

FRPC Parish Council for The Farnhams

Protocol on recording, photography and use of social media at meetings

Adopted at meeting of 25th January 2016

1 Introduction

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 allow any member of the public to take photographs, film or audio record the proceedings at meetings held in public and to report them using social media.

The Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts all its decision making at meetings which are held in public. The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidance for members of the public and representatives of the press about taking photographs and audio/visual recording of any council meeting which is held in public. It also covers blogging tweeting and use of other social media tools. 2

2 General Principle

There is a general presumption in favour of allowing the photographing and audio/visual recording of Council meetings which the press and public are entitled to attend including the use of social media. However the proceedings of that meeting must not be disrupted by the use of media tools and must not inhibit community involvement in the proceedings

3 Filming and Audio Recording

Audio and Visual recordings of meetings by representatives of the media and also by members of the public using small media tools are permitted. Anyone wishing to film or audio record a meeting is asked to inform the Clerk in advance of the meeting. If the equipment to be used is larger than a hand held device this advance notice should include details of that equipment so adequate arrangements can be made.

4 Obligations and limitations

Anyone wishing to photograph and / or audio or visually record a meeting must agree to the following:-

4.1 Any photography or audio or visual recording must take place from fixed positions in the meeting room. Any alternative location must be agreed with the Chairman of the meeting in liaison with the Clerk.

4.2 Large equipment must be set up before the meeting starts.

4.3 The use of flash photography or additional lighting will only be permitted if in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting it does not disrupt the proceedings of the meeting.

4.4 People seated in the public seating area should not be photographed filmed or recorded without the consent of the individuals concerned. This also applies to those individuals who ask public questions, present a petition or make representations at a council meeting open to the public and who are not seated in the public seating area.

4.5 If members of the public address a meeting that is being filmed or audio – recorded such as objectors to a planning or license application they will be asked if they permit to being filmed or audio- recorded. If they do not the operator will be asked to stop whilst that member of the public is speaking.

4.6 If the chairman of the meeting feels that any photography, audio or visual recording is disrupting the meeting in any way or any pre-meeting agreement has been breached then the operator of the equipment will be required to stop immediately. Examples of disruption include moving outside the designated area, excessive noise, intrusive lighting, a running commentary by the operator or other interruptions and continuing to film when a member of the public addressing the meeting has asked not to be filmed or recorded.

4.7 If during the meeting the press and public are asked to leave a meeting because there are private items of business on the agenda then all rights to record the meeting are removed. The operator of the equipment will be required to stop recording and / or filming and must not leave filming or recording devices in the meeting room.

4.8 If a meeting is adjourned by the Chairman then the operator of the equipment should stop any recording or photography at the point at which the meeting is adjourned.

4.9 To Comply with any request made by the Chairman regarding respecting the public rights to privacy.

4.10 Use must not be made of an image or recording of a member of the public if consent is refused by that person.

4.11 Photographs audio and visual recordings should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing the views recorded in a way that may ridicule or show lack of respect

5 Consequences of non compliance

Failure to comply with this protocol may lead to the refusal of any future requests to photograph or audio or visually record any future Council meetings.

6 Notices

If a request has been received to take photographs or to audio or visually record a particular meeting, notices to this effect will be displayed in the relevant meeting room. The Chairman of the meeting will also make an announcement that the meeting will be photographed and /or recorded or filmed.

The Council may on occasion audio record meetings for minuting purposes only. The relevant Chairman will make an announcement to that effect and any recordings will not be made available to anyone outside the Council and destroyed once the relevant minutes are approved.

7 Procedure prior to the meeting for those wishing to film or record a meeting

Requests to take photographs or to audio or visually record meetings open to the public either by members of the public or by the media should wherever possible be made to the Clerk at least two working days before the meeting.

The request should include the following information:-

7.1 Which meeting the request refers to

7.2 The name organisation and contact details of the person making the request

7.3 What equipment it is intended will be used (eg camera/audio recorder/ video camera)

7.4 What the photographs or audio/visual recording will be used for and/ or where the information is to be published

8 Social media

There are no restrictions placed on anyone at the meeting using twitter blogs Facebook or similar social media provided that the Chairman of the meeting does not consider their actions are disrupting the proceedings of the meeting.

If the chairman of the meeting feels the use of social media is at the time disrupting the proceedings the councillor, member of the public or media representative may be required to stop and if they fail to do so will be asked to leave the meeting or make other appropriate arrangements for the meeting to continue without disruption.

At the start of the meeting the Chairman of the meeting may request that all mobile phones are set to silent to ensure the meeting is not disturbed.

Protocol ends