

Guidance on the Recording and Webcasting of meetings

Wiltshire Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its business. The press and members of the public are therefore welcome to film, photograph or record at any meeting that is open to the public and to use social media such as Twitter, Facebook and blogs. The Council has also decided that some public meetings such as Cabinet and Full Council should be the subject of live web transmission ('webcasting'), or recorded for subsequent transmission.

This Protocol aims to assist the conduct of webcast meetings and to ensure that in doing so the Council is compliant with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998. It also provides practical information to assist anyone considering recording meetings and anyone speaking at meetings which may be recorded.

General

A notice will be included on the agenda and also be displayed on the door and inside the meeting room advising everyone who attends that the meeting may be webcast or recorded and that by attending the meeting they are consenting to the broadcast of their image.

The Chairman will make an announcement to attendees at the start of the meeting informing attendees that the meeting may be webcast or recorded and that the Chairman may terminate or suspend the webcast or recording should the Chairman consider this desirable to maintain the proper running of the meeting. Anyone who remains at the meeting after the Chairman's announcement will be deemed to have consented to the broadcast of their image.

Recording must be non intrusive and the Chairman may order the removal of a member of the public from a meeting should that person, having been warned, continue to interrupt proceedings. The Chairman may also call for any part of the meeting room to be cleared in the event of a general disturbance.

PLEASE NOTE: Any person or organisation choosing to record or broadcast any meeting is responsible for any claims or other liability from them so doing and by choosing to record or broadcast proceedings they accept that they are required to indemnify the Council, its members and officers in relation to any such claims or liabilities.

Before the meeting

Anyone intending to record a meeting should contact the Communications Team on 01225 713116 for advice and guidance. Reasonable advance notice will enable practical arrangements to be made and any special requirements to be discussed.

Flash photography, additional lighting or large equipment will *not* be permitted, unless agreed in advance and it can be accommodated without causing disruption to the proceedings. Requests to use equipment of this nature will be subject to consideration of the constraints of the meeting rooms.

During the meeting

Recording of meetings should:

- Not interfere with the effective conduct of the meeting, nor should it be disruptive or distracting. The Chairman has discretion to suspend or stop recording at any time if and to take appropriate action if anyone is, in their opinion, doing so in a disruptive manner.
- Not seek to 'overview' sensitive information such as close ups of confidential papers or private notes
- Not obstruct others from observing and participating in the proceedings.
- Cease immediately if and when the meeting agrees to formally exclude the Press and public due to business of an Exempt or Confidential nature.
- Not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings or the comments made, or that ridicules those being recorded.
- When published or broadcast, recordings should be accompanied by information including when and where the recording was made and the context in which the discussion took place.
- Be overt (i.e. clearly visible to anyone at the meeting).
- Cease, unless continued recording has been explicitly agreed by the Chairman, when the meeting is formally concluded.

It should be noted that councillors will be accessing their meeting documentation ie agenda and reports electronically. This stems from a decision by Council to have paperless meetings in order to reduce the costs associated with hard copies.

Exempt or confidential business

No part of any meeting will be webcast after members have passed a resolution excluding the press and public because there is likely to be disclosure of exempt or confidential information. The Democratic Services officer will ensure that recording of the meeting has ceased and will confirm this to the Chairman before any discussion of exempt or confidential matters is commenced.

Practical advice

1. Speaking at a meeting

Firstly and most importantly remember to speak into the microphone each time to ensure that your words can be clearly heard.

Try to avoid moving unduly whilst speaking and using expansive hand gestures; because the video stream is highly compressed all movement causes temporary pixilation and leads to a diminution of picture quality. In addition the camera operator will struggle to keep a moving person in shot. For the same reason if giving a presentation please try to stand in the same area rather than walking around the room.

When other people near you are speaking please bear in mind that you may still be on camera. Bear in mind that even when there is no audience in the room members of the public are nonetheless watching the meeting.

2. Microphone noise

Microphone noise is an artificial sound that is introduced when an object touches the microphone; speakers should not tap pencils and rings against microphones or touch the cable. When speaking, do not place objects in-between yourself and the microphone as this may distort what you are saying.

3. Clothing

It is advisable to avoid bright colours which tend to cause exposure problems when webcast.

Stripes and checked clothes are best avoided as they can cause a strobe effect when webcast, especially when the subject is moving.