

Lacock Parish Council
Reporting Meetings - Recording, Photography and use of Social Media
Agreed on 10/07/2017



A. Protocol and Guidance

This guidance applies to any council and committee meetings that are open to the public.

1. Any person may report on public meetings subject to the limited exceptions outlined below. The term 'reporting' includes the taking of photographs, filming, audio recording, tweeting, blogging or generally reporting on proceedings.
2. Those wishing to undertake any reporting of meetings are requested to make this known to the Clerk immediately prior to the commencement of the meeting.
3. The Chair of the meeting shall advise everyone that the meeting is being reported.
4. The proceedings of the meeting must not be disrupted by the use of any equipment or by the manner in which the reporting is undertaken.
5. It is also important that reporting does not inhibit public involvement.

B. Guidelines for Reporting

Any person wishing to report a public meeting should note that:

1. Any photography or visual recording must take place from a fixed position in the meeting room approved by the Chair so as to minimise disruption to the proceedings. Equipment must be setup before the meeting commences.
2. The use of flash photography, additional lighting, sound booms or other equipment will not be allowed.
3. If the Chair feels that any photography, audio or visual recording is disrupting the meeting in anyway then the operator of the equipment will be required to stop reporting.
4. If during the meeting a motion is passed to exclude the press and public, because

confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, then all rights to report the meeting cease and the operator of the equipment will be required to stop reporting and leave the meetings taking all reporting equipment with them.

5. If a meeting for which agreement is given to report is adjourned by the Chair then any reporting should stop at the point at which the meeting is adjourned.
6. Members of the public should not be photographed, filmed or recorded without their consent. A record of those consenting (including names) shall be recorded by the Parish Clerk prior to any photography, filming or recording taking place.
7. 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 recording in a way that may cause ridicule or show a lack of respect.
8. Any reporting of the public meeting will be noted in the minutes of the meeting.
9. Secretly using mobiles or similar devices to record council proceedings, without the Chair's permission, is not allowed and will be deemed to be an intrusion of privacy, Anyone such secret recordings will be inadmissible at any future council meetings/discussions.
10. The Council takes no responsibility for the loss of or damage to any equipment being used for reporting howsoever caused.
11. Any person or organization choosing to film, record or broadcast any meeting of the council is responsible for any claims or other liability resulting from any material they choose to publish

C. Social Media.

1. Social Media – there are no restrictions placed on anyone at the meeting using Twitter, blogs, Facebook or similar “social media” provided that the Chair does not consider their actions are disrupting the proceedings of the meeting.
2. If the Chair feels the use of social media is at the time disrupting the proceedings the person may be required to stop.

D. Disruptive behaviour when reporting or using Social Media.

This could be any action or activity which disrupts the proper conduct of meetings. Examples could include:

1. Moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public or press without the consent of the Chair,
2. Excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during the debate/discussion,
3. Asking for people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording.

If the person continues reporting or using Social Media after having being requested to desist then the Chair will ask the person to leave the meeting. If the person refuses to leave then the Chair may adjourn the meeting or make other appropriate arrangements for the meeting to continue without disruption.

Anyone asked to leave a meeting because they have refused to comply with the Chair's requests may be refused permission to report or use Social Media at future Council meetings that are open to the public.

E. Limits to what can be said in a tweet or video or report to be published.

The law of the land applies including the law of defamation and the law on public order offences. Freedom of speech within the law should be exercised with personal and social responsibility, showing respect and tolerance towards the views of others.

F. Can a commentary be provided during a meeting?

Any person can provide written commentary during a meeting, as well as oral commentary outside or after the meeting.

Oral commentary during a meeting is not permitted as this would be disruptive to the good order of the meeting.

A copy of this document may be downloaded from the Policies section of the Parish council's web site: <https://www.lacockparishcouncil.gov.uk/>

For approval and adoption at the Annual Parish Council Meeting each year as an annex to the Standing Orders.

* Agreed by the Parish Council on 10/07 2017 for their approval and included in the minutes of the Parish Council meeting when this matter was considered.