

Crowle & Ealand Town Council (DRAFT)

Recording a Town Council Meeting Policy



Adopted: 12th September 2023

Minute Reference: F/071/23

Review: September 2024

Introduction

The right to record, film and to broadcast meetings of the Council meeting is established under the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014. This is in addition to the rights of the press and public to attend such meetings.

Crowle & Ealand Town Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its decision making. For the purpose of this policy the term “record” means any form of audio, visual or electronic recording. Those who attend a public meeting should expect to be filmed. This includes councillors, council officers and members of the public.

The rules that Crowle & Ealand Town Council will apply are:

1. The Council will display requirements as to filming, recording and broadcasting at its meetings and on its website and those undertaking these activities will be deemed to have accepted them whether they have read them or not.
2. A copy of these rules will be provided to members of the public in attendance at a meeting of the Council meeting. The Chairman may also verbally remind the meeting and all present of the freedom to record but that these rules are in place to enable any type of recording to take place with minimal disruption to the council meeting.
3. Any person wishing to record a meeting in any format is encouraged to contact the Clerk prior to the start of the meeting. The Clerk’s details are set out on website and the agenda of the meeting. Discussing requirements with the clerk beforehand will help to ensure that the council provides reasonable facilities to meet the needs of the person that is recording.
4. Any person wishing to record that may require connection to the council mains power source must provide a valid PAT Testing Certificate prior to the start of the meeting. Failure to provide a certificate will result in the Council declining connection permission.
5. The person making the recording may not move around or disrupt the meeting by doing so.
6. The use of lighting for filming/flash photography will not be permitted.
7. Where the press and public are excluded from a meeting or part of a meeting owing to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, recording of that meeting or that part of the meeting will not be permitted.
8. The specific filming of children or young people under the age of 18 who are present cannot take place unless their parents/guardians have given their written consent. This provision also applies to vulnerable adults whereby the consent of a responsible adult is required, i.e. a medical professional, carer or legal guardian. Where the permission is given, filming of these people can take place.
9. The council requires that all recording is overt (i.e. clearly visible to anyone at the meeting).
10. The use of digital and social media recording tools, for example Twitter, blogging or audio recording are allowed as long as this type of recording is carried out in a non-disruptive way and only to the extent that it does not interfere with the ability of any person present to follow the debate.

11. A person or persons making a recording has no right to interrupt a Council meeting by asking questions or making comments for the purpose of the recording. The person recording has no right to ask councillors, officers or any members of the public who have been given permission to contribute orally to the meeting to repeat a statement for the purposes of the recording.
12. The Chairman of the meeting has absolute discretion to stop or suspend recording if, in his/her reasonable opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting or if the person recording is in breach of these rules.
13. Persons who are recording will not to leave their equipment unattended where possible, and are responsible for their equipment at all times
14. The recording and reporting on meetings of the Council is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those doing the recording and reporting to ensure compliance. This will include the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Act and the laws of libel and defamation.
15. The recording will not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or infringement of the Council's values or in a way that ridicules or shows a lack of respect for those in the recording. The Council would expect any recording in breach of these rules to be removed from public view. The Council will have no liability for material published by any other person unless it is itself undertaking the publication through its offices. Should anyone be found to have edited footage of a council meeting in anyway all evidence will be forward to the police for onward investigation and potential legal action
16. The Council may itself photograph, film, record or broadcast meetings and can retain, use or dispose of such material in accordance with its retention and disposal policies. Where the council proposes to record its own meetings it will be bound by this policy.
17. The Council is not liable for the actions of any person making a recording at a council meeting which identifies a member of the public or for any publication of that recording.
18. The minutes of a council meeting remain the statutory and legally binding formal record of Council decisions.