



# Horley Town Council

## Filming, Recording, Broadcasting and Livestreaming at Council Meetings

### Policy Guidelines

#### 1. Introduction:

- 1.1 This policy provides guidance on the use of filming, photography, audio recording and social media at meetings of Horley town Council (the Council) together with live broadcasts. This includes meetings of Full Council, Standing Committees and other public meetings.
- 1.2 For the purposes of this policy, social media refers to all forms of reporting via social media e.g. Facebook, YouTube, X, Microsoft Teams. If a member of the public wishes to live stream a meeting on social media, this will be classed as filming.
- 1.3 The Council is committed to openness and transparency in its decision-making and welcomes all those wishing to film, photograph, record and report on any aspect of a meeting open to the public and media. The Council shall provide all reasonable facilities to accommodate these activities.
- 1.4 Filming meetings does not replace the formal record of Council meetings and the decisions made. **The only formal record of any meeting of the Council is its minutes and agendas.**
- 1.5 **To ensure that filming, photography, recording and reporting of meetings does not cause disruption to the running of meetings, the following shall apply:**

#### 2. Procedures:

- 2.1 The Council may film/ live stream, photograph, record or report on certain meetings, eg. items with a high degree of public interest.
- 2.2 The Council shall itself film and stream the proceedings of the Full Council and Committee Meetings as a procedural activity and, where it is feasible and practical to do so, may consider filming other meetings of the Council which are open to the public, depending on the nature of the topic(s) for presented discussion or business to be transacted.
- 2.3 Recordings of live broadcasts shall be published to the public on the Council's website and will be available for a period of up to 12 months.
- 2.4 The footage shall be available for public viewing via the Council's communication and social media channels, eg. Facebook for access after the meeting has taken place.
- 2.5 The Chair of the meeting shall at the outset remind all attendees if the meeting is to be filmed and/or streamed, either in full or in part, depending on the content and any confidential matters. Any member of the public or third party viewing the meeting live, shall therefore be placed on

mute throughout the meeting and shall be unable to contribute unless invited to do so at the public forum part of the meeting.

- 2.6 The Chair shall reserve the right to terminate or suspend the webcasting of any meeting, if deemed appropriate to do so, at their discretion; or to terminate or suspend the webcast if in their opinion would disrupt or prejudice the proceedings if continued; or may infringe upon any individual's rights; or may lead to the breach of a legal obligation by the Council.

### **3. Confidential Session (Part 2 of Council Meetings)**

- 3.1 If a Council meeting enters into a Confidential Session (Part 2); or where, for example, exempt or classified information is to be discussed, then the press and public shall be excluded from the meeting immediately before those proceedings commence. Any filming and/or recording equipment in the council chamber (or meeting venue) belonging to a meeting visitor or observer **must** be turned off before the individual(s) leaves the room.

### **4. Filming and Live Streaming Processes**

- 4.1 Any filming or live streaming may begin no sooner than two minutes before the start of the meeting and sound shall not be broadcast until a microphone is in operation.
- 4.2 Sound shall be transmitted from the audio system microphone and managed by council officers present.
- 4.3 In the event of obscenities or offensive language being used, sound shall be muted, either in live session or post-production of webcasts, at the discretion of the Council.
- 4.4 Information signs shall be displayed inside and outside the Council chamber or meeting room (as appropriate), including the following notice.

***Please Note: The Council is permitted to enable the use of modern communication methods such as filming, tweeting, blogging and taking of photographs of Council meetings as per the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.***

***This meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the internet/social media. At the start of the meeting, the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed, depending on if there is any confidential business to be transacted.***

- 4.5 It is the intent that the camera position will only provide vision of the Chairman and Councillors; designated staff; and presenters/speakers who are present at the meeting. It is not intended that there be either live or recorded footage of the public, however, there may be incidental capture. Members of the public should inform the Chairman if they do not wish to be filmed so that they can be directed where to sit out of camera view.
- 4.6 Members of the public who have requested to speak at the meeting should be aware that they could be considered to be part of the public meeting and therefore may be filmed, photographed or recorded. If a member of the public who wishes to speak at a meeting, does not want to be filmed/ photographed/ recorded, then they should make this known when they register their interest to speak and the Council will aim to facilitate their request.

## **5. Unacceptable Public Posts on Social Media**

- 5.1** Prior to the meeting and Council posts made to provide meeting links, any commentary from the public **must** abide by the Facebook Community Standards and shall be kept monitored. Inappropriate comments shall be removed at the Council's discretion.
- 5.2** Meeting participants shall be asked to keep their points concise and relative to the discussions taking place. Any posts that are offensive or which contain personal comments which are deemed inappropriate shall be removed and authors advised that their access may be restricted or blocked, in accordance with the Council's procedures.

## **6. Public Filming**

- 6.1** Whilst no prior permission is required for filming by the public, anyone proposing to do so, is respectfully asked to notify Council Officers in advance of the meeting.
- 6.2** The filming, photography or recording actions should be clearly visible to anyone at the meeting and must not disrupt proceedings. Live commentary, flash photography and the use of equipment which causes significant noise is not permitted.
- 6.3** The Chair of the meeting has absolute discretion to stop or suspend filming, photography, recording and reporting if, in their opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting or if the person doing the filming/photography/recording/reporting is in breach of these rules. The circumstances in which termination or suspension might occur may include:
- public disturbance or suspension of the meeting;
  - requiring to formally exclude the public from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business being discussed where it is considered that continued filming, photography, recording or reporting might infringe the rights of any individual;
  - where a defamatory statement has been made.
- 6.4** The Council requires those recording the meeting, not to edit or adjust the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule, or shows a lack of respect towards those being recorded which are strictly prohibited and further to:
- avoid recording members of the public present unless they are addressing the committee or panel in camera view.
  - respect that some members of the public may prefer not to be filmed (who shall sit or stand in the public area, out of camera view
  - ensure no filming of young people under the age of 16 and / or vulnerable individuals without express permission from those responsible for them.
- 6.5** If anyone acts in a disruptive manner, then the Chair may ask the person to leave the meeting. If the person refuses to leave, then the Chair will adjourn the meeting or make other appropriate arrangements for the meeting to continue without disruption.

## **7. Tweeting or blogging by councillors, members of the media and public**

- 7.1** The Council permits social media reporting at all its public meetings. However, consideration shall be given to all aspects of this protocol in relation to respect, right to privacy and ensuring meeting conduct is not disturbed.

## **8. Data Protection Regulations**

- 8.1 In the UK, data protection is governed by the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. The Council is the Data Controller in regard to personal data it processes for its own purposes and shall determine how and why personal data shall be used, as outlined in its Data Protection Policy. Councillors are also Data Controllers in their own right and therefore should ensure they comply with General Data Protection Regulations together with rules and procedures in accordance with its Communications and Social Media Policy. Personal data collected during this time, including filming and/or recording shall be retained in accordance with the Council's Retention of Documents and Procedures Policy. Further information is contained in the Council's Privacy Notice.
- 8.2 Horley Town Council shall not accept any responsibility for any verbal statements made by the public during meetings which may be inaccurate, incorrect, or defamatory, in any circumstances.

## **9. Legal Matters**

- 8.1 The recording and filming of Council meetings is regulated under the *Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014*.
- 8.2 Council Officers and Councillors shall be expected to be filmed and images to be webcast, unless a specific request to Chief Executive Officer for an exemption, is made in advance of the meeting. The Chief Executive Officer will take a view on a case-by-case basis as to whether there is sufficient justification for making an exemption.
- 8.3 The recording and reporting of Council's meetings must comply with all legal requirements and it is also the responsibility of those involved in the recording and reporting to ensure compliance. This will include the Human Rights Act 1998 and the laws of libel and defamation. Freedom of speech within the law should be exercised with personal and social responsibility, showing respect and tolerance towards the views of others.
- 8.4 Any person or organisation choosing to record, film or broadcast any meeting of the Council is responsible for any claims or other liability resulting from them doing so.
- 8.5 The live streams and recordings of Council Meetings shall be the property of the Council and cannot be reused or reproduced without the prior approval of the Council. No person may use the recordings for political party advertising, election campaigns, or any other politically partisan activity. Unless expressly authorised herein, no part of the recorded materials posted on the Town Council website may be reproduced without the written permission of the Town Council. Copyright remains with the Council.

**THESE POLICY GUIDELINES ON FILMING, RECORDING, BROADCASTING AND LIVESTREAMING AT COUNCIL MEETINGS WERE APPROVED FOR ADOPTION AT THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
06 MAY 2025**

**NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2028**