# Salesbury Parish Council's Policy and Guidelines on the Recording of Council meetings

**For Councillors, employees and members of the public attending and recording public Council meetings**

## 1. Introduction

In general members of the public have the right to attend all public meetings of the Council. However, in certain circumstances members of the public, including press, will be asked to leave the room when confidential or restricted information is being discussed.

The Government's 'Openness of Local Bodies Regulations' (the 2014 Regulations) were published in August 2014 and gave members of the public the rights to report on proceedings via online media (e.g. blogs, twitter and other social networking sites) and local news. The Regulations are supported by a Department for Communities and Local Government plain English guide.

## 2. Responsibilities of the council

Salesbury Parish Council will provide reasonable facilities for those wishing to report on proceedings and has the discretion to amend from time to time its definition of what it determines to be such facilities.

The Council currently provides the following:

- Free access to public agendas, meetings, minutes, decision details, elections information and more via the Council's website and/or noticeboards;
- Access to Councillor's contact details where they have consented to make these publicly available;
- Reasonable assistance in providing adequate space for recording to take place;
- Access to online facilities used to host virtual/hybrid meetings.

## 3. Responsibilities of the public

By attending a public meeting of Salesbury Parish Council or any committee or sub-committee thereof, you are agreeing to this policy as a whole and in particular the stipulations listed below:

- Anyone planning to record meetings of the Council and its public committees through any audio, visual or written methods they find appropriate may do so, providing they do not disturb the conduct of the meeting;
- Please inform the Clerk of the Council if you wish to record meetings, particularly if members of the public are present so that appropriate consent may be obtained.
- You are welcome to attend a public meeting to report proceedings, either in 'real time' or after the conclusion of the meeting, on a blog, social networking site, news forum or other online media;

- You may use a laptop, tablet device, smartphone, recording equipment or portable camera to record proceedings during the meeting;
- Facilities at face-to-face meetings are limited and recording equipment must be of a reasonable size and nature in order to be easily accommodated. You are asked to contact the Clerk 7 days before the scheduled meeting if you have any large or complex recording equipment to see if and how this can be accommodated within the existing facilities;
- You must not interrupt proceedings and digital equipment must be set to 'silent' mode;
- Any person whose behaviour threatens to disrupt orderly conduct will be asked to leave;
- Be aware that libellous comments against the Council, individual Councillors, Officers or employees of the Council could result in legal action being taken against you;
- Recorded images, audio and written transcripts must not be edited in a way in which there is a clear aim to distort the truth or misrepresent those taking part in the proceedings;
- Personal attacks of any kind or offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability status could also result in legal action being taken against you;
- Failure to comply with the above requirements may result in the support and assistance of the Council in the recording of proceedings being withdrawn.
- The council regards violation of any of the points above as a risk to the orderly conduct of a meeting. The Council therefore reserves the right to refuse entry, to any further Council meetings, to any person who breaches any of these restrictions.
- The Chair of the meeting will ensure that the meeting runs in an effective manner and has the power to ensure that the meeting is not disturbed through the use of flash photography, intrusive camera equipment or the person recording the meeting moving around the room.

**Guidelines for Council recording of Public Meetings**

**Introduction**
The Government's 'Openness of Local Bodies Regulations' (the 2014 Regulations) were published in August 2014 and encourage all councils and public bodies to be as open and transparent as possible.

Salesbury Parish Council do not currently record meetings; however the following will apply to any meetings that are recorded.

**Main provisions:**
1. The Chair and/or Clerk of the meeting has the discretion to request the termination or suspension of recording if in the opinion of the Chair/Clerk continuing to record would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting.
2. This would include:
    a) Public disturbance or other suspension of the meeting;

b) Any other reason moved, seconded and supported by the Council.

3. Any Councillor who is concerned about audio recording should raise their concerns with the Clerk or in their absence, the Chair. Concerns will be listened to and may or may not lead to termination or suspension of recording.
4. At any given meeting, the decision to continue recording remains with the Clerk, or in their absence, the Chair of the meeting.
5. A note will be displayed on the door or on accessing the Zoom or other online platform informing members of the public that the proceedings may be recorded.

**Conduct of Meetings**

1. At the start of each meeting, a notice will be made on the joining instructions (virtual and hybrid meetings) or an announcement made in the room, informing attendees that the meeting is being or may be recorded in accordance with this protocol.
2. For virtual or hybrid meetings, it is essential that Councillors have their video stream switched on during the meeting so that members of the public are assured of their presence.
3. For virtual or hybrid meetings, it is essential that everyone present remembers to switch on their microphone when speaking.
4. The Clerk or Chair should state the date and description of the meeting at its commencement.
5. When meetings are private (not open to the public) or when confidential or exempt items of business are transacted (i.e. when the press and public are excluded), the meeting or part of the meeting may still be recorded, however this part of the recording will not be made public.

**General**

1. Members of the public are, as always, welcome to attend all open Council meetings. They will however be asked to leave when confidential or private business is being discussed. For more information about this, please see Salesbury Parish Council Standing Orders or contact the Clerk.
2. Members of the public are, as always, able to submit questions to Council meetings. All questions and comments for the public will be heard during the time set aside specifically for Public Participation.
3. Please contact the Clerk before the start of any meeting should you wish to speak or ask a question during Public Participation. Wherever possible, please contact the Clerk at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting to ensure you can be included. Where it has not possible to make contact earlier, please notify the Clerk of your wish to speak as soon as you enter the meeting room (physical or virtual).
4. Joining instructions for virtual/hybrid meetings will be made available on the Agenda. This will be displayed on the Salesbury Parish Council website and official noticeboards.
5. Recordings of Salesbury Parish Council meetings will be kept for a period of 12 months from the date of the meeting.

**Reviews**

**May 2022**

- Addition in Section 3
    - Please inform the Clerk of the Council if you wish to record meetings, particularly if members of the public are present so that appropriate consent may be obtained.
- Deletion of section relating to meetings held under Covid-19 Regulations

**February 2025**

- Reviewed against current LALC, LGA guidance
- Minor changes to formatting, clarity, correction of typos and inclusion of logo