

Stone Town Council

Protocol on the Filming and Recording of Council and Committee Meetings

The right to record, film and to broadcast meetings of Local Councils, committees and sub committees was established following the Local Government Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The “Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014” became active legislation in August 2014. This is in addition to the rights of the press and public to attend such meetings.

This documents sets out the protocol for filming, recording or otherwise reporting the meetings of Stone Town Council.

Members of the public are permitted to “report” Council or committee meetings, to which they are permitted access, in a non-disruptive manner. Meetings or parts of meetings from which the press and public are excluded may not be reported on. In addition, attendees have no right to report Sub-Committee meetings, whether they are open to the public or not.

“Reporting”, in the context of this protocol, is defined as:

- filming, photographing or making an audio recording of proceedings at a meeting;
- using any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later; or
- reporting or providing commentary on proceedings at a meeting, orally or in writing, so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.

The use of digital and social media recording tools, for example Twitter, blogging or audio recording is 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.

Whilst written blogging or tweeting can be undertaken by anyone at a meeting, including Councilors taking part in the meeting, all other individuals reporting must undertake the activity from the public gallery or other area set aside for the purpose. It must also be undertaken overtly, so that all present at the meeting are aware that they are being recorded. To this end, anyone wishing to report on a meeting by means other than written blogging or tweeting must inform the Clerk in advance of the meeting to allow the Chairman to announce at the start of the meeting that it is being recorded.

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 others people attending. Any children or young people under the age of 18 who are present at the meeting are not to be filmed unless their parents/guardians have given their written consent. This provision also applies to vulnerable adults, whereby the consent of a responsible adult is required for recording, i.e. a medical professional, carer or legal guardian.

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.

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

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.

The council will display requirements as to filming, recording and broadcasting at its meeting venues and those undertaking these activities will be deemed to have accepted them whether they have read them or not.

The Council may itself photograph, film, record or broadcasting at its meetings and can retain, use or dispose of such material in accordance with its retention and disposal policies.

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