

THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL



Body Worn Camera Policy

Date Ratified:	19 July 2022
Meeting:	Finance and General Purpose
Next review date:	July 2025

1. Policy Aim

This document will enable Councillors and staff of Thornbury Town Council to comply with legislation relating to video recording.

Policy Statement

The purpose of Body worn Camera's (BWC) is to protect staff and the public, discourage aggressive and abusive behaviour and provide evidence, where required, to investigate complaints.

The policy will set out the purpose of using BWC's, what information will be recorded, who will have access to this information and how this information will be stored and disposed of.

The purpose of using BWCs is to:

- 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 imposing recording system to address levels of anti-social behaviour
- keep people safe
- help protect Town Council Officers at work (for Health & Safety purposes)
- provide evidence to support formal and informal investigations, following an aggressive or violent incident, towards Town Council staff
- help investigate breaches in our terms and conditions of use in our outdoor spaces

The BWC will not be used as a tool to assist in the ad-hoc monitoring of Town Council Staff/Officers.

2. Implementation

All operators will be responsible for their own BWC.

BWC will be activated for recording when the operator:

- Has an engagement with a member of the public which, in the opinion of the operator, is confrontational and where they believe that they may be subject to physical or verbal abuse
- Encounter a situation in which they are approached by a member of the public in a manner perceived as aggressive or threatening
- BWC will be used in an overt manner and operators will verbally warn the public that the device is capable of visual and audio recording prior to it being switched on (where possible).
- If questioned, the operator must confirm to the enquirer that they are subject to recording and be prepared to answer questions as to the security of the data
- BWC will not be used in a hidden or covert manner
- BWC will only be used when wearing Council uniform

BWC's are worn so that they are clearly visible and a clear, verbal warning that the camera is in use will be given. This will ensure that both the maximum deterrent value is achieved, and that the public are fully aware that they are being recorded. CCTV and body worn camera signage will be in full sight around Thornbury Town Council properties.

In all instances where BWC are to be used, and where practical, operators will inform the individual (or group) that the BWC is switched on and recording. There may be occasions when to do so would escalate the incident or put the operator in danger if such a warning was given, but these should be very rare, and the operator may be required to justify such an action.

We respect and support the individual's entitlement to go about their lawful business and this is a primary consideration in the operation of a BWC system. Although there is inevitably some loss of privacy when BWC's are operational, cameras will not be used to monitor the progress of individuals in the ordinary course of their lawful business in the area under surveillance. Individuals will only be continuously monitored by BWCs if there is reasonable cause to suspect an offence or serious breach of discipline has been, or may be, about to be committed.

3. Retention of BWC recordings

Any recordings which have been made will be immediately uploaded to the Council's Secure IT network and stored in a restricted file available only to the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk. Once it has been uploaded to the Council's Secure IT network, it will be deleted from the camera. All data will be stored for a period of 28 days. After 28 days, all recordings will be permanently deleted.

All Council BWCs will be kept in a secure, locked cupboard overnight.

BWC recordings will only be retained for longer than 28 days in instances where an investigation or prosecution case has not concluded.

BWC recordings may only be accessed by authorised staff including the Operators, their Supervisor, the Deputy Town Clerk and the Town Clerk.

BWC recordings will be made accessible as soon as practicable to Avon and Somerset Police upon their request.

If a member of the public has been identified as being recorded by BWC, he/she can request to view the recording. The request will be treated as a subject access request under Section 7 of the Data Protection Act 1998 and will need to be made in writing to The Town Clerk, Thornbury Town Council. The Council will request proof of identity and a standard £10 processing fee will be payable as per Section 7 (2) (b) of the same Act. Availability of the BWC recordings will be subject to the retention period described above.

4. Monitoring

The use of BWC and this policy will be regularly evaluated to ascertain whether it is necessary and proportionate to continue using it.

DECLARATION – BODY WORN CAMERA POLICY

I have read, understood, and agree to abide by Thornbury Town Council’s Policy for the use of Body Worn Cameras.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____