

PROTOCOL ON USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA, PHOTOGRAPHY, FILMING AND RECORDING AT MEETINGS

1. Introduction

This protocol provides guidance to members of the public, media and Councillors on the use of social media, photography, filming and recording at public meetings of Crawley Borough Council (including Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub Committees).

Social media refers to the use of web-based technologies to share information and to interact with online communities, e.g. blogs, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube.

The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency in the way it conducts its meetings. Recording, photography, filming and the use of social media at meetings which are held in public is permitted:

- (a) Subject to the provisions of this protocol.
- (b) Provided that the Chair is satisfied that it will not be disruptive or distracting the good order and conduct of the meeting.

(Meetings which take the form of Hearings, for example Licensing Sub Committees, may not be suitable for recording due to the nature of some of the evidence given at the Hearing. It will be at the discretion of the Chair to determine whether the recording of a particular Hearing will be permitted.)

The Chair's decision on whether or not the meeting is being disrupted or disturbed and consequently to require the cessation of the use of social media, photography, filming or recording is final.

2. Filming, Photographing and Recording of Meetings

The filming, videoing, photographing or recording Council meetings is allowed, providing it does not disturb the conduct of the meeting and takes place from positions in the room as agreed by the Chair.

The Council asks that filming and/or photography requests are made in advance of the meeting to assist with any setting up of equipment. Anyone wanting to film should liaise with a member of the Communications or Democratic Services teams.

The Chair of the meeting will inform all attendees that proceedings may be reported via social media, photographed and/or filmed. Notices will also be placed in the meeting room informing attendees of this.

The Chair of the meeting will have the power to withdraw this permission if it is disruptive or distracting to the good order and conduct of the meeting, for example through flash photography or intrusive camera equipment.

All those visually recording a meeting are requested to only focus on recording Councillors, officers and the public who are directly involved in the conduct of the meeting.

If a meeting passes a motion to exclude the media and public (Part B / exempt information) then, in conjunction with this, all rights to film, video, photograph or record the meeting are removed.

3. Photographing and Filming Members of the Public

In the case of members of the public speaking at meetings (at Planning Committee, for example) the Chair will ask each individual to give their express permission to being photographed and/or filmed and they will not be photographed/filmed if they actively object.

Members of the public who are not speaking and do not wish to be photographed and/or filmed will be guided to a seating area away from the area being photographed and/or filmed, where possible.

4. Use of Mobile Devices

To minimise disruption to others attending the meeting, all attendees must ensure that their phone or other mobile devices are switched off or set to silent mode during the meeting.

No Councillor in attendance, whether a decision maker or observer, is permitted to use social media or mobile devices when the meeting is in private session (when the press and public are excluded) to disclose in any way the content of items under discussion.

The Councillors' Code of Conduct and social media guidance will apply when using social media. Inappropriate comments made during a meeting could open Councillors to potential complaints or investigation under the Code of Conduct.