



Fishguard & Goodwick Town Council
Cyngor Tref Abergwaun ac Wdig
Town Hall, Fishguard, Pembrokeshire, SA65 9HE
Neuadd Y Dre, Abergwaun, Sir Benfro SA65 9HE

Press and Media Policy

1.0 Introduction

Fishguard and Goodwick Town Council, welcomes enquiries from the press and the media and recognises that its relationship with the press, assists in communicating with its residents.

The Council seeks to be as transparent as is possible, cooperating at all times, wherever possible, with the press and using the opportunities of the media to publicise events that are being organised.

The press are encouraged to attend all Town Council meetings of the Council, including its committees, unless excluded under the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act, 1960. They are not, however, invited to attend any working group meetings which are informal fact finding sessions and are not official Town Council meetings.

2. Purpose

The aim of this policy is to ensure that Fishguard and Goodwick Town Council is seen to communicate in a professional and objective manner and reflect, as far as is possible, the corporate view of the council.

The Council wishes to respond to the growth of social media channels and recognises that posts and comments made by Members of the Town Council could reflect directly on the organisation.

This policy sets out the required protocol for members who communicate their thoughts and views through the press and social media channels.

3. Scope

The press and media policy includes:

- 1.0 Official Council Releases
- 2.0 Councillor Press Releases
- 3.0 Freedom of Information Requests
- 4.0 Press Protocol
- 5.0 Social Media Protocol

4.0 Policy

1.0 Official Council Releases

- a) Official Council press releases and statements will be prepared by the Town Clerk in consultation with other members as required.
- b) The Town Clerk will act as the Councils Press Officer. Any official contact with the media concerning the councils policies, the decisions it makes and the services that it provides, are to be initiated through the Town Clerk
- c) Members who identify a media opportunity should discuss this with the Town Clerk who will, in consultation with other Members as appropriate, decide how this will be followed up
- d) If a Member or an employee receives an approach or an enquiry from the press or the media about any matter relating to the Town Council, it should be referred to the Town Clerk

2. Councillor Press Releases

- a) Individual councillors can make their own statements relating to local press issues and this policy is not designed to prevent any member expressing a personal opinion through the media. Members must however, make it clear that any views expressed, which differ from the Council Policy, are their own views and should be recorded as such.
- b) Such releases may or may not be political, should bear no reference whatsoever to the Council, must not be under the title of Town Councillor and must not refer to the Council. Neither the Town Council address, telephone number, contact name, website or logo, should be referred to as a point of contact.
- c) Where a journalist/reporter wishes to confirm what was said by an individual councillor during a Council meeting, they will refer to the Town Clerk.

3. Freedom of Information Requests

- 1. All requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act, should be referred to the Town Clerk, who, in routine cases, will arrange for the information request to be satisfied in accordance with the legislation.

4. Policy

- a) The Town Clerk is responsible for issuing official press releases on behalf of the Town Council.
- b) Official press releases will not identify the political party or group affiliation of any Members(s) quoted in any release
- c) When the media seeks information on an issue that is, or likely to be, subject to legal proceedings, then advice should be sought from One Voice Wales or from the Monitoring Officer at Pembrokeshire County Council.
- d) During election year, from the issue of Notice of Election until the day following the election, members will not issue press releases.
- e) All press releases and other materials are copied and filed for reference by the Town Clerk.

5. Social Media Protocol

- a) Members should be aware of the Councils Code of Conduct and any legal implications if they are posting comments or views on social media about individual members, council employees or sharing information about the council
- b) Social media should not be used as a platform to discuss council policy and members who wish to challenge the councils procedures, must refer their concerns to the Town Clerk in the first instance.
- c) Members are not permitted to share outcomes of closed working groups or fact finding sessions on social media
- d) Defamation is the act of making a statement about a person or a company that is considered as harm to reputation. If the defamatory statement is written (in print or online), it is known as liable.

Author C. Bannister, Town Clerk
Date 26.5.17

Revisions

Name
Date

Name
Date

Name
Date