WOLLASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Filming, Audio-recording, Photographing and Reporting of Council and Committee Meetings Policy

1. The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 (2014 SI No. 2095), which came into force on 6 August 2014, require Parish Councils to allow any person to film, audio-record or take photographs of, and to report on, the proceedings of any part of a meeting which the public are entitled to attend by law.
2. The Regulations do not require Parish Councils to allow filming of any part of a meeting where the public are excluded by reason of the confidential nature of the business or where publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest. Exclusion of the public must be authorised by a resolution of the meeting and the reason for exclusion must be stated.
3. The Regulations apply only to formal, decision-making meetings of the Council, a committee or a sub-committee and not to informal meetings or meetings of a working party without decision-making powers.
4. The Department for Communities & Local Government has published a 'plain English' guide to the Regulations (available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-and-accountable-local-government-plain-english-guide). Wollaston Parish Council's policy is based on this guide.
5. The Parish Council has no objection to quiet and inconspicuous filming, photography, tweeting and blogging using a hand-held device such as a mobile phone or tablet. Oral commentary in the meeting room during a meeting is not permitted by the Regulations and may be disruptive.
6. The Parish Council asks anyone proposing to use a device larger than a mobile phone or tablet to notify the Clerk prior to the start of the meeting so that proper facilities can, if possible, be provided.
7. The Regulations apply to Councillors as they do to members of the public but Councillors will wish to ensure that they are not distracted from the business of the meeting.
8. Members of the public who attend a meeting merely to observe it are not taking part in the proceedings and the Parish Council asks others not to film or photograph them without their consent. Children or vulnerable adults attending a meeting should not be filmed or photographed.
9. Anyone acting in a disruptive manner may be asked by the Chair to stop doing so and if they continue they may be asked to leave the meeting. The DCLG guide gives the following examples of disruptive behaviour:
    - Moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public without the consent of the Chair.
    - Excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during the meeting.

- Asking people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording.

10. Recording equipment may be left running in the meeting room even if the person using it leaves the room. However, it may not be left running for a part of a meeting where the public are excluded and an Officer of the Council may stop the recording or switch off the equipment if this happens.
11. Those filming meetings are reminded that requirements of general law apply to their activities, for example:
    - The requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 may apply to personal information about living individuals including visual images.
    - There may be legal liability for defamatory or offensive statements, including statements made by people being filmed that are 'published' by the person filming.
12. The Parish Council cannot advise on general law and accepts no liability for any material created by those filming a meeting.

Signed ……

Chair, Wollaston Parish Council

Date:……

Reviewed March 2026

Next Review March 2028