

# **Policy and Protocol on Dealing with the Press and Media and Filming, Recording and Broadcasting of Meetings**

---

## **1 Introduction**

This policy is drafted in response to amendment to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as amended on 6 August 2014) and to ensure clarity with regard to making statements to the press.

It is based on research and advice/guidance provided by the Warwickshire Association of Local Councils.

## **2 Dealing with the Press and Media**

2.1 This policy is to guide both Councillors and Officers of the Council in their relations with the news media in such a way as to ensure the smooth running of the Council.

2.2 The Council is accountable to the electorate for its actions and shall therefore be proactive in making all reasonable efforts to make its decisions and policies known to the electorate.

2.3 The Council shall allow all reasonable access to news media organisations. The Council shall make every effort to respond without delay to requests for information from news media organisations. However, all news releases and enquiries made on behalf of the Parish Council will be authorised by the Parish Clerk or the Chairman and are therefore never answered immediately.

2.4 Councillors should be aware that case law states that the role of councillor overrides the rights to act as an individual. This means that Councillors should be careful about expressing individual views to the news media, whether they relate to matters of Council business. Councillors also have an obligation to respect Council policy once made, while it may be legitimate for a Councillor to make clear that he or she disagreed with a policy and voted against it (if this took place in an open session), they should not seek to undermine a decision through the news media.

2.5 Councillors and officers should act with integrity at all times when representing or acting on behalf of Coughton Parish Council.

2.6 Councillors and officers must not disclose information that is of a confidential nature. This includes any discussion with news media organisations of any item which has been discussed under confidential items on the Council's agenda.

2.7 A Councillor must not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an Officer at meetings held in public or before the press.

## **3 Recording and Filming of Council and Committee Meetings**

3.1 The right to record, film and to broadcast meetings of the council, committees, and sub committees is established following the Local Government Audit and Accountability Act 2014. This is in addition to the rights of the press and public to attend such meetings.

3.2 Meeting or parts of meetings from which the press and public are excluded may not be filmed or recorded.

3.3 Members of the public are permitted to film or record meetings to which they are permitted access in a non- disruptive manner.

3.4 The use of digital and social media recording tools, for example Twitter, blogging or audio recording be allowed as long as it is carried out in a non-disruptive way and only to the extent that it does not interfere with any person's ability, even where he or she has a disability, to follow the debate.

3.5 While those attending meetings are deemed to have consented to the filming, recording or broadcasting of meetings, those exercising the rights to film, record and broadcast must respect the rights of other people attending under the Data Protection Act 1998. (This includes their permission to broadcast their personal details)

3.6 The Chairman of the meeting has the authority to stop a meeting and take appropriate action if any person contravenes these principles or is deemed to be recording in a disruptive manner.

3.7 Any person or organisation choosing to film, record or broadcast any meeting of the Council or a committee is responsible for any claims or other liability from them so doing.

3.8 The Council asks those recording proceedings not to edit the film or recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings or infringe the core values of the Council. This includes refraining from editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule or show lack of respect towards those being filmed or recorded.

3.9 The Council will display requirements as to filming, recording and broadcasting and attendees will be deemed to have accepted them whether they have read them or not (refer to Appendix 1)

3.10 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's record is the definitive record of the meeting. The written approved minutes are the legal record.

### Appendix 1

#### Coughton Parish Council

#### Filming and Recording of Meetings

In line with legislation Coughton Parish Council allows the filming, record and broadcast of all public aspects of its meetings by members of the public and the press. This includes the use of digital and social media, e.g. Twitter and blogging.

It is suggested that those intending to film, record or broadcast request sight of a copy of the Council's Policy prior to commencement of the meeting.

Those filming, recording, blogging etc are asked to do so in a non-disruptive way that does not impede the ability of the Council to conduct its business or attendees to observe and follow the meeting and must observe the rights afforded by the Data Protection Act 1988.

Those attending the meeting are deemed to have consented to the filming, recording and broadcasting of meetings.