

Recording and Reporting Public Council Meetings

Rules for filming, audio recording, photography and social media at Ingoldmells Parish Council meetings

July 2017



Ingoldmells Parish Council

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Sound Issues.....	3
3. Do people need to ask permission to record Council meetings.....	4
4. Can anyone ask not to be recorded	4
5. Can people tweet or blog a Council meeting.....	4
6. Commentary during the meeting.....	5
7. Can people be asked to leave a meeting and stop recording.....	5
8. Are there any limits about recording a meeting or what people can say in a tweet or recording	5
9. Can people leave recording equipment in a public meeting room and record without being present	6

1. Introduction

Ingoldmells Parish Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its decision making.

The Openness of Local Bodies Regulations 2014 allows any person attending a public local government meeting to report proceedings by:

- ☒ Taking photographs
- ☒ Filming
- ☒ Audio-recording
- ☒ Using social media such as blogging, tweeting etc.,

The aim of this guidance is to help any members of the press and public who wish to film, audio-record, take photographs and use social media such as tweeting and blogging to report proceedings of Council meetings that are open to the public.

Note: At the beginning of each meeting, the Chairman will make an announcement that the meeting may be filmed or recorded and will ask if anyone objects to this. Meeting agendas will also carry this message:

Recording, including filming, audio recording, taking photographs, blogging, tweeting and using other social medial websites is permitted at Council meetings which are open to the public – however, anyone wishing to are encouraged to speak to the Parish Clerk prior to the meeting as there are rules which must be followed.

The Parish Council will display requirements as to filming, recording and broadcasting at its meeting venues, on its website and notice boards in the parish and those undertaking these activities will be deemed to have accepted them whether they have read them or not.

A copy of these rules will be provided to members of the public in attendance at a meeting of the Parish Council, whether they wish to film or not at the meeting. The Chairman will also verbally remind the meeting and all present

of the freedom to record that these rules must be observed when this is planned or taking place.

A person or persons recording the Parish Council meeting are reminded that the “Public Participation” period is not part of the formal meeting and that they should take legal advice for themselves as to their rights to make a recording during that period.

The Chairman of the meeting has absolute discretion to stop or suspend recording if, in his/her opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting or if the person recording is in breach of these rules.

2. Sound issues

All attendees, including members of the press, public, councillors and officers, must ensure that their mobile devices, tablets and other electronic devices are switched onto ‘silent’ mode throughout the meeting. This should include all web applications as well as ringtones.

3. Do people need to ask permission to record Council Meetings?

Although prior permission for filming public meetings is not required, anyone wishing to do so is encouraged to contact the Council in advance, so that the authority can ensure that all the necessary arrangements are in place.

4. Can anyone ask to not be recorded?

Any member of the public has the right not to be recorded. We ensure that agendas for and signage at Council Meetings make it clear that recording can take place – if anyone speaking at the meeting does not wish to be recorded they must let the Chairman of the meeting know.

Any children present at the meeting are not to be filmed unless their parents/guardians have given their consent.

5. Can people tweet or blog a Council meeting?

Yes, people may report meetings via social media of any kind. Therefore, bloggers, tweeters, Facebook and YouTube users and individuals with their own website are able to report meetings.

6. Commentary during the meeting

Any person can provide written commentary during a meeting as well as oral commentary outside or after the meeting. It is **not** permitted for oral commentary to be provided during a meeting as this would be disruptive to the good order of the meeting.

7. Can people be asked to leave a meeting and stop recording?

The majority of the Council's meetings are open to members of the public. However, there may be occasions when recording or reporting is not permitted and members of the Press and Public are asked to leave a meeting under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act – this is when the Council considers matters which are either exempt or of a confidential nature.

Members of the press and public in attendance will be notified at the meeting when this exclusion takes place.

People will also be asked to leave a meeting if they act in a disruptive manner. Examples can include:

- Moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public without the consent of the Chairman
- Excessive noise in recording, setting up or re-siting equipment during the debate/discussion
- Intrusive lighting and use of flash photography
- Asking for people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording

8. Are there any limits about recording a meeting or what people can say in a tweet or recording?

Without undermining the broader transparency of the meeting, the Council requests that the recording must be

- Overt (clearly visible to anyone at the meeting)
- Non-disruptive, that the public area is not filmed

- People respect the wishes of members of the public who have come to speak at a meeting but do not wish to be filmed.

More generally the law of the land applies – including the law of libel and defamation, the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Act and the law on public order offences (see the Crown Prosecution Service guidance on social media). Freedom of speech within the law should also be exercised with personal and social responsibility – showing respect and tolerance towards the views of others.

The Council asks those recording proceedings not to edit the 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 a lack of respect towards those being filmed/recorded.

9. Can people leave recording equipment in a public meeting room and record without being present?

This can take place; however, the Council will require any such recording to stop if at any stage the meeting became a private meeting. The Council, therefore, suggests that people remain in the meeting. The Council takes no responsibility for any unsupervised equipment.

In particular those intending to bring large equipment, or wishing to discuss arrangements, are advised to contact the Council's Clerk on 01754 873394 at least 24 hours before the meeting takes place.

All meetings to which these rules apply are recorded by the Council as a matter of course. Recordings are available to listen to on the Council's website at parishes.lincolnshire.gov.uk and can use or dispose of such material in accordance with its retention and disposal policies

Date of policy adoption 11 September 2017