

CORFE MULLEN TOWN COUNCIL

Protocol for Livestreaming & Webcasting, Filming and Recording of Council Meetings

Note: Livestreaming is a live digital stream of a meeting broadcast via the internet, whilst Webcasting is a broadcast via the internet, but is not necessarily live.

Background

1. Under the **Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014** any person who attends any council meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To “report” means:

- to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings;
- use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later;
- or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.

This is a statutory requirement and is listed in Corfe Mullen Town Council Standing Orders as item 3 (l).

2. A person present at a meeting may only provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place with prior permission of the Council.

This is a statutory requirement and is listed in Corfe Mullen Town Council Standing Orders and paraphrased from item 3 (m).

3. Reporting on a meeting as defined above (in items 1 and 2) is not permitted where the meeting, or part of a meeting is closed to the public due to the confidential nature of proceedings.

This is a statutory requirement and is listed in Corfe Mullen Town Council Standing Orders as item 3 (d).

Corfe Mullen Town Council's approach

To facilitate the openness of local government, Corfe Mullen Town Council has resolved to livestream all of its meetings to its own YouTube account where they will be accessible to the public.

Livestreaming and the retention of a digital copy of the meeting which was broadcast via the Council's YouTube account does not replace the formal record of the meeting and the decisions made. The only formal (and legally recognised) record of any council meeting is its written minutes.

Protocol for Corfe Mullen Town Council Filming/Livestreaming/Webcasting

Operating Procedure for Filming/Livestreaming/Webcasting

1. At the start of each meeting to be filmed, an announcement will be made to the effect that the meeting is being filmed – by livestreaming or recording to be made available to the public later, and that the Chairman may also terminate or suspend the filming type of the meeting, in accordance with this protocol. For Livestreaming this will be confirmed by the Chairman making the following statement: -

"I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet and will be capable of repeated viewing."

2. Livestreaming will only commence at the beginning of a meeting when the Chairman opens Public Discussion Period and will finish when the meeting is closed, or when the meeting reaches a point where it is closed to the public due to the confidential nature of proceedings.
3. The Chairman has the discretion to terminate or suspend the Livestream if in their opinion continuing to Livestream would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting. Circumstances that could lead to suspension or termination of Livestreaming include public disturbance or other suspension of the meeting or the potential infringement of the rights of any individual.
4. No exempt or confidential agenda items shall be Livestreamed, and no part of any meeting will be Livestreamed after the Council has voted to exclude the press and public because there is likely to be disclosure of exempt or confidential information.
5. Anything that is outside of the scope of the meeting or Public Discussion Period will not be filmed. This includes reaction shots, walkouts etc. Where an operator is unsure on what to film or is in an unfamiliar situation, the operator should always select a camera shot of the Chairman of the meeting.
6. Young people under the age of 16 will not be filmed.
7. Editing of content should only be undertaken if there is a legal reason (for example the name of a person in witness protection was divulged by a public speaker, confidential personal information is inadvertently disclosed, or defamatory comments made). Editing of content may also be authorised in exceptional circumstance such as if an attendee is taken ill on screen. A log will be maintained of Livestreaming where content has been edited. The Town Clerk makes the final decision on editing any Livestream or filmed material to be broadcast or published in connection with any Council meeting. The reason for any decision to edit a webcast or filmed material will be published.

8. Should the Livestream be halted for a technical reason the Clerk will inform the Chairman at the earliest opportunity.
9. In the event of obscenities being shouted, the sound will be muted either live or in post-production.
10. As part of the process for registering to speak at Council meetings, members of the public will be advised that the meeting will be streamed on the internet and a copy of the meeting retained on YouTube. If an attendee does not wish to be filmed whilst speaking to the committee, the Livestream operator will:
 - Give guidance to the best place to sit
 - Ensure no close-up images of the attendee will be taken
 - If the attendee is speaking, the Livestream operator will focus the camera on the Chairman

Guidance notes will also be issued to those residents in the audience at council meetings advising them to contact the Town Clerk if they have concerns about being seen on camera.

11. An original digital copy (i.e. a back-up) of each recording will be kept by the Clerk and will be an unedited raw version. This will only be used or referred to in the case of:
 - Internal scrutiny of decisions to pause Livestreaming;
 - Back-up facility in case of technical issues;
 - Proof of an original and unedited copy being required in the event of unauthorised or maliciously edited versions of the digital footage online being appropriated, circulated and used on the internet, which give a false, inaccurate and prejudicial impression of the original meeting.
12. The following notice will appear on the meeting agenda front page and also displayed inside and outside the meeting room:

LIVESTREAMING NOTICE

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the internet - at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this Livestream will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Public seating areas will not be filmed by the Council, but our audio equipment will be able to pick up conversations in this area.

Protocol for Reporting, Filming, Recording or Photography by members of the public and press

1. As stated at the beginning of this document, members of the public and are permitted to film or record any council meetings that are open to the public.
2. The Town Council may reasonably ask for the filming to be undertaken in such a way that it is not disruptive or distracting to the good order and conduct of the meeting. As a courtesy, attendees will be informed at the start of the meeting that it is being filmed; we recommend that those wanting to film liaise with council staff before the start of the meeting.
3. Members of the public wishing to provide oral reporting or commentary whilst the meeting is happening must ask for permission from the Council in advance. Such oral reporting may be terminated by the Chairman if it is disrupting the business of the meeting.