

Testing, testing, as town meetings will be recorded

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Meetings of Tenterden Town Council are to be recorded and made available to the public.

But it will only be audio recordings and discussions held in private will not be published.

Councillors have agreed to spend £80 on a microphone and to put the recordings on the council website.

There was dissent from one member, Cllr Harry Hickmott, who said: "It is a sad reflection.

"I am opposed to this. My concern is, where is this information going to go?"

He was the only councillor to vote against the microphone purchase at Monday's finance and general purposes committee.

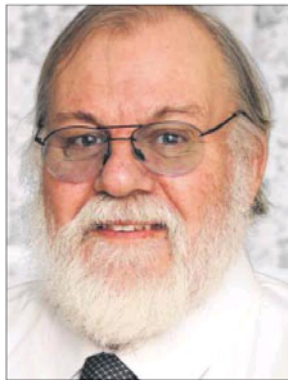
The move came in a report from



Cllr Robin Wade

town clerk Phil Burgess and follows new regulations allowing the filming and recording of council meetings.

Mr Burgess said the advantages included allowing council staff



Cllr Harry Hickmott

to check what had been said if there was a query over the minutes, and there would be a record of a meeting which could be used in Freedom of Information requests.

Equipment for sound recording, he said, would be cheaper than video recording and the sound was the most important element for accuracy.

Cllr Sue Ferguson asked if the recordings would be made available on the council website.

Committee chairman Cllr Robin Wade said: "There is no reason not to put it on the website. We can publish them and see how many downloads we get – it may improve the quality of debate.

"It is hard to argue against greater public access to what we do."

Cllr Callum Knowles said recording meetings should be embraced and used to encourage more people to get involved in the council, but Cllr Emma Hannett said: "I think it will put people off. They will say, that is what we thought of councillors."