

HILLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Media Policy

Purpose

The aim of this Policy is to set out a Code of Practice to provide guidance to the Clerk and the Council regarding procedures and protocol to follow when dealing with the press and public. This includes use of online communications, collectively referred to as social media and the management of the Council's website, as well as the more traditional ways of communicating.

Benefits of a multimedia policy

There are many benefits to using a variety of ways to communicate with our public. We are committed to traditional ways of communication with newsletters, questionnaires and through our website.

Press and Public

In the interests of openness and transparency, members of the public and press may film, record, photograph or use social media in order to report on the proceedings of a meeting of the Council or its committees when they are open to the public. This does not extend to live verbal commentary. It will be encouraged that all filming and photography is conducted from the area designated in the meeting room. No flash photography or additional lighting should be used without prior consent. People under the age of 18 or other members of the public not wishing to be filmed or photographed should notify the Clerk or Chairman and should sit in the area designated for this purpose. The council will do all it can to respect their wishes but it should be noted that there is not a requirement for anyone to notify the council that they are filming. Improper conduct or any disruptive behaviour could result in expulsion from the meeting.

Press Releases

It is the Clerk's role to issue press releases as instructed by the Council. In all cases, where quotations are included from Councillors in the press release, the Clerk will obtain approval from the Councillor. Press Releases will detail the name and contact details of the Clerk. No Press Release should be issued containing the Clerk's or Councillor's personal opinion.

The Parish Council's website

This is managed by the Clerk. The Clerk will, in a timely way, upload the information as required by law such as minutes and agendas, financial and governance information. Additional information uploaded will include news items supported by photographs.

Facebook – DOES NOT USE

Operation of Facebook

The Parish Council will not respond to all comments posted on Facebook, but will always aim to provide a response when maintaining or protecting its reputation. The Clerk will manage the social media posts when necessary. The views expressed by the Clerk on the social media account will be interpreted as those of the Parish Council. The Clerk must be mindful when using social media, particularly when commenting on contentious issues, and must speak on behalf of the Parish Council, rather than personal opinion. No comments will be made to posts received.

Councillors are responsible for what they post in connection with the Council. Councillors are strongly advised to have separate council and personal email addresses, and adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct and follow the principles of the Data Protection Act, as incorporated into the Council's Data protection Policy.

AUGUST 2025