

PRESS AND MEDIA POLICY

1. Communications with the media

1.1. Communications with the press and media on behalf of the Council will normally be conducted by the Parish Clerk except as defined in this policy.

1.2. Except in emergencies, the Parish Clerk will not communicate with the media or press on behalf of the Council without consulting with Councillors by email to obtain a consensus on the matter.

1.3. In the absence of the Parish Clerk, the Chair or appointed Councillor will conduct any communications with the media or press and will follow the same procedures as the Parish Clerk.

1.4. An emergency for the purpose of this policy is defined as an unplanned major event impacting upon the Council's responsibilities where there is no time to convene a PC meeting before communicating with the press or media concerning the Council's position.

1.5. The Chair or appointed Councillor may be authorised by the Council to communicate with the media and press for a specific issue, event or time period.

1.6. Decisions by the Council are taken collectively. It will be the Council's normal position to avoid face to face interviews with the press and media and for the Clerk to issue a formal statement which has been agreed, where practicable, by available Councillors even if such agreement is obtained informally.

1.7. Where the Parish Council considers that it will not be in the best interest of the Council or the community to decline a request for a specific interview, then the Chair or appointment Councillor will agree to such an interview and act as the Council's spokesperson.

The Chair or appointed Councillor will consult with other Councillors and Clerk before reaching this decision where practical. The Chair or appointed Councillor will also consult with Councillors on the approach to the interview where practicable. In responding to questions, the spokesperson will restrict answers to already agreed policy/decisions/policy justifications of the Council wherever possible and avoid personal opinion and speculation about a future decision of the Council.

1.8. The Clerk is authorised to write regular articles on themes/topics, to keep residents apprised of Council activities.

1.9. In performing media communications under sections 1.4 to 1.8 of this policy, the Parish Council must ensure that any publicity describing the Council's policies and aims should be as objective as possible, concentrating on the facts or explanation or both. The Parish Council will not use public funds to mount publicity campaigns whose primary purpose is to persuade the public to hold a particular view.

1.11. Parish Councillors can communicate with the media but must ensure that it is clear that the opinions given were their own and not necessarily those of the Council. Councillors are at liberty to communicate with the Press in their own right as parish representatives. However, they must always maintain that they speak as individuals and not on behalf of the Parish Council and adherence to the Code of Conduct.

Approved policy as agreed at the parish council meeting held Wednesday, 9th February 2022

Signed – Mrs Karen Howe – Parish Clerk