or impedes other members of the public being able to see, hear or film the proceedings. Examples of such disruptive behaviour can include:
 - moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public without the consent of the Chairman (areas designated for the public should be appropriate for filming, audio recording and photographing).
 - excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during the debate/discussion.
 - intrusive lighting and use of flash photography.
 - asking for people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording.
6. Where the public are excluded from a meeting no person may report on the meeting using methods which can be used without that person's presence at the meeting and which enable those not present at the meeting to see or hear the proceedings at the meeting as it takes place or later.
7. Members of the public are requested to switch their mobile devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.
8. Filming, recording, photographing or other reporting of children and vulnerable persons may only take place with the consent of a responsible adult, which in the case of a vulnerable adult is a medical professional, his carer or legal guardian and, in the case of a child, is his parent, legal guardian or teacher. Where such consent has not been given, such a vulnerable adult or child will be allocated seating in a separate part of the room.
9. At the start of the meeting the Chairman should remind those wishing to film, record or photograph the proceedings of the meeting about the restrictions which apply in respect of a vulnerable adult or child and they should also avoid those who may have objected to being filmed, photographed or recorded.
10. Should the Council itself decide to film, photograph, record or webcast the meeting, the public will be notified.
11. Members of the public should be aware that the law of defamation and the law on public order offences apply and that freedom of speech within the law should be exercised with personal and social responsibility, showing respect and tolerance towards the views of others.
12. Recordings should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation or for the purposes of ridicule. Those filming, recording or photographing are minded that requirements of general law apply such as the Human Rights Act, Data Protection Act 1988 and laws relating to libel and defamation.

13. Filming, recording, photographing or other reporting of a meeting is likely to include the personal data of individuals. Those persons filming, recording or photographing must take care to ensure that personal data is used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988.
14. The Council will have no liability for material published by any other person unless undertaking the publication itself nor is the Council liable for the actions of any person making a recording at a meeting which identifies a member of the public or for any publication of that recording.
15. Council agendas will bear a short note about the Council's policy and a copy of the full policy will be available on the Council's website.

References:

Statutory Instrument 2014 No 2095: The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014
DCLG - Open and Accountable Local Government: a guide for the press and public on attending and reporting meetings of local government.
NALC Legal Topic Note - LTN 5 August 2014: Parish and Community Meetings