



BODY WORN CAMERA POLICY

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1. POLICY AIM

This policy is to ensure that Body Worn Cameras (BWCs) will only be used when appropriate, proportionate, and fully compliant with relevant legislation, particularly the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. It also ensures that staff operating BWCs do so lawfully and responsibly.

This policy sets out the purpose of using BWCs, what information will be recorded, who will have access to it, and how it will be stored and disposed of.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of Body Worn Cameras (BWCs) is to protect staff and the public, discourage aggressive and abusive behaviour, and provide evidence, where required, to investigate complaints.

- Serve as a deterrent to acts of aggression or verbal and physical abuse
- Reduce Town Council staff's fear of crime or aggressive or violent behaviour
- Introduce a more effective recording system to address levels of anti-social behaviour
- Keep people safe
- Help protect Town Council officers at work (for health and safety purposes)
- Provide evidence to support formal and informal investigations following aggressive or violent incidents towards Town Council staff
- Help investigate breaches of our terms and conditions for use of our outdoor spaces
- BWCs will not be used for the ad hoc monitoring of Town Council staff or officers.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

All operators will be responsible for their own BWCs and will sign a declaration to state that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by this Policy for the use of Body Worn Cameras.

BWCs will be activated for recording when the operator:

- Has an engagement with a member of the public which, in the operator's opinion, is confrontational and where they believe they may be subject to physical or verbal abuse
- Encounters a situation in which they are approached by a member of the public in a manner perceived as aggressive or threatening
- BWCs will be used in an overt manner. Operators will verbally warn the public that the device is capable of visual and audio recording prior to activation, where possible.
- If questioned, the operator must confirm to the enquirer that they are being recorded and be prepared to answer questions regarding data security.
- BWCs will not be used covertly and will only be operated when staff are in uniform.

BWCs must be worn in a clearly visible manner. A clear verbal warning that the camera is in use will be given. This ensures maximum deterrent value, and that the public are fully aware that recording is taking place. Appropriate signage for CCTV and body worn cameras will be displayed around Thornbury Town Council properties.

In all instances where BWCs are used, and where practical, operators will inform individuals or groups that the BWC is switched on and recording. In rare cases, where issuing a warning could escalate the incident or endanger the operator, a warning may be omitted, but such instances must be justified by the operator.

The Council respects individuals' rights to go about their lawful business. Although there is inevitably some loss of privacy when BWCs are in use, cameras will not monitor individuals going about their ordinary business. Continuous monitoring will only occur where there is reasonable cause to suspect that an offence or serious breach of rules is taking place or is likely to take place.

4. RETENTION OF BWC RECORDINGS

All recordings will be uploaded immediately to the Council's secure IT network and stored in a restricted-access file available only to the Chief Executive and Deputy Clerk. Once uploaded, data will be deleted from the device. All recordings will be stored for 28 days, after which they will be permanently deleted.

Recordings may be retained for longer than 28 days if part of an ongoing investigation or legal case.

BWCs will be securely stored overnight in a locked cupboard.

Access to BWC recordings is restricted to the operators and senior management.

Recordings will be made available to Avon and Somerset Police as soon as practicable upon request.

If a member of the public is identified in a BWC recording, they may request to view it. Requests will be treated as Subject Access Requests under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Requests must be made in writing to the Chief Executive. Proof of identity will be required. There is no longer a standard fee, following the repeal of the Data Protection Act 1998.

5. MONITORING

The use of BWCs and this policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure that their use remains necessary, proportionate, and lawful.