

FILEY TOWN COUNCIL – PRESS AND MEDIA POLICY

Introduction

1. Filey Town Council (“the Council”) is committed to the provision of accurate information in respect of its functions, decisions, and actions.
2. The Council may communicate with those whose work involves gathering material for editorial publication in print, broadcaster, and electronic form (e.g., researchers, journalists, reporters, photographers, editors of newspapers and magazines, camera or sound operators and crew of TV and radio programmes) (“the media”) to publicise its business, decisions and actions. The Council may require the media to produce a UK press card.
3. Where information is not available via the Council’s publication scheme, the Council shall endeavour to assist the media with enquiries about the Council’s functions, decisions, and actions.
4. This policy explains how the Council, its councillors and staff will work with the media to meet the above objectives in accordance with the legal requirements and restrictions that apply.

Legal requirements and restrictions

5. This policy is subject to the Council’s statutory obligations 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 and the Council’s standing orders and financial regulations. Relevant standing orders and relevant financial regulations referenced to or explained in this policy are available via the Council’s publication scheme.
6. The Council, its councillors and staff cannot disclose information which is confidential or where disclosure of information 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. 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.

Meetings

7. The meetings of the Council, its committees and sub-committees are open to the public unless they resolve that 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 or if standing orders for certain sub-committees do not permit attendance of the public. In accordance with its standing orders, persons may be required to leave a meeting of the Council, its committees, sub-committees, and joint committees if their disorderly behaviour obstructs the business of the meeting.
8. Where meetings include time for public participation, the media may speak and ask questions. Public participation is regulated by the Council’s standing orders.
9. Standing Order, No 3m - The recording of Filey Town Council meetings is permitted under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 but that recording will be

carried out in accordance with separate rules adopted by the Town Council to effectively and lawfully manage this activity.

(Please refer to the Town Council's rule named 'Rules for The Effective Management of Recording (Audio, Visual or Electronic Recording) at Filey Town Council Meetings')

10. In advance of meetings of the Council, its committees, sub-committees and joint committees, newspapers, news agencies or organisations that collect news for sound and TV broadcast are entitled, on payment of postage or other necessary charges, to copies of the agenda and necessary supporting papers. The accredited representatives of newspapers, news agencies or organisations that collect news for sound and TV broadcast shall be given reasonable facilities for taking their report of a meeting and for telephoning their report at their own expense. This is confirmed in the Council's standing orders.

Other communications with the media

11. The media shall contact the Council's Clerk if they want to (i) interview councillors or staff about its business decisions and actions or (ii) obtain a verbal or written statement from the Council about its business decisions and actions. If the Clerk is not available, the media should contact the Deputy Town Clerk.
12. Any verbal or written statement given by the Council's Clerk (or Deputy Town Clerk as the case may be) to the media represents the corporate position and views of the Council, not the individual views of its councillors or staff held in their official capacity.
13. This policy does not seek to regulate councillors in their private capacity.
14. The Council's Clerk, or in his absence, the Deputy Town Clerk may contact the media if the Council wants to give an interview, provide a verbal or written statement to the media, or publish an article using the media about its business, decisions and actions.
15. Councillors and staff, other than the Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk in accordance with paragraph 12, cannot in their official capacity, provide verbal or written statements to the media, or write articles for publication using the media about the Council's business decisions and actions without the Council's prior written consent, subject to the Terms of Reference for each Council Committee/Working Party to have delegated power through its Chairman to issue press statements regarding matters relating to the Committee on behalf of the full council.
16. The Council's communications with the media seek to represent the corporate position and views of the Council. If the views of councillors are different to the Council's corporate position and views, **they will make this clear that this is their own personal view.** Councillors and staff are not permitted to misrepresent the corporate position and views of the Council, or to damage the reputation of others in the Council or the Council itself.
17. Subject to the obligations on councillors not to disclose information referred to in paragraph 6 above and not to misrepresent the Council's position, or to damage the reputation of others in the Council, councillors are free to communicate their position and views.

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Reviewed May 2022.**

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