



Press and Media Policy

Policy Statement

Scarning Parish Council is committed to the provision of accurate information in respect of its functions, decisions and actions.

Implementation

This policy is subject to the Council's statutory obligations set out in the Local Government Act 1972, the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Council's Standing Orders. The Council must also have regard to the Government's Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity.

Press/Media Attendance at Council Meetings

Meetings of the Council, its committee and sub committees are open to members of the Press unless the Council resolves that their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons.

Under its Standing Order 1 (k) the Council resolves that the Press 'shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.'

Members of the Press are entitled to speak and ask questions in the Council's Public Participation period. In response, the Council will act in accordance with its Standing Orders and will not be required to give a response at the meeting.

The recording and reporting of meetings is subject to the Council's separate policy on Public Participation.

The Press/media is entitled on payment of postage, photocopying or other necessary charges to copies of the agenda, minutes and supporting papers for a Council meeting.

Communication with the Press/Media

Where information is not available via the Council's Publication Scheme, the Council will endeavour to assist the Press/media with enquiries about the Council's functions, decisions and actions.

All communications with the Press/media should be made through the clerk.

The clerk, as the Proper Officer of the Council, is authorised to receive all communications from the Press/media and to issue statements on behalf of the Council in consultation with the Chairman, or in his/her absence the Vice Chairman.

If the Press/media wishes to discuss an issue that is, or likely to be, subject to legal proceedings then advice should be taken from the Council's solicitor before any response is made.

The clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, or in his/her absence the Vice Chairman, is authorised to publish Press statements on any urgent matter where there is insufficient time for a full Council meeting.

Reporters should be directed to contact the clerk if they wish to carry out an interview or obtain a statement about the Council's business and actions. Except in the most straightforward cases, the enquirer should be informed that a statement will be made within 24 hours and they should be asked to set out clearly what they want to know. The clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, or in his absence the Vice Chairman, will determine the response from the Press/media for an oral, written comment or statement from the Council.

Any verbal or written statement given by the clerk must represent the corporate position and views of the Council, not the individual views of the Chairman or councillors.

Privacy

The clerk and members must be mindful at all times not to release personal information about members such as home addresses, email addresses and telephone numbers.

Press Releases

The purpose of a press release is to make the Press/media aware of a potential story, to provide important public information, or to explain the Council's position on a particular issue. Press releases will normally be drafted by the clerk and where necessary approved by the Chairman, or in his/her absence, the Vice Chairman.

Agreed: January 2022.

Review Date: January 2024.