



Kingshurst Parish Council

Media Policy

Kingshurst Parish Council

MEDIA POLICY

KPC Media Policy – review 26th February 2022, next review by February 2023

Amended 18th May 2023

Aims:

Kingshurst Parish Council aims to build and maintain a positive reputation and will have a proactive approach to dealing with the media with enquiries being dealt with, wherever possible, within two working days. This approach will ensure an open and transparent approach which is helpful to the media and is positive and honest.

Objectives:

- To improve residents' understanding of the work of the Council and to provide public information.
- To enhance the reputation of Kingshursts parish by promoting and celebrating success and the achievements of the Council and its partners.
- To ensure a co-ordinated response from a single point of communication, the Clerk.
- Reduce the risk of negative publicity resulting from non-response to enquiries.
- To defend the Council from unfounded criticism by ensuring the public are properly informed of all relevant facts.
- Adhere to the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority publicity.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Council's policy is to deal with all media enquiries centrally through the Clerk. This will ensure that a consistent message is given. Any statements given by the Clerk must not be party political.

Meeting Privacy:

The press is free to attend all meetings, except for any part which is in Closed Session. Recordings are taken of each meeting by the Clerk. Councillors and the press are permitted to record meetings (unless Closed Session), but it is courteous to inform the Clerk if a person wishes to independently record it. All matters discussed in Closed Session during Council Meetings must remain confidential and should not be leaked in any form to the media. If notes are taken during Closed Session these should be left behind (face to face meetings) and all papers handed in. In online conferencing meetings, notes taken during Closed Sessions should be immediately shredded and if printed or removed from your device if in electronic file format. When meeting online, please ensure that no other person can either hear or see your screen during Closed Sessions items. In both types of meetings, mobile phones and any type of recording device must be switched off during Closed Session items.

Disciplinary action will be considered if Councillors are found to have "leaked" any confidential information.

Press, Radio and Television Interviews:

All elected/Co-opted members should be sensitive to the fact that they are perceived to be speaking on behalf of the Council. If Councillors are making comments or statements that are not in accordance with Council Policy, they should make it clear that it is their own personal view and not that of the Council's.

This being the case they should not use the prefix of Councilor. Out of courtesy, the Clerk should be informed of any radio or television interviews/statements/comments made by Councilors so that she can be aware of the situation.

Anyone acting in contravention of this protocol may be subject to misconduct and disciplinary action.

Management of Negative Publicity:

It is important that this is done well and points adhered to. Inaccurate reporting in the media should be discussed by the Clerk and the Chair (along with those Councilors invited to give their views where appropriate) before a course of action is decided on. Any press statement will be written by the Clerk.

Anyone acting in contravention of this protocol may be subject to misconduct and disciplinary action.

Social Media:

Kingshurst Parish Council has its own Facebook page. Any official information or statements regarding the Council will be posted on that page. Councillors and staff should remember that all social media sites are a public forum and that they are personally responsible for the content published. It must be made clear by Councillors that any comments or statements they make (unless quoting council policy) are their own personal views and not that of the Council. This being the case they should not use the prefix of Councilor. No defamatory, derogatory or offensive comments should be posted on the internet about colleagues or matters which have come in front of the Council.

Anyone acting in contravention of this protocol may be subject to misconduct and disciplinary action.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity:

These must be respected and adhered to at all times, when dealing with any form of media. The Parish Council shall not publish any material which in whole, or in part, appears to be designed to support a political party.

Embargoes:

To be used where deemed necessary and, all press releases should carry the embargoed logo on the top sheet. Clerk, the Chair and Councilors will convene a meeting to decide on a course of action should any media break the Council's stated embargo.

Press Conferences:

Can be convened in the event of a major incident or an emergency in the town. Any press conferences held need to be pre-planned so that press statements can be prepared. All press conferences should be run to an agreed framework.

Election Years

During an election year, from the issue of the Notice of Election until the day following the election, only the Clerk should issue press releases