



**TRING**  
TOWN COUNCIL

*Working Together for Tring*

## **Audio Recording, Filming, Photographing and Reporting of the Proceedings of Council and Committee Meetings Policy**

### **Introduction**

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 permits the audio and visual recordings and photography of Council and Committee meetings by the general public and/or press. This is in addition to the rights of the press and public to attend such meetings.

The regulations also allow anyone at the meeting to use Twitter, blogs, Facebook or similar media to report the meeting.

### **The Council**

- 1) Supports the principles of openness and transparency in its decision-making and will assist members of the public/press to exercise their rights. To this end, whilst no prior permission is required to carry out this activity, it is advisable that any person wishing to photograph, film or audio-record a public meeting let the Council staff know so that all necessary arrangements could be made before the public meeting.
- 2) Stipulates that photographs, films or audio recordings will not be edited before transmission in a way that misrepresents what occurred or ridicules those being photographed, filmed or recorded.
- 3) Will protect the rights of members of the public attending the meeting. At the beginning of a meeting (if the Council has been notified filming photography or recording of the meeting will be taking place) the Chairman will ask if anyone present objects to being filmed, photographed or recorded. Those filming, photographing or recording the meeting are expected to comply with such wishes.
- 4) Will exercise its right to take action against those disrupting the meeting or behaving in an intrusive manner.
- 5) May itself photograph, film, record or broadcast meetings and will retain, use or dispose of such material in accordance with the relevant legislation.

## **The Public/Press:**

1) Are allowed to film or record meetings to which they are permitted in a non-disruptive manner but it would be appreciated if prior notice be given to the Clerk and Chairman of the meeting. It would be helpful if the notification included the following information: a. The meeting the request is for; b. The name, organisation (if applicable) and contact details of the person making the notification; c. what equipment is intended will be used; d. What the photographs or audio/visual recording will be used for and/or where the information is to be published. Meetings or parts of meetings from which the press and public are excluded may not be photographed, filmed or recorded.

2) All recordings must be overt, i.e. visible to anyone at the meeting. Filming or recording equipment cannot be left running in meeting rooms when the public is excluded. The right to film, record, etc. is limited to the duration of the meeting. The recording must not start until the meeting is called to order and must cease when the Chairman closes the meeting. Equipment is not to be left in the meeting room unattended.

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

The law of the land applies – including the law of defamation and the law on public order offences. Freedom of speech within the law should also be exercised with personal and social responsibility – showing respect and tolerance towards the views of others.

4) Filming, recording, etc. will not be permitted if the effect would be to interrupt or disturb the smooth running of the meeting. This means, for example:

- Commentary is not permitted
- Speakers must not be asked to repeat statements for the purpose of recording
- Equipment that needs setting up must be in place when the meeting starts and needs to be in good, proper and safe working order and not prove a hazard or danger to the user or others.
- Excessive noise, intrusive lighting and flash photography are not permitted
- 'Roaming' whilst filming or recording is not permitted - those operating equipment must stay in the designated area

The list above is not exhaustive and if in the Chairman's opinion, a person filming, recording, photographing or broadcasting a meeting is interrupting proceedings or causing a disturbance, that person can be ordered to stop their activity or to leave the meeting

These requirements will be displayed at meeting venues and those undertaking these activities will be deemed to have accepted them whether or not they have read them.

Only the official signed minutes of the meetings will be recognised as the formal, statutory and legally binding record of the meeting.

*Policy reviewed and amended in Council Meeting on 24th January 2024 Review in 2 years time.*