

MEDIA POLICY.

(This Policy was reviewed by the full Council at its AGM held on 15 May 2024, minute 20/24-25)

Introduction:

1. The Town Council is committed to the provision of accurate information about its governance, decisions and activities. Where this information is not available via the Council's publication scheme, please contact the Town Clerk or, in his absence, the Assistant Town Clerk.
2. The Town Council shall, where possible, co-operate with those whose work involves gathering material for publication in any form including use of the internet ("the media").
3. This policy explains how the Town Council may work with the media to meet the above objectives in accordance with the legal requirements and restrictions that apply.

Legal requirements and restrictions:

4. This policy is subject to the Town Council's obligations which are set out in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1986, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, other legislation which may apply and the Town Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The Town Council's Financial Regulations and relevant Standing Orders referenced in this policy are available via the Town Council's publication scheme.
5. The Town Council cannot disclose confidential information or information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law. The Town Council cannot disclose information if this is prohibited under the terms of a court order, by legislation, the Town Council's Standing Orders, under contract or by common law. Town Councillors are subject to additional restrictions about the disclosure of confidential information which arise from the Code of Conduct adopted by the Town Council, a copy of which is available via the Town Council's publication scheme.

Meetings:

6. A meeting of the Town Council and its Committees/Sub-Committees is open to the public unless the meeting resolves to exclude them because their presence at the meeting is prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business or other special reason(s) stated in the resolution. In accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders, persons may be required to leave a meeting of the Town Council and its Committees/Sub-Committees, if their disorderly behaviour obstructs the business of the meeting.
7. Where a meeting of the Town Council and its Committees/Sub-Committees include an opportunity for public participation the media may speak and ask questions. Public participation and responding to questions is regulated by the Town Council's Standing Orders.

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8. The photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a meeting of the Town Council and its Committees/Sub-Committees (which includes e.g. using a mobile phone or tablet, recording for a TV/radio broadcast, providing commentary on blogs, web forums, or social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube) which enables a person not at the meeting to see, hear or be given commentary about the meeting is permitted unless: i) the meeting has resolved to hold all or part of the meeting without the public present or (ii) such activities disrupt the proceedings or (iii) paragraphs 9 and 10 below apply.
9. The photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a child or vulnerable adult at a Town Council or Committee/Sub-Committee meeting is not permitted unless an adult responsible for them has given permission.
10. In accordance with the Town Councils Standing Orders, the photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a member of the public speaking at a meeting of the Town Council or Committee/Sub-Committee is only allowed with their express permission.
11. Oral reporting or commentary during a Town Council or Committee/Sub-Committee meeting by a person who is present at the meeting is not permitted.
12. The Town Council shall, as far as it is practicable, provide reasonable facilities for anyone taking a report of a Town Council or Committee/Sub-Committee meeting and for telephoning their report at their own expense.
13. The Town Council's Standing Orders will confirm if attendance by the public, their participation, photographing, recording, filming or other reporting is permitted at a meeting of a Committee/Sub-Committee.

Other communications with the media:

14. This policy does not seek to regulate Town Councillors in their private capacity.
15. The Town Council's communications with the media seek to represent the corporate position and views of the Town Council. If the views of Town Councillors are different to the Town Council's corporate position and views, they will make this clear.
16. The Town Clerk, or in his absence, the Assistant Town Clerk may contact the media if the Town Council wants to provide information, a statement or other material about the Town Council.
17. Subject to the obligations on Town Councillors not to disclose information referred to in paragraph 5 above and not to misrepresent the Town Council's position, Town Councillors are free to communicate their position and views.

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Social Media:

18. The Town Councils presence, content of entries and monitoring, on Social Media shall be exclusively the responsibility of the Town Clerk, or in his absence, the Assistant Town Clerk.
19. Any issues arising from the Town Councils presence and content of entries on Social Media shall, where appropriate, be dealt with in accordance with the Town Councils Capability and/or Staff Disciplinary Policies/Procedures

