

Proposal: Formalizing YouTube Live Streaming for Parish Meetings

To: Birchington Parish Council

Date: May 5th 2026

Subject: Transitioning the Live Streaming Pilot to Permanent Standing Procedure

1. Purpose of Proposal

To formalize the use of the Council's YouTube channel to live stream and archive public meetings, ensuring long-term transparency and compliance with the *Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014*.

2. Benefits of the YouTube Platform

- **Accessibility:** Automated closed-captioning (subtitles) helps the Council meet accessibility standards for the hearing impaired.
- **Zero Hosting Costs:** Unlike bespoke streaming software, YouTube provides unlimited hosting and bandwidth at no cost to the taxpayer.
- **Cross-Device Compatibility:** Residents can watch on smartphones, tablets, or smart TVs without needing specialized software.
- **Ease of Integration:** Streams can be easily embedded directly into the Parish Council website.

3. Updated Arguments & Risk Management

Argument	Detail / Mitigation
Privacy & GDPR	Risk: Captured images of public attendees. Action: Designate a "camera-free" seating zone. Update the Meeting Agenda with a GDPR notice stating: <i>"This meeting is being streamed live to YouTube and recorded."</i>
Public Comments	Risk: Unmoderated or defamatory live chat during the meeting. Action: Disable YouTube Live Chat by default. YouTube is for broadcast and record-keeping, not real-time debate.
Data	Risk: Reliance on a US-based platform.

Argument	Detail / Mitigation
Sovereignty	Action: Maintain a local backup of all recordings on the Council's own hard drive/cloud storage for the official archive.
"Right to be Forgotten"	Risk: Requests to remove footage. Action: Adopt a 12-month retention policy on YouTube. After 12 months, videos are set to "Private" or deleted, while written minutes remain the permanent legal record.

4. Proposed Standing Orders (The "Rules")

To formalize this, the following "Protocol for YouTube Streaming" should be added to the Council's procedures:

1. **The "Kill Switch":** The Chair has the absolute discretion to pause or terminate the stream if a meeting becomes disorderly or if confidential (Part II) business is reached.
2. **Notification:** Physical notices must be displayed at the entrance to the meeting room.
3. **Public Participation:** Members of the public who choose to speak during the "Public Forum" must be informed that their voice (and potentially image) will be broadcast.
4. **Technical Failure:** A technical failure of the YouTube stream shall not invalidate the meeting or its decisions, provided the meeting remains physically open to the public.

5. Financial Implications

- **Capital Expenditure:** £0 (Equipment already owned).
- **Revenue Expenditure:** £0 (YouTube is a free service).
- **Staff Time:** Approx. 10 minutes per meeting for setup and "ending" the stream.

6. Recommendation

That the Council resolves to continue the live streaming of all Full Council meetings via YouTube as a permanent service, subject to the privacy and moderation safeguards outlined above.

