

Sutton-in-Craven Parish Council

Press & Media Policy

Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to define the roles and responsibilities within the Council for working with the media and deals with the day-to-day relationship between the Council and the media.
- 1.2 It is not the intention of this policy to curb freedom of speech or to enforce strict rules and regulations. Rather, it provides guidance on how to deal with issues that may arise when dealing with the media.

Aims

- 2.1 The council's media policy reflects the organisation's policy aims including the way we expect members and employees to behave and the culture we strive to achieve.
- 2.2 The media policy is therefore to be:
 - Open
 - Transparent
 - Honest
 - Proactive
 - Helpful to the media in facilitating photograph opportunities, interviews and other reasonable request.

Policy on dealing with media

- If you are a member of the press and wish to contact the council with an enquiry you should contact the Proper Officer in the first instance.
- All requests from the press or other media for an oral or written statement or comment from the Council shall be processed by the Proper Officer in consultation with the Chairman.
- In accordance with our standing orders, the press shall be provided reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.
- Confidential documents, exempt Minutes, reports, papers and private correspondence should not be leaked to the media. If such leaks do occur, an investigation will take place to establish who was responsible and appropriate action taken.
- When the media wish to discuss an issue that is, or is likely to be, subject to legal proceedings then advice should be taken from the Council's solicitor before any response is made.
- Statements made by the Chairman and the Clerk should reflect the Council's opinion.
- Other Councillors can talk to the media but must ensure that it is clear that the opinions given were their own and not necessarily those of the Council.
- There are occasions when it is appropriate for the Council to submit a letter, for example to explain important policies or to correct factual errors in letters submitted by other

correspondents. Such letters should be kept brief and balanced intone and correspondence should not be drawn out over several weeks. All correspondence must come from the Clerk.

Legal Framework

- 3.1 The law governing communications in local authorities can be found in the Local Government Acts 1986 and 1988. The Council must also have regard to the government code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity.

Press Releases

- 4.1 The purpose of a press release is to make the media aware of a potential story, to provide important public information or to explain the Council's position on a particular issue. It is the responsibility of the Clerk and Members to look for opportunities where the issuing of a press release may be beneficial.
- 4.2 The Clerk or any Member may draft a press release, however they must all be issued by the Clerk in order to ensure that the principles outlined in section three (Legal Framework) are adhered to, that there is consistency of style across the Council and that the use of the press release can be monitored.