

Recording, Filming, Photographing and Reporting of Council Meetings Policy

1. Purpose

To enable openness and public reporting while ensuring meetings run safely and without disruption, and that any recording is handled in line with the law (including data-protection requirements). This policy implements the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 while setting reasonable operational arrangements for Bethersden Parish Council.

2. Legal framework (key references)

- Right to report/record public meetings: Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 (and underlying Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 / Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014).
- Data protection and storage of recordings: UK GDPR / Data Protection Act 2018 obligations and ICO guidance on video surveillance / handling recorded images.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all meetings of Bethersden Parish Council, its committees, sub-committees and joint bodies that are open to the public. It does not permit recording of parts of meetings from which the public have been lawfully excluded.

4. Principles

- Openness: members of the public and press may film, photograph, audio-record and report proceedings that are in public session.
- Non-disruption: recording must not interrupt or inhibit the proper conduct of the meeting. The Chair will manage any conflict between reporting and the effective conduct of business.
- Compliance: anyone recording is responsible for complying with other relevant law (data protection, defamation, contempt, privacy). The Council will treat any recordings it makes as personal data and process them in line with ICO guidance.

5. Notification and equipment setup

- Notification: Bethersden Parish Council requests that anyone intending to record a meeting using equipment beyond a personal handheld smartphone/tablet notifies the Clerk at least one working day (24 hours) before the meeting.
- Equipment set-up: All recording equipment must be set up, tested and in its final position before the Chair calls the meeting to order. Set-up may only occur in designated areas agreed with the Clerk to avoid obstruction of exits, cables across walkways or health & safety hazards. Roaming with equipment during the meeting is not permitted. If urgent/impromptu handheld recording occurs without notice it must still comply with the non-disruption rules.

6. Chair and Clerk responsibilities

- Clerk: to receive notifications, and co-ordinate health & safety requirements.
- Chair: at the start of the meeting announce when recording is taking place and remind attendees of this policy. To take immediate action to stop or restrict recording that is

disrupting the meeting. The Chair may require a recorder to stop filming or to leave if they refuse reasonable direction.

7. Confidential / excluded business

Recording, filming or reporting is prohibited during any part of a meeting from which the public have been lawfully excluded.

8. Storage, retention and access (Council recordings)

Where the Council itself records meetings, recordings will be stored securely, access limited, and retained only for as long as is necessary, unless retained longer for complaint, legal or audit reasons. Retention and security shall follow ICO guidance. Requests to access Council-held recordings will be dealt with under data-protection/s. access rules.

9. Publication and use by third parties

Recorders are responsible for their own published material (social media, websites, broadcast). The Council is not responsible for third-party edits or use of recordings. If publication raises legal concerns (e.g., defamation, sensitive personal data), the Council may seek legal advice.

10. Publication of policy & agenda notice

This policy will be published on the Council website and a short notice will be included on all meeting agendas: "Recording of this meeting may take place. Anyone intending to use equipment other than a personal handheld device should notify the Clerk at least one working day in advance and must set up equipment before the meeting starts."

11. Enforcement and complaints

Concerns about non-compliance should be raised with the Clerk or Chair. The Council may ask a recorder to stop, move or leave; persistent refusal may lead to removal and further action. Appeals or complaints follow the Council's complaints procedure.