

# Recording, Filming and Photography at Council Meetings Policy

## 1. 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 in accordance with this policy subject to the following:

## 2. Guidelines

The rules which the Council will apply are:

- 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. Recording must not distract from, disturb, or otherwise interfere with the conduct of the meeting.
- 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. Care should be taken to avoid filming members of the public who do not wish to be recorded.
- At the start of each meeting, the chair will advise those present that the meeting may be recorded or filmed. This information will also be included on the published agenda.
- Any member of the public has the right not to be recorded. If anyone speaking at the meeting does not wish to be recorded, they must let the chair of the meeting know. Reasonable steps will be taken to accommodate this request.
- 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.
- The chair of the meeting has 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

- 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. The council may request that any recording published in breach of this policy be removed from public view.
- 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.
- If the council or committee needs to discuss confidential or exempt information (and goes into a confidential session) and the public are excluded from the meeting, then all recording equipment will need to be removed immediately from the room.
- 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.
- 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 used without disrupting proceedings.

### **3. Online and Hybrid Council Meetings**

- 3.1 From time to time, the council may hold meetings online or in a hybrid format. Where meetings are livestreamed or recorded by the council, this will be made clear to all participants. The officer hosting the meeting is responsible for starting and stopping any recording and advising participants when recording is taking place.
- 3.2 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 and document retention arrangements.

### **4. Guidance for the Public and the Media**

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. Persistent or deliberate breaches of this policy may result in recording being restricted at future meetings.

### **5. Legal Responsibilities**

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 2018, 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.

**Version Control:**

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This policy will be reviewed every four years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or council practice.

Review Date: **February 2030**