

THE USE OF RECORDING, PHOTOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL MEDIA AT PUBLIC MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 came into force on 6th August 2014. These regulations allow any member of the public who wishes to film, audio-record, take photographs and use social media such as tweeting and blogging, to report the proceedings of any meeting that is open to the public.

Wing Parish Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its main decision-making meetings and has therefore developed a protocol to assist its citizens in this activity.

RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS

Access

To facilitate access to Council meetings, a designated area for those wishing to record proceedings will be clearly sign-posted. This area will provide an unfettered view of the meeting. Although there is no requirement to notify the Council in advance of the intention to record a meeting, we respectfully ask those who are wishing to bring large equipment to a meeting to contact us in advance so that necessary arrangements can be made to accommodate this.

Please email requirements to sjawcock@btinternet.com

In order to prevent accidents, (particularly but not exclusively caused by trailing cable) the Council is unable to facilitate members of the public using electric plug sockets in meetings for their equipment.

Open meetings

Access to record proceedings is only available to meetings, which are open to the public. In limited defined circumstances, for example when confidential or exempt items are discussed, some meetings may need to be held in private or move to a private session during the meeting. In these cases, recording will not be permitted as the public will be excluded for the relevant part of the meeting.

Commentary

Any person can provide written commentary during a meeting, as well as oral commentary outside or after the meeting. Oral commentary is not permitted during a meeting as this would be disruptive to the good order to the meeting.

Although the Council supports the principles of freedom of speech, this should be exercised with personal and social responsibility and be operated within the law. The Council requests those participating not to edit recordings, film or photographs in any way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule or show a lack of respect towards those being photographed, filmed or recorded.

There is no legal requirements for councils to webcast, but where councils webcast any of their public meetings as a matter of good practice, the public will be notified.

Filming or audio – recording is not allowed during private meetings or private sessions. All recording equipment must be removed during these sessions/meetings.

Disruption

Anyone wishing to record a meeting who acts in a disruptive manner may be at risk of expulsion. Examples where this may be considered are:

Moving outside the areas designated for recording without the consent of the Chairman
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 purpose of recording

Impact on meeting attendees

It is important that members of the public, who are seated in the separate public area, are not photographed/filmed/recorded without their consent.

However, if a member of the public asks a question, presents a petition or makes a representation, then they are likely to be filmed and are deemed to have given their consent in these circumstances.

All meeting Agendas, which are published on the Council's website in advance of a public meeting, will include a paragraph on the possibility of a meeting being recorded and the Chairman will make an announcement to this effect at the opening of the meeting.

If members of the public object to be filmed they should seat themselves to the rear of the Designated Filming Area.