

HILPERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Policy and protocol on recording, photography and use of social media at meetings of Hilperton Parish Council

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Hilperton Parish Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it carries out its business. It will therefore seek to provide reasonable facilities to anyone who wishes to record meetings of the Parish Council and its committees that are open to the public. Anyone can therefore film, audio-record, take photographs and use social media such as tweeting and blogging to report the meeting when it is open to the public.
- 1.2 The Parish Council does, however, expect that anyone filming, audio-recording, taking photographs or using social media will do so in a way that does not disrupt the meeting or involve filming those members of the public who have actively objected to being filmed. The use of flash photography is not permitted, due to it being likely to become a distraction and annoyance.
- 1.3 As oral reporting or commentary on a meeting as it takes place by anyone who is present at the meeting would be disruptive, the Parish Council does not allow this. Anyone may, however, provide an oral report or commentary outside or after the meeting.
- 1.4 For Health and Safety and security reasons, the Parish Council does not permit anyone to report on a meeting using methods which can be used without that person being present at the meeting.

2. Protocol

- 2.1 The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidance, particularly, for members of the press and the public on the filming, taking of photographs and the audio-recording of any Parish Council meeting which is held in public.
- 2.2 The protocol also refers to the use of 'social media' at meetings and makes clear that there are no restrictions placed on anyone at the meeting using Twitter, blogs, Facebook or similar 'social media', provided that the Chairman does not consider their actions are disrupting the meeting.
- 2.3 The Parish Council will not vet those who want to film, audio-record, take photographs or use social media to report the meeting. However, it would help the Parish Council in providing facilities if anyone wanting to film, audio-record, take photographs or use social media to report the meeting, notify the Clerk of their intention not later than 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting.
- 2.4 Irrespective of whether the Clerk has been notified, anyone wanting to film, audio-record, take photographs or use social media to report the meeting is asked, on arrival at the meeting, to inform the Clerk.
- 2.5 The Clerk can then tell the person what facilities the Parish Council can make available for them to use. This will usually mean that they are provided with a designated space to view and hear the meeting, and a seat where available.
- 2.6 If notification has been received in accordance with protocol 2.3 to take photographs or to audio or visually record a particular meeting, notices to this effect will be prominently displayed at the meeting advising members of the public that other members of the public and the press may be recording the meeting. If they do not wish to be filmed or photographed, they should inform the Clerk before the meeting begins. Failure to register an objection before the meeting begins will be taken to indicate their consent to

being filmed or photographed. The Clerk will advise those wanting to film or take photographs of any objections.

- 2.7 The filming, recording, photographing or other reporting of children ('children' being persons under the age of eighteen) and the vulnerable will only be permitted with the consent of a responsible adult which - in the case of a vulnerable adult - is a medical professional, the carer or legal guardian and, in the case of a child, is the parent, legal guardian or teacher. At the start of the meeting, the Chairman will remind those who wish to film, audio-record, photograph or otherwise report on the proceedings of a meeting about the restrictions which apply in respect of a vulnerable adult or child.
- 2.8 Any person or organisation choosing to film, audio-record, take photographs or use social media is responsible for any claims or other liability from their so doing, and it is their responsibility to ensure compliance with the law; this will include the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Act and the laws of Libel and Defamation. The Parish Council reserves the right to initiate legal procedures in appropriate circumstances.
- 2.9 The Parish Council asks those filming, audio-recording, taking photographs or using social media not to edit their material in a way which could lead to misrepresentation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing any material in a way that may ridicule or show lack of respect towards those who have been recorded.
- 2.10 In accordance with the Parish Council's Standing Orders, the Chairman may require anyone who is filming, taking photographs, audio recording or using social media to record the meeting to leave the meeting if their activities disrupt the meeting. Examples of acts or activities that are likely to disrupt a meeting include:-
 - a) moving to areas outside the area designated for the public without the consent of the Chairman.
 - b) excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during the debate/discussion.
 - c) intrusive lighting or use of flash photography.
 - d) asking people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording; and
 - e) filming or taking photographs of members of the public who have actively objected to being filmed or photographed.

3. Monitoring

Monitoring of this protocol will be carried out periodically.

October, 2015

