



Seaford Town Council

Press & Media Policy

Introduction

Seaford Town Council welcomes enquiries from the Press and Media and recognises that its relationship with the Press helps communications with residents.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the Council is communicating in a professional and objective manner and reflecting, as far as possible, the corporate view of the Council.

The Press are permitted to attend all public meetings of the Council and its Committees and Sub-Committees, however under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the Press may be excluded for items of a confidential or sensitive nature.

Official Council Press Statements

Under the Council's Scheme of Delegation, the Town Clerk is authorised to issue press statements relating to Council activity on behalf of the Council.

Any official contact with the Press concerning the Council's policies, decisions it makes and services it provides should be addressed to the Town Clerk.

Unless authorised to do so in advance by the Town Clerk, no other Officers should be making or discussing statements with the Press.

Councillor Press Statements

Individual Councillors can make their own statements relating to local issues and this policy is not designed to prevent any member expressing a personal opinion through the media. However, members must make it clear that any view expressed which differs from Council policy or a Council press statement made, is their own personal view.

A Councillor must not disclose information that is of a confidential nature. This includes any discussion within the Press on any matter which has been discussed under confidential items on Council or Committee agendas.

At all times when conducting the business of the Council or acting as a representative of the Council, members must act in accordance with Seaford Town Council's Code of Conduct.

Press Protocol

The Town Clerk is responsible for the issuing of all official Council press statements. Any questions relating to an official press statement should be referred to the Town Clerk.

Press statements, agendas and reports and minutes of meetings are all emailed to Press contacts. Councillors will also receive a copy of all press statements made, by email, so they are aware of its existence.

Official Council statements to the Press cannot speculate on matters that have not been considered by the Council and cannot disclose any information of a confidential nature.

Any request for information under the Freedom of Information Act should be referred to the Town Clerk to deal with in accordance with Council policy.

During an election year, from the issue of the Notice of Election until the day following the election (referred to as Purdah period) officers will not normally issue press statements, in particular will not do so naming any individual councillors.

Social Media Protocol

The Council acknowledges that Social Media sites are a growing method of communicating with the public.

The Town Clerk is responsible for the content and activity on the Council's official Social Media sites.

Members should be aware of the Council's Code of Conduct and any legal implications if they are posting any comments or views on Social Media about individual members or Council employees or sharing information about the Council; whether they are identified on the site as a Town Councillor or not.

Adopted by Council: 12th May 2016

Review: May 2019