

ST. ANNE'S ON THE SEA TOWN COUNCIL

PRESS PROTOCOLS

Introduction

This document has been prepared as a guidance note for officers and elected members. It represents the policy of the Council in respect of its relationships with the Press and Media. The policy has been prepared to ensure consistency in the Council's dealing with the Media and details who is authorised to speak on behalf of the Council. It has been drafted to ensure that the views and policy of the Council are presented accurately.

The overriding principle of this policy is that all elements of the Media will be treated equally.

The Town Clerk and Officers of the Council

The Town 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 as instructed or as the Officer may consider appropriate. All communications made by the Town Clerk will relate to the stated business, day to day management of its activities or adopted policy of the Council. He is not expected or authorised to speculate on matters that have not been considered by the Council. Where such questions are put to the Town Clerk he should refer the enquirer to all of the Group Leaders on the Council, the Chairman of a Committee or the Town Mayor as considered appropriate.

In the absence of the Town Clerk media communications will be handled by the Community Development Manager. In the absence of both of these officers enquirers will be referred to the Town Mayor or Deputy Town Mayor who will act as the Town Clerk for the purposes of this element of the policy.

No other officer of the Council apart from the above, or whom may be authorised by the Town Clerk, is authorised to speak or communicate with the Media on any matter affecting the Council or its business.

[Note: This requirement will not prevent any officer contacting the Media in the capacity of an elected Union representative, or individually if in dispute with the Council]

Members of the Council

When speaking or providing written material to the Media Members should make it clear in what capacity they are providing information or, are responding to the enquiry or interview. For example: -

- As Group Leader
- As Chair of Committee
- As Town Mayor
- As individual (i.e. letter to press for publication)
- As spokesperson or as Press Officer for a political party

A copy of any written material provided by a Member, as representing the Council, to the media shall be forwarded on to the Town Clerk.

In providing information to the Media Members and Officers representing the Council will abide by the "Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity".

Meetings of Council and Committees

Copies of Agenda, Minutes and Reports sent to Members for meetings of the Council or its Committees will be posted on the website, at the same time.

Facilities will be provided at meetings for the Press to take notes of the proceedings.

As provided in the Council's Standing Orders both the Press and Public may be excluded from a meeting whilst certain confidential matters (as provided for in the relevant legislation) is under discussion.

[Note: The Town Council as a Parish Council is governed by the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960. The provisions of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985, which gave greater public access to the proceedings of local authorities, does not apply to Parish Councils. However, in adopting the policy contained in this document the Town Council has included parts of the revised procedures]

Adopted by the Town Council on 30th April 2013