



# Stanway

## Parish Council Policy

Adopted Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Minute Ref: \_\_\_\_\_

### Recording and Reporting on Council Meetings Policy

1. Stanway Parish Council will not customarily photograph, film, record or broadcast meetings for the Council or public but retains the right to do so should the Council or a delegated committee decide otherwise. The Chair will declare any such recordings either for internal retention or public publication at the start of the meeting and these recordings will be governed by this policy. The retention and disposal of such material will be in accordance with the Council's retention and disposal policy.
2. The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2015 (2014 SI No. 2095), which came into force on 6<sup>th</sup> 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.
3. The Regulations do not require Parish Councils to allow filming, audio-recording, photographing or reporting 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.
4. 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.
5. The Department for Communities & Local Government had published a 'plain English' guide to the Regulations (available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-and-accountable-local-government-plain-english-guide> ). Stanway Parish Council's policy is based on this guide.
6. The Council will display requirements as contained in this policy on its website and at public meetings. Those undertaking recording and/or reporting on meetings will be deemed to have accepted the terms of this policy whether they have read them or not.

7. Recording for the purposes of this document is defined as video recording, audio recording and photography.

Reporting for the purposes of this document is defined as posting on social media, blogging, broadcasting video or audio streams, or any other mechanism which allows those not physically present at the meeting to follow the course of debate

In accordance with Standing Order No. 3, the Parish Council has no objection to overt, nondisruptive recording and written reporting of a meeting, only to the extent that it does not interfere with any person's ability to follow the debate. Oral commentary in the meeting room during a meeting is not permitted in accordance with the Regulations as may be disruptive.

8. The Parish Council requests any person proposing to record or report on a meeting contact the Clerk prior to the start of the meeting. The Clerk's details are provided in the public notice and agenda of the meeting (or in his/her absence, the contact will be the Chair of the Council).
9. The Regulations apply to Councillors as they do to members of the public, but Councillors must ensure that they are not distracted from the business of the meeting.
10. Members of the public will be notified at the start of the meeting if a request to record or report on the meeting has been made. To protect their rights, the Parish Council asks others not to film or photograph them without their consent. Children or vulnerable adults attending a meeting must not be filmed or photographed.
11. The right to record is limited to the duration of the meeting. Therefore recording must not start until the meeting is called to order, and must cease when the Chair closes the meeting. Members of the public putting forward a question under the "Public Participation" heading may request that their representation not be recorded.
12. The Chair of the meeting has absolute discretion to stop or suspend recording, if, in his/her opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting or if the person recording is in breach of these rules. Anyone acting in a disruptive manner may be asked to leave by the Chair in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders. The DCLG guide gives the following examples of disruptive activity: 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; Intrusive lighting and use of flash photography; Asking people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording.

13. Recording equipment may not be left unattended at any time by a person recording a meeting.
14. Those recording or reporting meetings are reminded that requirements of general law apply to their activities. The Council cannot advise on general law and accepts no liability for any material created by those recording or reporting a meeting, including identification of any member of the public. Freedom of speech within the law should be exercised with personal and social responsibility by showing respect and tolerance towards the views of others. The recording should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or infringement of the Council's meetings values or in a way that ridicules or shows a lack of respect for those in the recording. The Council would expect any recording in breach of these rules to be removed from public view.
15. The minutes of the council meeting remain the statutory and legally binding formal record of council decisions.