



# **Ilminster Town Council**

## **Policy on Filming, Audio Recording, Photographing And Reporting of Council And Committee Meetings**

**Reviewed and Approved By Full Council September 2024**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Ilminster Town Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its decision making. Recording, including filming, audio recording, taking photographs, blogging, tweeting and using other social media is permitted at Council meetings and Committee meetings which are open to the public, subject to this policy.
- 1.2 This policy conforms with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 (Statutory Instrument No 2095) and as such applies only to formal Council and Committee meetings and not to informal meetings or meetings or Advisory and Review Groups which do not have decision making powers.
- 1.3 The Regulations and, thus this policy, apply to Councillors as they do to members of the public.

## 2. Procedure at meetings

- 2.1 Anyone wishing to record is requested to let the Chairman of the meeting know prior to, or at the start of, the meeting and the recording should be overt (i.e. clearly visible to anyone at the meeting) and not disruptive.
- 2.2 Anyone visually recording a meeting is requested to only focus on recording councillors, officers and the public who are directly involved in the conduct of the meeting. Members of the public who attend a meeting merely to observe it are not taking part in the proceedings and the Town Council asks others not to film or photograph them without their consent. Children or vulnerable adults attending a meeting should not be filmed or photographed. Recording a Ward of Court is usually regarded as an actionable Contempt of Court.
- 2.3 Ilminster Town Council supports the right of any member of the public not to be recorded. The council will ensure that signage at council meetings makes it clear that recording can take place – if anyone speaking at the meeting does not wish to be recorded they should let the Chairman of the meeting know.
- 2.4 At the beginning of each meeting, the Chairman will make an announcement that the meeting may be filmed or recorded. Agendas will also carry this message.
- 2.5 Oral commentary in the meeting room during a meeting is not permitted.
- 2.6 Any person wishing to record Council meetings will be responsible for ensuring that any cabling, or electrical equipment they use has been properly tested and installed and adheres to health and safety requirements. The Council will not be held liable for any injuries to the individual or members of the public caused by the recording of its meetings.

- 2.7 The Chairman of the meeting has absolute discretion to request a person to stop or suspend recording if in the Chairman's opinion continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting because:
- recording is disrupting the proceedings of the meeting
  - there is public disturbance or a suspension of the meeting
  - the meeting has resolved to exclude the public for reasons of confidential business
- 2.8 Anyone acting in a disruptive manner may be asked by the Chairman to stop doing so, and if they continue may be asked to leave the meeting. The following are examples of disruptive activity:
- Moving to areas outside those designated for the public without the consent of the Chair
  - Excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during the meeting
  - Intrusive lighting or use of flash photography
  - Asking people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording
- 2.9 The recording should not be edited in any way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or infringement of the Council's values or in a way that ridicules or shows a lack of respect for those in the recording.
- 2.10 Subject to 2.11 below recording equipment may be left running in the meeting room even if the person using it leaves the room.
- 2.11 If the Council resolves to discuss confidential information, and the public are excluded from the meeting, all recording equipment must be removed immediately from the room.
- 2.12 The use of flash photography or additional lighting will not be allowed unless this has been discussed with the Town Clerk and the meeting Chair in advance of the meeting and agreement reached on how it can be done without disrupting proceedings.

### **Guidance Notes**

Please contact the Town Clerk prior to the meeting you wish to record, and especially if the recording you wish to make involves large equipment or special requirements.

Recording and reporting the Council's meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those who undertake the recording and reporting to ensure compliance. This will include the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Act, the Public Order Act Part III (1986 as amended), the Equality Act 2010, the laws of libel and defamation and any subsequent legislation or regulations.

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

To be reviewed September 2027