

# Yarnscombe Parish Council

## Press and Media Communications Policy



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## Document History

Version	Date	Author	Reason for Change
1.0	20/05/2019	Richard Pengilley	First formal issue (Conversion from “Protocol for Recording of Meetings”).
1.1	07/09/2020	Richard Pengilley	Updated following annual review to include “remote” meetings.
1.2	31/10/2021	Richard Pengilley	Clarified “remote” meetings and updated Data Protection Act date.
1.2	25/06/2023	Richard Pengilley	No change following annual review.

### Notes

1. Use of the word “Chairman” (and similar) in this document should not be taken to assume that women are precluded from taking such a role.

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Rights for Recording and Broadcasting</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Rights and Requirements of Council</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Consent and Respect for Rights</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Document Availability and Acceptance</b>	<b>5</b>

## 1 Introduction

This document sets out the policy of Yarnscombe Parish Council (“the Council”) regarding communications with the press and media. It replaces the previous “Protocol for Recording of Meetings”.

## 2 Rights for Recording and Broadcasting

The right to record, to film (including digital video) and to broadcast meetings of Local Councils, committees and subcommittees was established following the Local Government Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

On 6 August 2014, the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (“the 1960 Act”) was amended by the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 (“the 2014 Regulations”). Prior to amendment of the 1960 Act, the press and public had a right to attend meetings of Local Councils, committees and subcommittees. The amended 1960 Act provides, in addition, that a person may not orally report or comment about a meeting as it takes place if he or she is present at the meeting of a parish council or its committees but otherwise may:

- a) film, photograph or make an audio recording of a meeting;
- b) use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later;
- c) report or comment on the proceedings in writing during or after a meeting or orally report or comment after the meeting.

The use of digital and social media recording tools, for example Twitter, blogging, or audio and/or video recording, is allowed as long as it is carried out in a non-disruptive way and only to the extent that it does not interfere with any person’s ability, including where he or she has a disability, to follow the debate.

While no prior permission is required to carry out these activities, it is advisable that any person wishing to film or to audio-record a public meeting let the Council Chairman or Clerk know so that all necessary arrangements can be made for the public meeting. This includes meetings conducted, simultaneously or entirely, remotely over the Internet. This is important because the rules require local government bodies only to provide reasonable facilities for any member of the public to report on meetings.

## 3 Rights and Requirements of Council

The right of the Council to exclude the press and public from parts of Council meetings for contractual and staff confidentiality reasons remains unaffected. Otherwise, members of the public are permitted to film or record Council meetings, to which they are permitted access, in a non-disruptive manner. The Chairman of the meeting has the authority to stop a meeting and to take appropriate action if any person contravenes these principles or is deemed to be recording in a disruptive manner. This includes the authority to eject a person from a meeting conducted remotely over the Internet.

The Council may itself photograph, film, record or broadcast at its meetings and can retain, use or dispose of such material as it wishes.

There is no legal requirement for councils to stream “live” their meetings over the Internet, and the Council has no intention to do so regularly, but where the Council does stream any of its public meetings, it will, as a matter of good practice, notify the public.

In accordance with the Council’s Standing Orders, councillors must not, in their official capacity, provide oral or written statements or written articles to the press or other media.

## **4 Consent and Respect for Rights**

While those attending meetings are deemed to have consented to the filming, recording or broadcasting of meetings, those exercising the rights to film, record and broadcast must respect the rights under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 of other people attending. This will include the particular rights of any children or vulnerable adults attending the meeting. Individual councillors have the right to request not to be filmed, although such withdrawal is not normally to be encouraged.

The Council asks those recording proceedings not to edit the film or recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings, or infringe the core values of the Council. This includes refraining from editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule or show lack of respect towards those being filmed or recorded.

## **5 Responsibilities**

Any person or organisation choosing to film, record or broadcast a meeting of the Council or a committee is responsible for any claims or other liability from their so doing.

## **6 Document Availability and Acceptance**

The Council will have this document available at its meeting venues and those undertaking filming, recording or broadcasting activities will be deemed to have accepted its contents whether or not they have read the document.