

# WHADDON PARISH COUNCIL

## Press and Media Policy

Whaddon Parish Council recognises the role of its relationship with the local community in influencing the work and decisions it takes. Effective media relations are an important factor in establishing a good relationship between the Parish Council and the community.

This policy sets out the framework for Parish Council members and employees to follow, when in contact with the media, to inform the public about the Parish Council's activities, decisions and the services it provides.

The term "Media" encompasses many different means of communicating a message to a wide audience and includes radio, television, social media, the internet and a wide range of printed media such as newspapers, leaflets, posters and the Parish Newsletter.

### Contact with the Media

1. The general principle is that the Clerk shall act as the Press Office for the Parish Council. Any official contact with the media concerning the Parish Council's policies, decisions and services should be initiated through the Clerk. The Clerk will clear all press reports or comments to the media with the Chairman\* of the Parish Council.
2. Press releases and statements will be prepared by the Clerk and/or Chairman\*, in association with other Members as required, and will be informally restricted to matters that have been debated and agreed by the Parish Council.
3. If a Member or employee receives an approach or enquiry from the media about any matter relating to the Parish Council, it should be referred to the Clerk. A decision will then be made by the Clerk and/or Chairman\*, in consultation with other Members as necessary, about the format and content of any response.
4. Unless a Councillor has been authorised by the Parish Council to speak to the media on a particular issue, if comments are made to the Press, Councillors must make it clear that it is a personal view and ask that it is clearly reported as such.
5. Any Member taking part in a radio or television broadcast should only do so on behalf of the Parish Council with the approval of the Clerk and/or Chairman\*, in consultation with other Members where necessary. Ideally arrangements should be made for the broadcast to be recorded and retained for reference. Alternatively, a note of the broadcast's content should be made and sent to the Clerk.
6. Members of the Parish Council who identify a media opportunity should refer to the Clerk and Chairman\* so as to ensure accuracy and consistency in any subsequent press release or contact with the media.
7. Members of the Parish Council are not prevented from expressing a personal opinion through the media e.g. by writing to a newspaper or posting an opinion on an internet site. However, Members must make it clear that any views expressed are their own views. Members should take care not to misrepresent and/or bring the Parish Council into disrepute and must bear in mind their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct.

# **Public Meetings**

## **Recording and Filming**

1. Any member of the public/Press may take photographs, film and audio record proceedings of all public meetings of the Parish Council and its Committees.
2. Whilst no prior permission is needed, it is advisable that any person wishing to film or audio record a meeting let the Clerk know so that all necessary arrangements can be made for the public meeting. The Parish Council will endeavour to provide a space to view and hear the meeting, preferably with a table.
3. Any filming of the public should not include children, the vulnerable or other members of the public who actively object to being filmed, without undermining the broader transparency of the meeting.
4. Members of the public/Press who are taking part in filming or audio recording of a meeting must not act in a disruptive manner i.e. any action or activity which disrupts the conduct of meetings or impedes other members of the public from seeing, hearing, filming etc the proceedings. Anyone displaying disruptive behaviour may be excluded from the meeting.
5. If at any time it becomes necessary to close the meeting to the Public (usually due to matters of confidentiality), filming and recording will also be requested to stop.
6. If the Parish Council intends to webcast its meetings, they will notify the public in advance.

## **Tweeting and Blogging**

Councillors and members of the public are allowed to report from meetings by any form of social media provided it is not disruptive and does not detract from the proper conduct of the meeting. Councillors may not report confidential information from any section of a meeting that has been closed to the Public.

\* or in the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman

This policy was adopted by Whaddon Parish Council on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016