



Northam Town Council

Policy on the filming and recording of Local 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 document sets out the policy and protocol for the filming or recording of the meetings of Northam Town Council.

The right of the Council to exclude the press and public from parts of Council meetings for contractual and staff confidentiality reasons remain unaffected.

The Council is committed to openness and transparency in its decision-making.

Agendas for meetings will make it clear that recording is permitted to take place at the meeting.

Members of the public are permitted to film or record Council meetings, to which they are permitted access, in a non-disruptive manner and the recording must be clearly visible to anyone at the meeting. 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.

While no prior permission is required to carry out this activity, it is advisable that any person wishing to film or audio-record a public meeting let their local government staff know so that all necessary arrangements can be made for the public meeting. This will include completion of a protocol form. This is important because the rules require local government bodies only to provide reasonable facilities for any member of the public to report on meetings.

The Chairman will ask for the recording to stop if the meeting goes into "Part 2" where the public is excluded for confidentiality reasons. In that case, the person filming should leave the room ensuring that all recording equipment is taken out of the room with them.

The use of digital and social media recording tools, for example Twitter, blogging or audio recording be 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, including where he or she has a disability, to follow the debate.

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 other people attending under the Data Protection Act 1998. This will include the particular rights of any children or vulnerable adults attending the meeting.

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 understands that some members of the public attending its meetings, may not wish to be recorded. The Chair of the meeting will ensure, insofar as is possible, that any request not to be recorded, will be respected.

The Council asks that those recording proceedings do not 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 broadcast at its meetings and can retain, use or dispose of such material in accordance with its retention and disposal policies.