

**Brewood and Coven Parish Council  
with Bishop's Wood and Coven Heath**

**Recording of Parish Council Meetings by a Member of the Public Protocol**

Brewood and Coven Parish Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its business. The press and members of the public are therefore welcome to record\* any public meetings. This Protocol provides practical information to assist anyone considering recording meetings.

**Before the Meeting**

While it is not a requirement, it would be helpful to the Council and other members of the public who might be in attendance if you were able to give 24 hours' notice of your intention to record a meeting. Please feel free to contact the Clerk to clarify any details of the recording arrangements that you might want to put in place. Please be aware that space in the Council Chamber is quite limited and this may preclude the use of some types of equipment.

**General**

The Chairman of the meeting or the relevant Members will be informed of any intention to record and they will make an announcement to attendees before the start of the meeting informing attendees that the meeting may be recorded.

Notice of recording of meetings in any format shall be displayed in and outside the place of meeting and meeting agendas will include the following:

'Please be advised that this meeting is being recorded by the Parish Council. The Parish Council will record this meeting except when the public and press are lawfully excluded.'

The Council, members of the public and the press may record meetings when the public and the press are not lawfully excluded. Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being recorded should advise the Chairman or the Clerk in the case of a virtual meeting who will instruct that they are not included in the recording.

Members of the public speaking at, or attending, the meeting (including asking questions or presenting petitions) should not be recorded by another member of the public if they have indicated that they do not wish to be included.

Recording and reporting the Council's meetings 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.

Any children or young people under the age of 18 who are present at the meeting are not to be recorded 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 for recording, i.e. a medical professional, carer or legal guardian.

All those recording a meeting are requested to focus only on recording councillors, officers and those members of the public who have not requested anonymity or have not been identified as under the age of 18 or a vulnerable adult.

Any person or organisation choosing to record a public meeting of the Parish Council is responsible for any claims or other liability resulting from them so doing and by choosing to record proceedings they

accept that they are required to indemnify the Council, its members and officers in relation to any such claims or liabilities.

The Council will display the requirements as to recording and broadcasting at its meeting venues and those undertaking these activities will be deemed to have accepted them whether they have read them or not.

The Council will publish the guidance on the recording and broadcasting of meetings on its website.

Recording must be non-intrusive and the Council's Standing Orders which provide for the removal of a member of the public from a meeting should that person, having been warned once, continue to interrupt proceedings. The Chairman of a meeting may also call any part of the meeting room to be cleared in the event of a general disturbance.

It should be noted that the Chairman of a meeting will have absolute discretion to terminate or suspend any of the above activities if, in their opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice the running of the meeting. The circumstances in which termination or suspension might occur could include:

- public disturbance, disruption or suspension of the meeting.
- the meeting agreeing to formally exclude the press and public from the meeting due to the exempt/confidential nature of the business being discussed, in accordance with statutory procedures.
- where it is considered that continued recording might infringe the rights or privacy of any individual (including staff members), or intimidate them.
- for any other reason which the Chairman considers reasonable in the circumstances.

### **During the Meeting**

Recording of meetings should:

- Not interfere with the effective conduct of the meeting, nor should it be disruptive or distracting. The Chairman has discretion to suspend or stop recording at any time if, and to take appropriate action if anyone is, in their opinion, doing so in a disruptive manner.
- Not seek to 'overview' sensitive information such as close ups of confidential papers or private notes
- Usually take place from a specified location(s) within the room.
- Not obstruct others from observing and participating in the proceedings.
- Cease immediately if and when the meeting agrees to formally exclude the press and public due to business of an exempt or confidential nature (see 'Exempt or Confidential Business' below).
- Not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings or the comments made, or that ridicules those being filmed.
- When published or broadcast, recordings should be accompanied by information including when and where the recording was made and the context in which the discussion took place.
- Be overt (i.e. clearly visible to anyone at the meeting).
- Cease, unless continued recording has been explicitly agreed in advance with the Clerk, when the meeting is formally concluded.

### **Exempt or Confidential Business**

All meetings of the Parish Council are open to the public except in limited circumstances where the Council is legally required, or allowed, to close the meeting to the public. The circumstances where

business is 'exempt' or 'confidential' are set out in Schedule 12A of the Local Govt Act 1972 (as amended).

Upon request, a copy of any recording must be made available to the Parish Council or the Police in full and unedited.

\*By recording, the Parish Council means audio recording, filming, webcasting, blogging and photographing.