

WESTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

POLICY ON RECORDING OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

1 The right to record, film or broadcast meetings of the Council, its committees and sub-committees is established under the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014. These rights are in addition to those already in existence enabling press and public to attend Council meetings.

2 Westham Parish Council are committed to being open and transparent in decision making. For the purpose of this policy the term “record” applies to any form of audio, visual or electronic recording and is permitted under the lawful direction of the council.

3 Any person wishing to record in any format must contact the Clerk or Chairman prior to the start of the meeting. Where possible (i.e. where the room layout permits), reasonable facilities will be made available to any person wishing to record and the Clerk or Chairman will take reasonable steps to ensure that members of the public who do not wish to be filmed are sat in a separate area of the room.

4 Filming should take place from a static point to avoid disruption to the meeting and all recording must be clearly visible to anyone at the meeting. Anyone using recording equipment must strive not to leave it unattended.

5 The Council understand that some members of the public attending meetings may not wish to be recorded and the Chairman will ensure that such requests are observed by those making a recording. Any member of the public who does not wish to be recorded should make this known to the Clerk or the Chairman prior to the commencement of the meeting and those filming should not record the “Public Question Time” session without permission from members of the public who are present.

6 The rules relating to recording of meetings will be displayed in the meeting room and available on the Parish Council website. Anyone wishing to film, or record will be deemed to have accepted these rules whether they have read them or not.

7 Young people under the age of 18 must not be filmed unless a parent or guardian has given written consent. This restriction also applies to vulnerable adults whereby written consent would be required from a medical professional, carer or legal guardian.

8 Those recording should focus on the area of debate and must not interrupt a council meeting by asking questions, making comments or giving a running commentary. The use of digital and social media, for example, Twitter, blogging or audio recording is allowed by those recording a meeting, providing it is carried out in a non-disruptive way. The Act gives the following examples of disruptive activity –

- Moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public without the consent of the Chair;
- Excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during the meeting;
- Intrusive lighting and use of flash photography;
- Asking people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording

9 Those filming or recording are reminded that requirements of general law apply to their activities, for example the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Act and laws of libel and defamation. The recording should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or infringement of the Council's values or in a way that shows ridicule or lack of respect for those in the recording. The Council would expect any recording in breach of these rules to be removed from public view. The Council will have no liability for material published by any other person unless undertaking the publication itself.

10 The Council may itself photograph, film, record or broadcast meetings and can retain, use or dispose of such material and this will be as agreed and set out in a separate policy.

11 The Council is not 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.

Date of adoption