Cornsay Parish Council

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION AND RECORDING OF MEETINGS POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 Cornsay Parish Council (the Council) is committed to openness, transparency and public engagement in its decision-making.

1.2 This policy explains the arrangements for public attendance and participation at Council meetings and the rights and responsibilities of those wishing to film, record, photograph or otherwise report on proceedings.

1.3 This policy should be read alongside the Council's Standing Orders and relevant legislation. Arrangements for committee and sub-committee meetings remain subject to the Standing Orders and applicable terms of reference.

2. Public Attendance

2.1 Meetings of the Council are open to members of the public and press unless the Council has lawfully resolved to exclude them from all or part of a meeting because of the confidential nature of the business or other special reasons.

2.2 Members of the public are welcome to attend and observe proceedings. Attendance does not, however, confer a right to join councillors' discussions, debates or decision-making.

2.3 Opportunities to address the Council are governed by its Standing Orders and Section 3 of this policy.

2.4 Everyone attending is expected to behave in a manner that does not disrupt proceedings or prevent others from hearing or observing the meeting.

3. Public Participation

3.1 Members of the public may make representations, answer questions or provide information concerning matters included on the published meeting agenda.

3.2 Anyone wishing to address the Council should speak to the Chair and Clerk before the meeting begins, indicating the agenda item on which they wish to speak.

3.3 The Council does not have a separate public participation session. The Chair will normally invite a member of the public to speak when the relevant agenda item is introduced, before councillors begin their discussion and debate.

3.4 The Chair may change the order of agenda items at their discretion to accommodate a member of the public wishing to speak.

3.5 In accordance with Standing Order 3(f), the total time available for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed five minutes unless extended by the Chair. This applies to public contributions throughout the meeting, not separately to each agenda item.

3.6 Subject to the overall limit, an individual member of the public may speak for up to five minutes.

3.7 Members of the public should raise their hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking, unless they have a disability or standing would cause discomfort. The Chair may permit anyone to remain seated when speaking.

3.8 Comments and questions must be directed to the Chair. Only one person may speak at a time; the Chair determines the order of speakers where necessary.

3.9 Questions do not require an immediate response and must not initiate a debate. The Chair may direct that a response be provided orally or in writing.

3.10 Following their contribution, members of the public may continue to observe proceedings but must not join councillors' subsequent discussion or debate unless invited by the Chair to provide further information or clarification.

3.11 Public participation is restricted to matters included on the published agenda. Other matters cannot be introduced for discussion or decision at the meeting. Members of the public wishing to raise an issue not on the agenda should contact the Clerk, who can advise how it may be brought to the Council's attention and considered for a future agenda.

4. Filming, Recording and Broadcasting

4.1 The Council recognises the right of members of the public and press to photograph, film, make audio recordings and otherwise report on proceedings of meetings open to the public, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended by the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

4.2 Members of the public and press may:

- Photograph, film or make audio recordings of public meeting proceedings.
- Broadcast or livestream proceedings so that people not present may see or hear them.
- Report on proceedings through written commentary, social media or other means during or after the meeting.

4.3 Prior permission is not required. Anyone intending to film, record or broadcast is encouraged to inform the Clerk beforehand so that practical arrangements can be considered.

4.4 In accordance with Standing Order 3(m), a person present at a meeting must not provide oral reporting or commentary while the meeting is taking place without permission.

4.5 The Council will provide reasonable facilities for recording and reporting, having regard to the venue's size, layout and facilities. The press are entitled, on payment, to copies of the agenda and necessary supporting papers in accordance with section 1(4)(b) of the 1960 Act, and to reasonable facilities for reporting as required by law.

5. Conduct During Recording

5.1 Filming, recording and reporting must not disrupt proceedings or interfere with others' ability to observe the meeting.

5.2 Those undertaking such activities must not:

- Move into areas reserved for councillors or Council staff without the Chair's agreement.
- Cause excessive noise when setting up, moving or adjusting equipment during proceedings.
- Use intrusive lighting or flash photography that disrupts proceedings.
- Ask councillors or other speakers to repeat statements for recording purposes.
- Obstruct access or create safety hazards through equipment or cables.

5.3 Equipment should be positioned so that it does not interfere with the meeting or the safety of those attending.

5.4 The Chair may request reasonable adjustments to recording arrangements where necessary to prevent disruption or maintain safety.

5.5 Disruptive behaviour will be dealt with under the Council's Standing Orders, particularly Standing Order 2.

6. Privacy and Safeguarding

6.1 The Council recognises the importance of protecting the privacy and welfare of those attending, particularly children and vulnerable adults, while respecting the statutory right to report on public proceedings.

6.2 Children and vulnerable adults should not be filmed, photographed or recorded without consent from an appropriate responsible adult. For a child this may be a parent, legal guardian or teacher; for a vulnerable adult it may be a carer, legal guardian or appropriate medical professional.

6.3 Members of the public who do not wish to be filmed, photographed or recorded are encouraged to inform the Chair or Clerk. Where practicable, the Council will identify suitable seating for those who do not wish to be recorded, including children and vulnerable adults where the relevant consent has not been given.

6.4 Those recording meetings are asked to respect such requests, particularly from people attending solely to observe. A separate seating area cannot guarantee exclusion from wide-angle or panoramic images; anyone recording should avoid focusing on or zooming in on those who have objected.

6.5 Members of the public who address the Council should be aware that their contributions may be filmed, recorded, broadcast or otherwise reported as part of public proceedings, subject to the safeguarding arrangements above.

6.6 Anyone recording or publishing material from a meeting is responsible for ensuring their activities comply with applicable data protection and other legal requirements.

6.7 At the start of a meeting, the Chair will remind those present that proceedings may be filmed, photographed, recorded or otherwise reported. Where recording is taking place, the Chair will also remind those undertaking it of the safeguarding arrangements concerning children, vulnerable adults and members of the public who do not wish to be recorded.

7. Confidential Business

7.1 Where the Council lawfully resolves to exclude the public and press from part of a meeting, all public filming, recording and broadcasting must cease.

7.2 Members of the public and press must leave the meeting room, taking any filming, recording or broadcasting equipment with them, for the duration of confidential proceedings.

7.3 Recording may resume when the meeting returns to proceedings open to the public.

8. Disorderly Conduct

8.1 Members of the public must not obstruct the transaction of business or behave in a manner that disrupts proceedings.

8.2 The Chair will deal with disruptive behaviour in accordance with Standing Order 2, which provides for a request to moderate behaviour and, where necessary, further action including exclusion from the meeting.

8.3 These provisions apply equally to anyone filming, recording or otherwise reporting on a meeting.

9. Responsibility and Review

9.1 The Chair is responsible for ensuring meetings are conducted in accordance with the Standing Orders and this policy, with advice and assistance from the Clerk as appropriate.

9.2 In the event of any inconsistency, applicable legislation takes precedence, followed by the Council's Standing Orders.

9.3 The Council will review this policy periodically and whenever changes in legislation or guidance make a review necessary.