# Wymondham Town Council pauses YouTube livestreams amid criticism and internal tensions



Wymondham Town Council has decided to halt its livestreaming of meetings on YouTube, a move attributed to what the council terms "continuous negative coverage" from a local publication, Wymondham Magazine. This decision follows an incident that occurred last year when the council adopted a 'red card' policy, allowing members to signal a need to leave meetings due to high anxiety levels triggered by proceedings.

The specific incident prompting this latest decision involves a satirical sketch published in Wymondham Magazine, authored by local journalist Jimmy Young. Mr Young commented that the cessation of livestreaming is part of "a line of increasingly bizarre behaviour" arising from council decisions. The council's meetings had been streamed for over two years, supported by a £3,000 investment in equipment aimed at increasing transparency and accessibility for residents unable to attend in person.

In a behind-closed-doors meeting held last month, councillors voted to pause livestreaming for four months, with plans to reevaluate the policy afterward. Concerns were raised regarding the impact of negative coverage on the "health and wellbeing" of both councillors and staff.

Despite the cessation of livestreaming, members of the public will continue to have the right to record or livestream meetings themselves. Mr Young expressed scepticism about the council's decision, stating, "If they're proud of what they're doing, they wouldn't be afraid of live streaming or reporting in the media. People will see this and wonder what they're trying to hide."

Coinciding with this decision is the council's announcement of a new job opening for a 'community engagement officer', tasked with promoting a more positive image of the council, offering a salary of up to £33,000 a year. Mr Young drew a parallel to the well-documented chaos of Handforth Parish Council meetings, suggesting an atmosphere of self-seriousness within the Wymondham council akin to that seen in Handforth.

The red card policy, implemented a year ago, was initially proposed by Green councillor Joe Barrett after he experienced a "psychiatric emergency" during a meeting. The policy allows councillors to indicate their need for a break due to mental health reasons and directs them to a designated area for support. However, Mr Barrett did not see the system fully adopted prior to his resignation last month and noted that its implementation faced considerable backlash, particularly from fellow council member Tony Holden, who had previously opposed its introduction.

Mr Holden once pushed for the livestreaming of meetings as a transparency measure but has since been highly critical of the council's operations, remarking, "Wymondham Town Council is in chaos and as crazy as a box of frogs." He further questioned the resilience of councillors to handle criticism, particularly in light of the challenges posed to their decision-making processes.

This development highlights ongoing tensions within the council, reflecting broader concerns about transparency and governance within local authorities.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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2. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/24228691.wymondham-council-introduces-red-cards-meetings/> - This piece details the Wymondham Town Council's implementation of a 'red card' system, allowing councillors to leave meetings for mental health reasons, following an incident involving councillor Tony Holden's resignation speech.
3. <https://www.wymondhammagazine.co.uk/news/town-council-watch-feb-2024> - This article discusses the Wymondham Town Council's decision to halt livestreaming meetings on YouTube, attributing it to negative coverage from Wymondham Magazine and highlighting a satirical sketch by journalist Jimmy Young.
4. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/04/05/councillors-red-cards-leave-meetings-mental-health/> - This report covers the Wymondham Town Council's introduction of a 'red card' system for councillors to leave meetings for mental health reasons, following a resignation speech by councillor Tony Holden.
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7. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25133348.wymondham-town-council-stop-livestreaming-meetings/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data