

CHAPTER 3.6 – FILMING AND RECORDING PROTOCOL

3.6.1 Introduction

Wokingham Borough Council is committed to openness and transparency in how it takes decisions on behalf of local residents.

In accordance with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 members of the press and public will be permitted to take photographs or audio / visually record any meeting arranged by the Council and open to the public. ~~public meeting of the Council, its Committees or Sub-Committees, or Executive meetings.~~

The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidance to those taking photographs or audio / visual recording at such meetings.

The press and public will also be permitted to use social media eg tweeting and blogging to report the proceedings of all such meetings that are open to the public. No restrictions will be placed on anyone at the meeting using Twitter, blogs, Facebook provided that the Chairman does not consider their actions are disrupting the proceedings of the meeting.

For the purposes of this Protocol “Chairman” means the chair of the meeting, if one has been appointed, or the responsible Wokingham Borough Council Member/Officer.

3.6.2 Exemptions

Although the Council welcomes the photographing and audio / visual recording of any of its meetings that are open to the public ~~Council, its Committees or Sub-Committees and Executive meetings~~ the proceedings of that meeting must not be disrupted by the use of media tools and must not inhibit community involvement in the proceedings.

Photography and audio / visual recording will not be permitted at any meeting where the public have been excluded as permitted by law i.e. when confidential or exempt information is due to be discussed.

3.6.3 Obligations

In order not to disrupt proceedings any member of the press / media or the public wishing to photograph and/or audio / visually record a meeting must adhere to the following:

- a) Any photography or audio / visual recording must take place from a fixed position in the meeting room approved by the Chairman;
- b) The use of flash photography or additional lighting will only be permitted for a limited period during the meeting at a point in the proceedings agreed with the Chairman;
- c) If the Chairman feels the photography / audio / visual recording is disrupting the meeting in any way or any pre-meeting agreement has been breached the operator of the equipment will be required to stop;
- d) Oral reporting or commentary is not permitted during a meeting;

- e) Any request made by the Chairman in respecting ~~at~~ the public's- member of the public's right to privacy should be complied with;
- f) People seated in the public gallery/seating area should not be photographed / filmed / recorded;
- g) Use must not be made of an image if consent is refused;
- h) Photographs / audio / visual recordings should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing the views being recorded in a way that may ridicule or show lack of respect.

3.6.4 Rights of Attendees at Meetings

If a request has been received to take photographs or audio / visually record a particular meeting, notices to this effect will be displayed in the relevant meeting room. The Chairman will also make an announcement that the meeting will be photographed / recorded or filmed.

The Council will, on occasions, audio record meetings for minuting purposes only. The relevant Chairman will not make an announcement to this effect and these recordings will not be supplied to anyone outside the Council.

The Council wishes to respect the privacy of members of the public who are attending their meetings. Therefore if you are taking photographs or audio / visually recording a meeting you are asked not to film those people seated in the public gallery / seating area. If you ask a question, present a petition or make a representation, then you are likely to be filmed and you will be deemed to have given your consent to this.

If you do not wish to be photographed / filmed or recorded please inform the Democratic Services Officer in attendance at the meeting or the Chairman of the relevant Committee.

3.6.5 Prior to the Meeting

We kindly ask anyone wishing to use large equipment to take photographs or audio / visually record meetings, to contact Democratic Services in advance of the meeting at: democratic.services@wokingham.gov.uk. This is in order that we can assist in finding an appropriate location, which does not impede access to / from the meeting room or block the view of any attendee, and provide any "reasonable facilities".

Taking into account the venue and expected public attendance / participation the Chairman of the relevant committee will rule on whether facilities requested are "reasonable".

3.6.6 At the Meeting

~~Large E~~quipment must be set up before the meeting starts. The use of flash photography or additional lighting will only be permitted for a limited period during the meeting at a point in the proceedings agreed with the Chairman. This will be communicated to all relevant parties.

If the Chairman feels the photography / audio / visual recording is disrupting the meeting in any way or any pre-meeting agreement has been breached the operator of the equipment will be required to stop.

Disruptive behaviour is any action or activity which disrupts the conduct of meetings or impedes other members of the public from being able to see, hear or film etc the proceedings. Examples of types of disruptive behaviour are:

- Moving to areas outside the area designated for the public 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; and
- Asking for people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording.

If someone refuses to stop when requested to do so the Chairman will ask the person to leave the meeting. If the person refuses to leave then the Chairman may adjourn the meeting or make other appropriate arrangements for the meeting to continue without disruption.

If during the meeting a motion is passed to exclude the press and public, because confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, then all rights to record the meeting are removed.

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