

Press Policy

The council strives to be open and accessible to the media at all times.

Purpose of press policy.

The Council uses external communication with the media for a number of purposes:

- To broaden and strengthen local democracy through a well-informed public
- To raise awareness of the Council's policies, services and functions
- To publicise meetings and decisions of the Council, and other decision making committees
- To promote the Council's role as a community leader
- To publicise the Council's role in partnership initiative with other bodies
- To enable local people to have an effective, well informed dialogue with the Council about services and policies and the needs of individuals and communities
- In an emergency, to highlight public safety messages and keep people informed.

Press Releases.

The Clerk will normally be the contact for press enquiries on appropriate issues, but will refer to the Chairman of the Council or appropriate committee for specific quotes as and when required. The Clerk/Chairman will be responsible for issuing all press releases and for dealing with enquiries from the press in an efficient and timely manner. In certain circumstances this responsibility could be delegated to another suitable or well informed person. Press releases will normally be approved by the Chairman of the Council or Committee chairman when there are direct quotes used.

The Council's publicity is intended to be objective and balanced, and will be designed not to affect public support for any particular political party.

Press Approaches to Parish Councillors.

When approached by the press, councillors should only comment if they are confident about the issue raised and the Council's policy or response to particular activity, service or issue. It is important that quotes that are made on behalf of the Council are factual and standards and ethics are maintained. The parish office should be informed of the approach.

Other Publicity.

The parish office will update notice boards, use Facebook and maintain the Council's website, liaising with the Chairman as appropriate to provide a useful means of informing residents of the Council's services and its activities. The Clerk/Chairman will edit the page in the Downs Mail.

Controversy on some issues is inevitable – indeed it is a healthy part of the democratic process. In these circumstances the Council's policies may need defending in a manner which may be robust but which must still be reasonable.