

Billinge Chapel End Parish Council

Protocol for Filming and Recording of Council Meetings

Introduction

The Parish Council welcomes responsible reporting of its meetings in order to promote transparency. This Protocol provides guidance on the recording and filming of public meetings by the public, the press and the Parish Council itself.

Recording and Filming by the Public and Press

In accordance with legislation, anyone is able to film, photograph and audio record meetings of the Council, providing they do not disturb the conduct of the meeting. The Council will provide reasonable facilities to those wishing to record meetings but asks them to give notice of their intention to record a meeting to the Clerk beforehand.

Any communication method can be used for reporting, but the Council is not required to permit oral reporting or oral commentary on a meeting if the person reporting is present at the meeting.

Filming or recording of the meeting should:

- not interfere with the effective conduct of the meeting;
- not seek to cover sensitive information such as close ups of confidential documents or private notes;
- not obstruct others from observing and participating in the meeting;
- be overt (i.e. clearly visible to anyone at the meeting).

Those wishing to record meetings must not do so in a manner which disrupts the conduct of the meeting, or the Chairman of the meeting may ask them to stop or leave the meeting. Examples of this would include moving around the room, excessive noise in setting up equipment during the meeting, intrusive lighting or asking people to repeat statements for the purpose of the recording.

The public are excluded from some meetings of the Council due to consideration of exempt/confidential items, which are categorised in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The Council will not permit recording of such items.

The public and press are expected to respect the rights of other members of the public in attendance when recording, by focusing solely on those actively taking part in the meeting. Any children or vulnerable adults present should not be filmed without the prior express permission of their parent, guardian or carer.

If a meeting is adjourned by the Chair then any recording or photography should stop at the point at which the meeting is adjourned.

The Council requests anyone recording proceedings to provide a balanced recording and not edit the film or recording in a way which could lead to a misinterpretation of the proceedings or which reflects only a single or particular point of view expressed at the meeting.

It is the responsibility of those undertaking filming, recording and reporting of meetings to ensure compliance with the law, including the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Act and the laws of libel and defamation.

Council Recording

The Parish Council may also film its meetings. The Council summons will announce that meetings are being filmed. The Chair will also announce this at the start of the meeting.

The camera should film the actual Council meeting and should not film members of the public, although they may be heard on the recording. Members of the public can opt out of being recorded.

In the event of any dispute, the Parish Council recording is the only correct record of the meeting.

Recordings of meetings will be kept for the Council's term of office (and for at least 12 months).

Recordings do not replace the formal record of the meeting and the decisions made. The only formal record of any meeting is the minutes and agendas which are retained for a number of years.

Social Media

The use of social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, is permitted for the reporting of the proceedings during public meetings. However, where the Chair considers the use of social media is causing a disruption to the meeting, the person causing the disruption will be requested to stop using the device. If the disruption continues, the Chair may adjourn the meeting and/or ask the person to leave the meeting.