

Piddle Valley Parish Council

Recording, Photography & use of social media at meetings Policy & Protocol

1. Policy Statement

1.1 Piddle Valley Parish Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it carries out its business wherever possible. 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. Filming /recording of meetings that are not open to the public is not allowed.

1.2 The Parish Council does however expect that anyone filming, audio-recording, taking photograph's, or using social media will do so in a way that does not disrupt the meeting and does not 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 be 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 can however provide an oral report or commentary outside or after 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. This is available on the website and a copy can be made available at the meeting.

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. It would help us, however, in providing facilities if anyone wanting to film, audio-record, take photographs, or use social media to report the meeting were to 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 previously, anyone wanting to film, audio-record, take photographs, or use social media to report the meeting should, on arrival at the meeting, inform the Clerk of their intention.

2.5 The Clerk will 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 space to view and hear the meeting, a seat and possibly a table, where available.

2.6 If a request has been received 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 and, 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 inform those wanting to film or take photographs, of the objection, and instruct them not to film the person(s)?

If someone arrives late, refer back to 2.4

2.7 The filming, recording, photographing or other reporting of children 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 In accordance with the Parish Council's Standing Orders 22, 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 areas 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 for 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.

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