



Crewkerne Town Council

Policy on audio/visual recording and photography at Council meetings

Introduction

Crewkerne Town Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its decision making. Recording, including filming, audio recording, taking photographs, blogging, livestreaming on social media and internet sites, tweeting and using other social media websites is permitted at Council meetings which are open to the public subject to the following:

The rules which the Council will apply are:

1. Anyone wishing to record must let the Chair of the meeting know prior to, or at the start of, the meeting and the recording must be overt (i.e. clearly visible to anyone at the meeting), but non-disruptive and must not interrupt the meeting.
2. All those visually recording a meeting are requested to only focus on recording councillors, officers and the public who are directly involved in the conduct of the meeting. Any children present at the meeting are not to be filmed unless their parents/guardians have given their consent.
3. At the beginning of each meeting, the Chairman will make an announcement that the meeting may be filmed or recorded. Meeting agendas will also carry this message.
4. Any member of the public has the right not to be recorded. We ensure that agendas for, and signage at, council meetings make it clear that recording can take place – if anyone speaking at the meeting does not wish to be recorded they must let the Chairman of the meeting know.
5. Any person wishing to record Council meetings will be responsible for ensuring that equipment used is battery operated because use of electricity will be prohibited. The Council will not be held liable for any injuries to the individual or members of the public caused by the recording of its meetings.
6. The Chairman of the meeting has absolute discretion to stop or suspend recording if in their opinion continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting or if the person recording is in breach of these rules.



The circumstances in which this might occur might include:

- recording is disrupting the proceedings of the meeting
 - there is public disturbance or a suspension of the meeting
 - the meeting has resolved to exclude the public for reasons which are set down in the Local Government Act 1972
7. 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 ridicules or shows a 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.
 8. On rare occasions meetings which take the form of hearings, may not always be suitable for recording due to the nature of some of the evidence to be given at the hearing, and the Chairman will use discretion to decide if recording is allowed.
 9. If the Council or Committee needs to discuss confidential or exempt information (and goes into Confidential Session) and the public are excluded from the meeting, then all recording equipment will need to be removed immediately from the room.
 10. Council Officers have the right to turn off or remove any unattended equipment during the times when the public and press have been excluded. Any equipment left unattended in the Council Chamber is done so entirely at the owner's risk.
 11. The use of flash photography or additional lighting will not be allowed unless this has been discussed in advance of the meeting and agreement reached on how it can be done without disrupting proceedings.

Online Council meetings:

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Council and committee meetings could be held remotely in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. This legislation has now expired but from time to time the council may hold informal council meetings remotely. Meetings are conducted on Zoom and streamed via YouTube. In person council meetings will also be, where possible, streamed over the internet. The officer hosting the meeting is responsible for recording the meeting and will verbally advise all participants at the time the recording is begun. The footage will be deleted by the officer hosting the meeting once the minutes have been accepted as a correct record of the meeting, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

Notes for guidance:



Please contact the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk on 01460 74001 in advance of the meeting you wish to record, and especially if the recording you wish to make involves large equipment or special requirements.

A failure to follow these requirements may lead to a request to record being refused at subsequent Council meetings.

Recording and reporting the Council's meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those who undertake the recording and reporting to ensure compliance. This will include the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Act, the Public Order Act Part III (1986 as amended), the Equality Act 2010 and the laws of libel and defamation.

The Council may itself photograph, film, record or broadcast at its meetings and may retain, use or dispose of such material in accordance with its retention and disposal policies.

Policy Review Schedule:

In accordance with the Council's Policy Review Schedule, this policy will be reviewed every four years (at least once in every council term), and sooner should any changes to relevant legislation require it.

Approved Full Town Council 24th November 2014 Min No. 136 (b)

Reviewed and amended at Policy & Resources Committee 14th February 2022 Min No 21/22 34