



FISHBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

PRESS AND MEDIA POLICY

Adopted on 19 September 2017 **Signed** *Geoff Hand* **Chairman**

Minute reference: **17/66.1**

Policy Reviewed on 21 May 2019 Minute reference 19/67.2

Fishbourne Parish Council's interaction with the community is vital to its work and the decisions it takes. An open and constructive dialogue is a key requirement for influencing and developing services, identifying needs and measuring satisfaction. Effective information, news and media relations are an essential factor. This policy does not set out to be comprehensive, but is to guide Parish Council Members and anyone employed by the Council in their relations with the news media.

1. The term media encompasses many different means of communicating information to a wide audience. While not an exhaustive list, the media includes the following: radio, television, newspapers, magazine, newsletters, social media, and the internet.
2. The Clerk and Councillors should always have due regard for the long term reputation of the Council in all their dealings with the media.
3. The Local Government Act 1972 requires that agendas, reports, and minutes are sent to the media on request.
4. The media are encouraged to attend Council meetings and seating will be provided.
5. Confidential documents, exempt minutes, reports, papers and private correspondence should not be leaked to the media. If leaks do occur, an investigation should take place to establish who was responsible; appropriate action may be taken.
6. If a Councillor receives an approach or enquiry from the media about any Parish Council matter, this must be referred as soon as possible to the Chair and the Clerk.

7. The Council should make every effort to respond promptly to requests for information. Responses should be made via the Clerk, after consultation with the Chair and/or other relevant Councillors. Copies of responses should be retained.
8. Statements made by the Chair or the Clerk should reflect the Council's position. If the council does not have an official position on the issue raised, this should be stated.
9. Other Councillors should not communicate with the media on behalf of the Council. If they do have contact with the media, they must make clear that they are speaking in a personal capacity and that the views expressed are their own.
10. There may be occasions when it is appropriate for the Council to submit a letter, for example to explain important policies or correct factual errors in articles or letters submitted by other correspondents. Such letters should be brief and balanced in tone. They should be sent by the Clerk but may be signed by the Chair.
11. The purpose of a news release is to make the media aware of a potential story, to provide public information, or to explain the Council's position on a particular issue. It is the responsibility of the Clerk and Councillors to identify opportunities where the issuing of a news release may be beneficial.
12. The Clerk or any Councillor may draft a news release, however they must all be issued by the Clerk, to ensure a consistency of style and that legal principles are adhered to.