



# **Policy on Filming, Audio-Recording, Photographing and Reporting of Council and Committee Meetings**

**DATE OF ADOPTION:** Full Council 19th September 2023

**DATE OF REVIEW :** Every three years, or earlier if subject to legislative changes

## Policy on Filming, Audio-Recording, Photographing and Reporting of Council and Committee Meetings

1. The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, require Town and Parish Councils to allow a person to film, audio-record or take photographs of, and to report on, the proceedings of any part of a meeting which the public are entitled to attend by law. Any member of the public who does not wish to be recorded should make this known to the Town Clerk, The Mayor or Committee Chair prior to the start of the meeting. (see Sections 7 and 8).
2. The Regulations do not require Town and Parish Councils to allow filming etc. of any part of a meeting where the public are excluded by reason of the confidential nature of the business or where publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.
3. Exclusion of the public must be authorised by a resolution of the meeting and the reason for the exclusion must be stated.
4. The Regulations apply only to formal, decision-making meetings of the Council, a committee or sub-committee, and not to informal meetings or meetings of a working party without decision-making powers.
5. Downham Market Town Council (the Council) has no objection to quiet and non-intrusive filming, photography, tweeting and blogging using a hand-held device such as a mobile phone or tablet. Oral commentary in the meeting room during a meeting is not permitted by the Regulations and may be disruptive.
6. The Council asks anyone proposing to use a device larger than a mobile phone or tablet to notify the Town Clerk prior to the start of the meeting, so that proper facilities can, if possible, be provided.
7. Members of the public who attend a meeting merely to observe it are not taking part in the proceedings, and the Council asks others not to film or photograph them without their consent. Children or vulnerable adults attending a meeting should not be filmed or photographed, unless their parents/guardians have given prior written consent.
8. The Council may, at its own discretion, require members of the public who do not consent to being recorded to sit separately from those who are content to be recorded.
9. Anyone acting in a disruptive manner may be asked by The Mayor or Chair of the meeting to stop doing so and if they continue, they may be asked to leave the meeting.
10. Examples of disruptive activity are:
  - . Moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public without the consent of The Mayor/Chair;

- . Excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during the meeting;
  - . intrusive lighting and use of flash photograph;
  - . Asking people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording.
11. Recording equipment may be left running in the meeting room even if the person using it leaves the room. However, it may not be left running for a part of the meeting where the public are excluded and an officer of the Council may stop the recording or switch off the equipment if this happens.
  12. It is the responsibility of those filming or recording Council meetings to ensure compliance with the Human Rights Act, The Data Protection Legislation and Laws of libel and defamation. The recording must 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 will expect any recording that breach these rules to be removed from public view.
  13. Any person or organisation choosing to record any meeting of the Council will be responsible for any claims or liabilities resulting from them doing so, and by choosing to film, record or broadcast Council meetings they accept they are required to indemnify the Council, its Councillors and staff in relation to any such claims or liabilities.
  14. The Council may itself photograph, film, record or broadcast meetings and can retain, use or dispose of such material in accordance with its retention and disposal policies. The Council when recording its own meetings will be bound by this policy.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or updated in accordance with changes in the law.

**The minutes of a Council meeting remain the only statutory and legally binding formal record of Council decisions.**

**END**