

PROTOCOL FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WISHING TO FILM AND REPORT ON MEETINGS OF ALDWINCLE PARISH COUNCIL

Introduction

Aldwincle Parish Council is committed to openness and transparency in the way it conducts decision-making at all council meetings held in public. This Protocol is to provide guidance to members of the press and public wishing to film, photograph, or record a meeting or report on it through social media.

Members of the press and public are entitled to report on meetings of the Council except in circumstances where they have been excluded in accordance with national rules. These restrictions protect confidential information.

Reporting for the purpose of this Protocol means:

- Filming, photographing or making an audio recording of proceedings at a meeting;
- Using any other means for enabling people not at the meeting to see or hear proceedings at the meeting as it takes place or later; or
- Reporting or providing commentary on proceedings at the meeting, orally or in writing, so that the report or commentary is publicly available as the meeting takes place or later;
- Reporting of meetings via social media of any kind including blogging, and tweeting, Facebook and YouTube.

Before the Meeting

Anyone intending to report on a meeting is asked to notify the Clerk and Chair in advance. Your co-operation in letting us know how you intend to report will allow the Council to make the necessary arrangements to provide you with reasonable facilities. Please contact the Clerk by phone or by email at least two working days before the meeting. You do not need permission to report on a meeting; however, the necessary facilities may not be available if you do not let us know in advance.

The Council will seek to provide the following facilities:

- Space to hear and view the meeting
- Seats
- A desk will be provided for the press. Members of the public requiring a desk should inform the Clerk in advance of the meeting. Every effort will be made to accommodate the request.
- Wi-Fi facilities are not available.

The Council is not able to provide the following facilities:

- Access to electricity points
- Equipment for the purpose of reporting on the meeting
- Technical IT assistance

During the Meeting

The Chair will announce at the commencement of the meeting that the proceedings are to be filmed or recorded and ask members of the public present to indicate if they object to being filmed or recorded.

Anyone filming, recording or photographing a meeting, must comply with any requests made by the Chair relating to filming, recording or photographing, either prior to or during the meeting itself.

Filming or photography must take place from an area allocated for those purposes within the meeting room.

If you intend to bring large equipment or have special requirements you are advised to contact the Clerk in advance of the meeting. The use of flash photography or additional lighting will not be permitted to ensure that the meeting will not be disrupted.

Members of the public attending the meetings should not be photographed, filmed or recorded without the consent of the individuals concerned. This also applies to those individuals who may ask a public question, present a petition or make a representation under the Council's Right to Speak Policy. Please note the Council cannot guarantee that members of the public will not be filmed, recorded or photographed.

Members of the public or the press are not allowed to make an oral commentary on the meeting as it takes place.

All mobile phones and other means of electronic communication must be switched to silent.

If you conduct reporting activities, including use of Social Media, in a disruptive manner you may be directed by the Chair to cease recording or excluded from the meeting. Disruptive behaviour could be any action or activity which disrupts the conduct of the meeting. This may include:

- Excessive noise in recording, setting up or re-siting of equipment during the meeting
- Intrusive lighting and use of flash photography
- Asking people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording
- Filming or recording members of the public without their consent

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 reporting must stop and members of the press and public must leave the room. The Council reserves the right to refuse access and/or recording rights in the event of disruptive or inappropriate behaviour.

After the Meeting

Anyone who films, records or photographs a meeting of the Council and publishes the film, recording or report must respect the law. They will be responsible for any allegations of breaches of the law which may result from their use of recorded material and any subsequent report. This will include the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Act and the laws of libel and defamation.

The proper record of the meeting is the formal minutes for that relevant meeting, and nothing else.

Recording Meetings by the Parish Council

Aldwinckle Parish Council reserves the right to record meetings in whole or part at its own discretion.

For more information on legal guidance relating to social media, visit the Crown Prosecution Service at
http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/a_to_c/communications_sent_via_social_media/