

Wheatley Hill Parish Council

Public Filming, Recording and Reporting at Council Meetings

1. INTRODUCTION

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 issued under s43(2) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 came into force on 6 August 2014.

This amended the requirements of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960. The 1960 Act provided that members of the public had no statutory right to film, take photographs or record full Council or Committee meetings that were open to the public.

The amended 1960 Act provides that a person may not orally report or comment about a meeting as it takes place if he is present at the meeting of a Parish Council or its Committees but otherwise may:

- (a) Film, photograph or make an audio recording of a meeting
- (b) Use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later
- (c) Report or comment on the proceedings in writing during or after a meeting or orally report or comment after the meeting.

2. COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT

The Council acknowledges that it is required by legislation to allow any member of the public to take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on all public meetings.

The Council acknowledges that no prior permission is required but asks that anyone wishing to film or audio record a public meeting advise the Council prior to the meeting.

The Council will provide “reasonable facilities” to facilitate reporting and a space to view and hear the meetings. This will not be part of the seating arrangements for the Council itself or an area required by council staff or invited guests.

It is not permitted to provide a running verbal commentary.

Those undertaking reporting must not act in a disruptive manner. This could be any action or activity which disrupts the conduct of meetings or impedes other members of the public being able to see, hear or film the proceedings.

Examples include:

- Moving around outside the areas designated without the consent of the Chair
- Excessive noise in recording or re-siting equipment during the meeting
- Intrusive lighting and use of flash photography
- Asking for people to repeat statements for the purpose of recording

Press and public will be excluded from a meeting, under the Council's Standing Orders, if acting in a disruptive manner.

Recording equipment must be removed from the room if at any stage the meeting becomes a private meeting.

No trailing cables or plugging into sockets for electrical equipment will be permitted.

Children and vulnerable adults are not to be filmed, recorded or photographed or otherwise reported about where the relevant responsible adult has not given consent.

Part of the public area will be used, if required, for children and vulnerable adults or those public attending who do not wish to be filmed, however, this is within the limitation of the meeting room and its layout.

Persons taking part in the public participation section, excluding children and vulnerable adults, may be filmed, recorded or photographed or otherwise reported whether they are in a designated area or not.

Persons filming meetings are likely to record personal data of individuals. These persons must take care to ensure that personal data is used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chair of the Council will be responsible for its implementation and deal with anything which disrupts the conduct of meetings or impedes other members of the public being able to see, hear or film, audio record, take photographs and use social media such as tweeting and blogging.

The Chair of the Council will remind those present at the meeting of this Policy. In particular reminding individuals who wish to film to avoid those who have expressed a wish not to be filmed or children or vulnerable adults without the express permission of the parent or responsible adult.

4. ENFORCEMENT OF THE POLICY

Enforcement of the policy will be undertaken by the Chair of the Council. Behaviour deemed to be disruptive will be dealt with under the Council's Standing Orders.