

**SOUTH SWINDON
PARISH COUNCIL**

PRESS & MEDIA POLICY

Adopted 17 May 2017

1. Introduction

This policy will define the roles and responsibilities within the Council for dealing with the Press and media.

2. Aims

The Parish Council is accountable to the parishioners and communication through the media; press, radio, TV and Internet are important in conveying information to the community. The Council should maintain positive relations with the media and work with them to increase public awareness of their policies, services and facilities.

3. Press Releases

Press releases will be issued from the Parish Office by the Clerk, having been agreed in advance by the Chair of the Council, or in their absence the Vice-Chair of the Council.

4. Contact with the Media

The media contact the Parish Office on occasions for a quote from the Parish Council on a local issue.

The Chair of the Council will make the comment on behalf of the Parish Council following the known policy or decision on a particular issue. The Chair of the Council may feel that the quote should be made by the Chair of a Committee and ask them to make the quote on behalf of the Parish Council.

If the media are requiring background information regarding an issue, then this can be supplied by the Clerk.

5. Individual Councillors

The media may contact an individual Councillor for a Parish Council comment on a local issue. The Councillor should direct the media to the Parish Office, or if this is closed the Chair of the Council. Councillors are not, in their official capacity, permitted to provide statements in any form to the media (Standing Order 21(c)).

Councillors may make their own comment on any issue, but it must be made clear that the opinions are their own and not necessary those of the Council.

6. Letters to the Press

Letters to the media on behalf of the Parish Council will be sent by the Clerk having been agreed in advance by the Chair of the Council, or in their absence the Vice-Chair of the Council.

Councillors may write their own letters to the media, but it must be made clear that the opinions are their own and not necessary those of the Council.

7. Confidential

Confidential documents and information cannot be given to the media. If this does occur an investigation will take place to establish who was responsible and appropriate action taken (Standing Order 11(c)).

8. Legal Proceedings

When the media request a comment that is likely to be, or subject to legal proceeding, no comment should be made without the advice of the Parish Council's solicitor.

9. Personal Information

No personal information or details of any staff matters including disputes should be given to the media.

10. Council Meetings

The media are welcome to attend Parish Council Meetings. These are all publicised on the noticeboard in the parish and on the website.