

Walford Parish Council

Media Policy

1. Policy statement

- a. Walford Parish Council is committed to the provision of accurate information about its governance, decisions and activities.
- b. The Council shall, where possible, co-operate with those whose work involves gathering material for publication in any form including use of the internet ["the media"].
- c. The purpose of this policy is to define the roles and responsibilities within the Council for working with the media and explains how the Council may work with the media to meet the above objectives in accordance with the legal requirements and restrictions that apply
- d. 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.

2. Legal requirements and restriction

- a. This policy is subject to the Council's obligations which are set out in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1986, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, other legislation which may apply and the Council's standing orders and financial regulations. The Council's financial regulations and relevant standing orders referenced in this policy are available via the Council's publication scheme.
- b. The Council cannot disclose confidential information or information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law. The Council cannot disclose information if this is prohibited under the terms of a court order, by legislation, the Council's standing orders, under contract or by common law.
- c. Councillors are subject to additional restrictions about the disclosure of confidential information which arise from the code of conduct adopted by the Council, a copy of which is available via the Council's publication scheme.

3. Meetings

- a. A meeting of the Council and its committees is open to the public unless the meeting resolves to exclude them because their presence at the meeting is prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business or other special reason(s) stated in the resolution. In accordance with the Council's standing orders, persons may be required to leave a meeting of the Council and its committees, if their disorderly behaviour obstructs the business of the meeting.
- b. Where a meeting of the Council and its committees include an opportunity for public participation, the media may speak and ask questions. Public participation is regulated by the Council's standing orders.
- c. The photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a meeting of the Council and its committees (which includes e.g., using a mobile phone or tablet, recording for a TV/radio broadcast, providing commentary on blogs, web forums, or social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube) which enable a person not at the meeting to see, hear or be given commentary about the meeting is permitted unless
 - i. The meeting has resolved to hold all or part of the meeting without the public present
 - ii. Such activities disrupt the proceedings or
 - iii. Paragraphs d and e below apply
- d. The photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a child or vulnerable adult at a Council or committee meeting is not permitted unless an adult responsible for them has given permission
- e. Oral reporting or commentary about a Council or committee meeting by a person who is present at the meeting is not permitted.
- f. The Council shall, as far as is practicable, provide reasonable facilities for anyone taking a report of a Council or committee meeting and for telephoning their report at their expense.
- g. The Council's standing orders will confirm if attendance by the public, their participation, photographing, recording, filming or other reporting is permitted at a meeting of a sub-committee.

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4. Contact with the media

- a. When responding to approaches from the media, the Clerk or the Chair are authorised to contact the media
- b. Statements made by the Clerk and the Chair should reflect the Council's opinion
- c. Subject to the obligations on councillors not to disclose information referred to in para 2.b and 2.c above and not to misrepresent the Council's position, councillors are free to communicate their position and views. If the views of individual councillors are different to the Council's corporate position and views, they will make it clear that the opinions given are their own and not necessarily those of the Council.
- d. The Clerk or any member may draft a press release, however they must all be issued by the Clerk to ensure adherence to the requirements outlined in section 2 above, that there is consistency of style across the Council and that the use of the press release can be monitored.
- e. All correspondence must come from the Clerk

Document control

Revision number	1.1	Written by	Clerk
Last approved by the Parish Council	21 st July 2021		
Date for next review	July 2022		