



## Audio Recording, Filming, Photographing and Reporting of The Proceedings of Council and Committee Meetings Policy

### 1. Introduction

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 permits the audio and visual recordings and photography of the Council and Committee meetings by the general public and/or the media.

A notice will be provided for all meetings, advising the public that the meetings may be recorded and/or photographed and will ask everyone intending to record and/or photograph to inform the Chair of the meeting. Before each meeting starts, the Chair will ask if anyone intends to record and/or photograph so the public may be advised that the meeting is being recorded and/or photographed.

The regulations also allow anyone at a meeting to use Twitter, blogs, Facebook or similar media to report the meeting.

### 2. Limitations:

Although there is a statutory right to photograph and record meetings, the proceedings of that meeting must not be disrupted by the use of media tools and must not inhibit any public involvement.

### 3. Recordings

The Council will also record meetings when others are recording.

The Council has agreed to the recording of town council meetings to improve minute taking of meetings to provide greater clarity on how decisions are reached. The minutes of meetings are the only legal record of that meeting and will be the only method used in determining a challenge on the validity of any decision made.

The Council is required to ensure that minutes are an accurate record of the proceedings and the recording of the meetings could assist this aim.

#### **4. Guidelines for members of the Public**

Any member of the public, or of the media, wishing to photograph or record the meeting is asked to comply with the following:

- Any photography or audio/visual recording takes place from a fixed position in the meeting room agreed by the Chair so as to reduce disruption and avoid a health and safety risk to the proceedings.
- Use of flash photography or additional lighting is for a limited period only during the meeting at a point in the proceedings agreed in advance with the Chair.
- If, in the Chair's opinion, any photography, audio or visual recording is disrupting the meeting in any way, then the operator of the equipment will stop recording;
- If, during the meeting, a motion is passed to exclude the press and public, then all rights to record the meeting are removed and the operator of the equipment will be required to stop recording and/or photography and leave the room with the equipment;
- Equipment is not to be left in the meeting room unattended;
- Any request made by the Chair regarding respecting the public's right to privacy is complied with;
- Photographs, audio and visual recordings should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing the views being recorded in a way that may ridicule or show lack of respect.

#### **5. The Procedure Prior to the Meeting for those Wishing to Record or Photograph a Meeting**

It would be appreciated if persons wishing to take photographs or to record a meeting, were, wherever possible, notified to the Clerk before the meeting concerned. Contact details are:

Telephone: 01225 704187

Address:

Melksham Town Council  
Town Hall  
Market Place  
Melksham  
SN12 6ES

It would be helpful if the notification included the following information:

- a. the meeting the request is for;
- b. the name, organisation (if applicable) and contact details of the person making the notification;
- c. what equipment it is intended will be used;
- d. what the photographs or audio/visual recording will be used for and/or where the information is to be published.

Any equipment required for recording purposes should be set up before the meeting starts to avoid disturbance. Any wires or trailing leads are to be protected by cable covers supplied by the applicant to eliminate any trip hazards or dangers.

Connection to mains electricity cannot be guaranteed, but in any event the equipment is to be in good, proper and safe working order and not prove a hazard or danger to the user or others.

## **6. Social Media**

There are no restrictions placed on anyone at the meeting using Twitter, blogs, Facebook or similar 'social media' provided that the Chairman does not consider their actions are disrupting the proceedings of the meeting.

If the Chairman feels that the use of social media is disrupting the proceedings the person doing so may be required to stop. If use continues, the Chairman may ask the person to leave the meeting and if the person refuses to leave then the meeting may be adjourned to make appropriate arrangements for the meeting to continue without disruption.

Reviewed and Adopted by Full Council on 22 March 2021  
To be reviewed April 2023