West Mersea
Town Council

Adopted: 3 August 2023
Reviewed: 3 September 2026
Next Review: September 2027

RECORDING AT MEETINGS POLICY

1. **INTRODUCTION**

a. The Town Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it carries out its business whenever possible. Reporting, as defined in 1c and subject to 1d, is permitted at all meetings in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended by the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

b. The Town Council shall seek to provide reasonable facilities to allow anyone who wishes to do so, to report on meetings of the Council and its committees in line with this policy.

c. Reporting is defined as filming, photographing, audio-recording or using any other means of enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later and reporting or providing commentary on proceedings, orally or in writing as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.

d. Reporting is not permitted following a resolution to exclude the public and press.

2. **GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

a. This policy will be available at all meetings where the public are present to remind them of the requirements of this policy and ensure that members of the public are aware that meetings may be reported upon.

b. Members of the public who participate in meetings may reserve the right not to be filmed/photographed.

c. Those responsible for children or vulnerable adults present at meetings may withhold consent for their being reported upon. (see 3d)

d. Members of the public not wishing to participate in meetings and who object to being reported upon should sit in the rear row(s) of seating provided.

e. After the draft Minutes are approved, recordings will be deleted.

3. **GUIDANCE FOR REPORTERS**

a. A reporter is defined as anyone reporting on the proceedings of a meeting.

b. Reporters are requested to notify the Town Clerk or Chairman in advance of the meeting of their intention to report and the form they intend to report by (i.e. filming, photography etc).

c. Reporters intending to bring large equipment should notify the Town Clerk at least 1 hour prior to the start of the meeting to ensure that sufficient space can be provided. Equipment will not be permitted if the health and safety of members of the public, councillors or officers is risked (i.e. trailing cables etc).

d. Reporting on a child or vulnerable adult is not permitted unless an adult responsible for them has given permission. e. Reporters should sit at the front of the area provided for the public.

e. Members of the public who are not participating in proceedings (i.e. those who are just present to observe) should not be reported upon if they object. It is a reporter's responsibility to ensure they have the consent of such members of the public.

f. Reporting must not cause disruption to the conduct of meetings or impede other members of the public being able to see, hear or film the proceedings. The Chairman of the meeting may exclude those acting in a disruptive manner from the meeting. Examples of disruptive behaviour include (but are not limited to):

   i. Moving to areas outside the area designated to the public without the consent of the Chairman.
   ii. Excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during debate/ discussion. For the avoidance of doubt, mobile devices should be set to silent prior to the start of the meeting.
   iii. Intrusive lighting and or excessive use of flash photography.
   iv. Asking people to repeat statements for the purpose of recording.

g. Oral commentary at the meeting is not permitted.

h. All personal belongings including recording equipment must be removed from the room following a resolution to exclude the public and press.

i. Reporting is subject to the law, and it is the responsibility of reporters to ensure compliance. This will include the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Act and the laws of libel and defamation.