

PEASEDOWN ST. JOHN PARISH COUNCIL FILMING AND RECORDING OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Written: November 2015 (based on information from ALCA)

Adopted: Policy & Personnel Committee on 2nd February 2016 / Ratified at Full Council on 15th March 2016

Last Reviewed:

The right to record, film and to broadcast meetings of Local Councils, committees and sub committees was established following the Local Government Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The "Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014" became active legislation in August 2014. This is in addition to the rights of the press and public to attend such meetings.

PROTOCOL

This document sets out the protocol for the filming of recording the meetings of Peasedown St. John Parish Council (this includes all Full Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings).

The right of the council to exclude the press and public from parts of Council meetings for contractual and staff confidentially reasons remains unaffected.

Members of the public are permitted to film or record Council meetings, to which they are permitted access, in a non-disruptive manner. The Chair of the meeting has the authority to stop a meeting and take appropriate action if any person contravenes these principles or is deemed to be recording in a disruptive manner.

The use of digital and social media recording tools, for example Twitter, blogging or audio recording is allowed as long as it is carried out in a non-disruptive way and only to the extent that it does not interfere with any person's ability, even where he or she has a disability, to follow the debate.

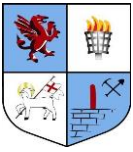
While those attending meetings are deemed to have consented to the filming, recording or broadcasting of meetings, those exercising the rights to film, record and broadcast must respect the rights of other people attending, under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Any person or organisation choosing to film, record or broadcast a meeting of the Council or a committee is responsible for any claims or other liability from them so doing.

The council asks that those recording proceedings do not edit the film or recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings, or infringe the core values of the Council. This includes refraining from editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule, or show lack of respect towards those being filmed or recorded.

The council will display requirements as to filming, recording and broadcasting at its meeting venues and those undertaking these activities will be deemed to have accepted them, whether they have read them or not.

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



INFORMATION TO BE DISPLAYED AT MEETINGS

FILMING AND RECORDING OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

The agenda of every council meeting states the following:

Please be aware that Parish Council meetings may be recorded, subject to the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014. We kindly ask that anybody intending to record the meeting please inform the Chair or Clerk beforehand in order that any necessary arrangements can be made.

The Chair will also verbally announce this at the beginning of every meeting. In order to satisfy the protection of children, the vulnerable and other members of the public who actively object to being filmed, there will be an area of the room allocated for those individuals who intend to record/film and an area for those who do not wish to be filmed.

Useful Questions and Answers

Can I film or audio-record the meeting?

Yes, councils and other local government bodies are required to allow any member of the public to take photographs, film and audio-record the proceedings, and report on all public meetings. While no prior permission is required to carry out this activity, it is advisable that any person wishing to film or audio-record a public meeting let their local government staff know so that all necessary arrangements can be made for the public meeting. This is important because the rules require local government bodies only to provide reasonable facilities for any member of the public to report on meetings.

Do I need to have advance permission to record the meeting?

No, but we would encourage people to contact staff in advance if they want to film or record.

Are there any limits to what I can say in a tweet or video I publish?

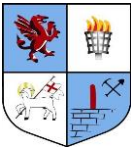
The law of the land applies – including the law of defamation and the law on public order offences (see the Crown Prosecution Service guidance on social media). Freedom of speech within the law should also be exercised with personal and social responsibility – showing respect and tolerance towards the views of others.

Will I be able to provide commentary during the meeting?

Any person can provide written commentary during a meeting, as well as oral commentary outside or after the meeting. The new rules do not permit oral commentary to be provided during a meeting as this would be disruptive to the good order of the meeting.

Can I be asked to leave a meeting because I'm taking photographs, filming or audio-recording the meeting or using social media?

Generally, people attending public meetings must be readily able to film, audio-record, take photographs or use social media. Councils and other local government bodies must take steps to ensure this is the case. However, those undertaking these activities must not act in a disruptive manner, which could result in being excluded from the meeting.



PEASEDOWN ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

Beacon Hall, French Close, Peasedown St John, Bath BA2 8SN
Tel: 01761 433686 E-mail: clerk@peasedownstjohnparishcouncil.gov.uk
www.peasedownstjohnparishcouncil.gov.uk

What is disruptive behaviour?

Essentially, this could be any action or activity which disrupts the conduct of meetings or impedes other members of the public being able to see, hear or film etc. the proceedings.

Examples can include:

- moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public without the consent of the Chairman,
- excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during the debate/discussion,
- intrusive lighting and use of flash photography; and
- asking for people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording.

You may be excluded from a meeting if you act in a disruptive manner.

Further details can be found in the following Department for Communities and Local Government publication (August 2014):

Open and accountable local government – A guide for the press and public on attending and reporting meetings of local government

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/343182/140812_Openness_Guide.pdf