

PERRY PARISH COUNCIL – PRESS AND MEDIA POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to define the roles and responsibilities within Perry Parish Council (“the Council”) for working with the media and deals with the day-to-day relationship between the Council and the media.

1.2 “Press” and “media” includes, and is not limited to: local and national newspapers and magazines, radio, television and online platforms.

1.3 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.

1.4 This policy operates alongside the Council’s Standing Orders and Social Media policies.

2. CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA

2.1 Councillors and the Clerk should always have due regard for the long-term reputation of the Council in all their dealings with the media.

2.2 Confidential documents, exempt minutes, reports, papers and private correspondence must not be leaked to the media. If such leaks do occur, an investigation will take place to establish who responsible and appropriate action was taken. This investigation will be undertaken by the Chairman and / or the Clerk.

2.3 When the media wish to discuss an issue that is, or is likely to be, subject to legal proceedings then legal advice should be sought before any response is made. Whenever possible any information given to the press shall be given in writing so as not to leave interpretation open to misunderstanding and misreporting.

2.4 Personal information - which includes but is not limited to: disciplinary procedures and long-term sickness absences that are affecting service provision – should be treated as

confidential, and advice must be taken from the Clerk before any response concerning these is made to the media.

2.5 When responding to approaches from the media, the Chairman and the Clerk are authorised to make contact with the media.

2.6 Statements made by the Chairman and the Clerk should reflect the Council's opinion.

2.7 Other Councillors can talk to the media but must ensure that it is clear that the opinions given are their own and not necessarily those of the Council.

2.8 There are occasions when it is appropriate for the Council to submit a letter, for example to explain important policies or to correct factual errors in letters submitted by other correspondents. Such letters should be kept brief and balanced in tone and correspondence should not be drawn out over several weeks. All correspondence must come from the Clerk.

3 ATTENDANCES OF MEDIA AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

3.1 The Local Government Act 1972 requires that agendas, reports and minutes are sent to the media on request.

3.2 The media are encouraged to attend Council meetings and seating and workspace will be made available.

3.3 Any filming or recording of Council proceedings by the media must be with prior notice to and agreement by the Chairman and Clerk.

4 PRESS RELEASES

4.1 The purpose of a press release is to make the media aware of a potential story, to provide important public information or to explain the Council's position on a particular issue. It is the responsibility of the Councillors and Clerk to look for opportunities where the issuing of a press release may be beneficial.

4.2. Any Councillor or the Clerk or may draft a press release, however they must all be issued by the Clerk in order to ensure that there is consistency of style and that the use of the press release can be monitored.