

West Sussex County Council Recording Broadcasting and Filming of Meetings

This protocol provides guidance for the management of meetings in relation to the application of the County Council's Standing Orders 4.01 to 4.06 which address the rights of the press and public to film or record business at Council meetings.

The guidance aims to balance the rights of the press and public to film and record with the effective discharge of council business and the rights of members to carry out their responsibilities without undue pressure or harassment.

1. Anyone intending to film or record at a meeting should contact Democratic Services in advance of the meeting or at least before the meeting begins, so that it is known that filming, broadcasting, live-streaming or recording is planned to take place. The Chairman of the meeting will then draw this to the attention of all attendees in advance of the meeting where possible.
2. In the absence of prior notice, the chairman at any meeting will ask for any persons intending to record or film or to broadcast the business of that meeting to let the chairman know of that intention before the business starts. The purpose of this is to ensure that any other person at the meeting, including other members of the public, are aware of this activity. If no such notice is given but it becomes apparent that such activity is being carried out the Chairman will halt the meeting in order to establish whether this is the case. The Chairman shall be entitled to ask whether the activity includes live streaming of the meeting.
3. Democratic Services will strive to give reasonable facilities to the press and public to help them film or record the meeting. This can include giving access to power sockets and giving reasonable space to set up and record, where possible. No such equipment shall, or shall be used in any way so as to, disrupt the business of the meeting or inhibit the exercise by any member of their rights and responsibilities as a member of the Council.
4. Oral reporting or oral commentary on a meeting while it takes place is not permitted in the room where the meeting is taking place.
5. Recordings and broadcasts should not be altered, edited or presented so as to deliberately misrepresent or provide a false account of the business of the meeting or the words or actions of elected members.
6. Recordings and broadcasts should not be used to deliberately ridicule or be defamatory of a member of the County Council.
7. Recordings and broadcasting and the manner in which these take place should not be used so as to cause or lead to a risk that any member will be harassed in any form.
8. Recordings or broadcasts should not be used for any malicious or unlawful purpose.

Any person who breaches any of the above requirements shall be at risk of being required to desist from future recordings of council business, at the discretion of the chairman of the relevant meeting, or by the Chairman of the Council.

Any person or organisation choosing to film, record or broadcast any business at any meeting of the Council shall be entirely responsible for any claims or other adverse consequences resulting from them doing so.