

## **Policy and protocol on recording, photography and use of social media at meetings of the Council**

### **1. Policy statement**

- 1.1 Stinsford Parish Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it carries out its business whenever possible. It will therefore seek to provide reasonable facilities to allow anyone who wishes to do so to record meetings of the Council that are open to the public. Anyone can therefore film, audio-record, take photographs, and use social media such as tweeting and blogging to report the meeting when it is open to the public.
- 1.2 The Council does however expect that anyone filming, audio-recording, taking photographs, or using social media will do so in a way that does not disrupt the meeting or does not involve filming children, vulnerable adults or those members of the public who have actively objected to being filmed. The use of flash photography is not permitted due to it being likely to become a distraction and annoyance.
- 1.3 As oral reporting or commentary on a meeting as it takes place by anyone who is present at the meeting would be disruptive the Council does not allow this. Anyone can however provide an oral report or commentary outside or after the meeting.
- 1.4 The Council does not permit anyone to report on a meeting using methods which can be used without that person being present at the meeting i.e. the use of recording equipment which is switched on and left running unsupervised.
- 1.5 The Council does not permit the use of methods which enable persons not present at the meeting to see or hear the proceedings at the meeting as it takes place e.g. streaming of proceedings in real time over the internet.

### **2. Protocol**

- 2.1 The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidance, particularly, for members of the press and the public on the filming, taking of photographs and the audio recording of any Council meeting which is held in public.
- 2.2 The protocol also refers to the use of “social media” at meetings and makes clear that there are no restrictions placed on anyone at the meeting using Twitter, blogs, Facebook or similar “social media” provided that the Chairman does not consider their actions are disrupting the meeting.
- 2.3 Anyone wanting to film, audio-record, take photographs, or use social media to report the meeting should on arrival at the meeting inform the Clerk before the beginning of the meeting.

- 2.4 The Clerk will then tell the person what facilities the Council can make available for them to use. This will usually mean that they are provided with space to view and hear the meeting, a seat, and a desk. Internet access may also be provided if possible.
- 2.5 At the beginning of the meeting, the Chairman will advise members of the public that other members of the public and the press may be recording the meeting and if they do not wish to be filmed or be photographed, they should make this known. Failure to register an objection will be taken to indicate their consent to being filmed or photographed.
- 2.6 In accordance with Council's Standing Orders, the Chairman may require anyone who is filming, taking of photographs, audio recording or using social media to record the meeting to leave the meeting if they act or if their activities disrupt the meeting. Examples of acts or activities that are likely to disrupt a meeting include:
- (a) moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public without the consent of the Chairman;
  - (b) excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during the debate/discussion;
  - (c) intrusive lighting;
  - (d) asking for people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording; and
  - (e) filming or taking photographs of children, vulnerable adults or members of the public who have actively objected to being filmed or photographed.

### 3. **Further information**

- 3.1 Please contact the Clerk to the Parish Council ([stinsfordclerk@gmail.com](mailto:stinsfordclerk@gmail.com)).
- 3.2 The Government has also published a [plain English guide](#) for the press and public on attending and reporting meetings of local government.