



CROWTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

Press and Media Communication Policy

Introduction

1. This policy does not seek to be either prescriptive or comprehensive but sets out to provide guidance on how to deal with some of the practical issues that may arise when dealing with the press and media.

Policy

2. Any council communications with the press and media will be in writing via the Parish Clerk or Chairman of the council.
3. The Clerk as the Proper Officer of the council is authorised to receive all communications from the press and media and to issue press statements on behalf of the council. In her absence this will be dealt with by the Assistant Clerk in liaison with the Chairman.
4. All communications made by the Clerk will relate to the stated business and day to day management of the activities or adopted policy of the council.
5. Enquiries relating to matters not yet considered by council should be referred to the Chairman of the council and/or related committee.
6. No individual Councillor should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the council, a committee, sub-committee or working group.

Members of the Council

7. All councillors must observe the Code of Conduct in force whenever conducting the business of the council, or acting as a representative of the council.
8. A councillor must not discuss with the press any matter which has been discussed under confidential items on the council's agenda or at any other private briefing.
9. When speaking or providing written material to the press and media, members must make clear the capacity, in which they are providing the information. For example: -
 - Clerk or Chairman of the council
 - private individual (i.e. letter to press for publication) but not necessarily representing the views of the council.

10. When writing to the press as an individual, never imply you are stating council policy e.g. by use of the prefix “Cllr” or Councillor” as a title.
11. If members have a complaint or receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be presented to the Clerk in written format, to be dealt with under the complaints procedure, or via a council agenda item. The person’s name and address should be on record.

Dealing with the Press

12. When approached for a comment, think carefully about what you want to say particularly if it is in relation to a controversial subject. If necessary ask for some time to call the reporter back. Never be pushed in to saying something when you need time to think.
13. Ensure that your comments and views will not bring the council, its councillors or its staff into disrepute and ensure that comments are neither libellous nor slanderous.

Meetings of Council and Committees

14. Copies of agenda, minutes and reports sent to members for meetings of the council are available to the public and press and media and are displayed on the council’s web site.
15. At meetings, members of the press are permitted to take notes and/or record the proceedings, unless excluded by resolution of the council, usually when matters of a confidential nature are being discussed or if the meeting is being disrupted because of the recording.

Press Releases

16. All press releases made on behalf of the council will be prepared by the Clerk following any meetings of the council.
17. The Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, is also authorised to publish press releases on any urgent matters where there is insufficient time for a council meeting.