Newport
Parish Council

Press and Media Policy

Newport Parish Council's Standing Orders (section21) state:

- Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

This policy outlines therefore the procedures and arrangements for handling the press and what Councillors or the Clerk should do if approached by the media or if they are involved in a situation that will attract media attention.

The Parish Council is keen to develop a good rapport and work proactively with the media, whilst ensuring that confidentiality and consent are maintained at all times.

1. On receipt of a request from the press or other media for a statement to the Clerk or any Councillor, the person receiving the request will advise the body making the request that a statement will be considered and issued shortly.

2. On receipt of a request the journalist or other caller should be asked to make clear who they are working for or what is the exact nature of their enquiry. Further, they should be asked what and where any information they elicit will be put.

3. The Council is under no obligation to provide a statement – and may prefer to make 'no comment'.

4. Only the Clerk and/or the Chair shall provide the press with a verbal or written statement – ideally this statement would be after liaison with each other as a minimum and may involve input from other Councillors too.

5. The exception to point 3 above would be if the Chairman or the Parish Council at a Parish Council meeting had delegated a specific Parish Councillor(s) to make the response on behalf of the Council.

6. Under no circumstances must anything of a confidential nature be disclosed to the press or other media.

7. The response to the press or other media should be the view of the Parish Council as a whole, not the view of an individual Councillor or the Clerk. However an individual may give a direct quote as long as they attribute that quote to their name and make it clear that is their view and not that of the Parish Council.

8. No response should be made that is in any way damaging to the interests or reputation of the Parish Council.

9. The Parish Council acknowledges the right of the media to obtain information from the Parish Council under the Freedom of Information Act. The Council will respond to such requests in accordance with the Act as laid out in Newport Parish Council's Freedom of Information policy.

The Council will not release information that is exempted. Exemptions will be: (a) Personal data (see paragraph 10 below); (b) Confidential matters (c) Information likely to endanger the health or safety of a Councillor or Clerk or any other individual.

10. Data protection Act – The Council recognises that personal data (including photographs relating to a Councillor or Clerk are protected under the Data Protection Act and this personal data will not be disclosed to the media without the consent of the person concerned.

11. If a request for information involves a conflict of interest for a Councillor or the Clerk. In that event, the Councillor or Clerk must declare his or her interest and avoid involvement with the matter.

12. This Policy will be reviewed annually and recommendations for changes to it should be approved by Full Council.

13. The Clerk should keep a record of all communications with the Press or other media.

14. At Parish Council meetings – The Press or representatives from any other media are welcomed at Parish Council meetings. However under Newport Parish Council's Standing Orders, if any item or information is deemed personal or sensitive and not for the public domain, then the press / media along with members of the public should leave the meeting when requested to do so at this point.

Social Media

In their use of social media (Facebook, Twitter email, etc) Councillors and Staff must at all times observe the principles stated in this policy.

Adopted: 14th December 2021 Minute Number: 2021/12/11
Newport Parish Council
Reviewed by the Newport Parish Council 13.12.22 – No updates required Minute Ref 2022 12 09
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