PROTOCOL for filming and recording at public meetings

(NOTE: This protocol is based on that used by South Downs National Park Parish Council (April 2015)

The Parish Council supports the principle of transparency and encourages filming, audio recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. It also welcomes the use of social networking websites (such as Twitter and Facebook) and micro-blogging to communicate with people about what is happening, as it happens.

Although not required to do so, anyone intending to record a meeting of the Parish Council and/or its committees is encouraged to contact the Parish Office (01273 833264 or Hurstpierpoint.pc@btinternet.com) in advance of the meeting for advice and guidance. Reasonable advance notice will enable practical arrangements to be made and special requirements to be discussed e.g. bringing large equipment. It should be noted that the Chair of the meeting will have absolute discretion to terminate or suspend any recording and/or reporting if, in their opinion, it is distracting or otherwise disrupting proceedings at the meeting. Disruptive behaviour includes any action or activity which disrupts the conduct of the meeting or impedes others from being able to see, hear or film etc. the proceedings, for example:

- Excessive noise in recording or re-siting equipment during the debate/discussion,
- Intrusive lighting and use of flash photography,
- Moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public without the consent of the Chair; or
- Asking for people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording.

Termination or suspension of recording and/or reporting might also occur in other circumstances, for example where:

- the meeting is suspended; or
- The meeting agrees formally to exclude the press and public from the meeting due to the confidential/exempt nature of the business being discussed

The Parish Council expects those recording proceedings not to edit the film/audio record/photographs in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings, or infringe the core values of the Parish Council. This includes refraining from editing any record in a way that may ridicule, or show a lack of respect towards those being photographed/filmed/recorded.

The use of flash photography or additional lighting will not be allowed unless this has been discussed in advance of the meeting and agreement reached on how it can be done without disrupting proceedings. At the beginning of each meeting, the Chair will make an announcement that the meeting may be filmed, recorded or photographed. Meeting agendas will also carry this message. Letters/emails to applicants, supporters or objectors on planning applications regarding when the application will be heard will state that the meeting may be recorded. In this way all attendees will be aware that proceedings may be recorded. Written minutes of meetings, once confirmed by the parent body, will remain the formal record of all decisions taken.

Recordings of the Parish Council's meetings by those other than the Parish Council are the responsibility of the person making the recording in whatever form, and any breaches of the law which may result are similarly their responsibility. The Parish Council accepts no liability whatsoever for such breaches.

7 September 2015