

# **ASHFORD HILL with HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Media Policy**

### **Introduction**

The Parish Council is committed to the provision of accurate information about its governance, decisions and activities. Where this information is not available via the Council's publication scheme, please contact the Council's Clerk. The Council will where possible, co-operate with those whose work involves gathering material for publication in any form including use of the internet.

This policy explains how the Council may work with the media to meet the above objectives in accordance with the legal requirements and restrictions that apply. This policy is subject to the Council's obligations which are set out in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1986, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, other legislation which may apply and the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

The Clerk to the Council is the first point of contact for all officer-related media enquiries. Where appropriate the Clerk will respond to all calls and arrange interviews with members and officers.

The Council cannot disclose confidential information or information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law. The Council cannot disclose information if this is prohibited under the terms of a court order, by legislation, the Council's Standing Orders, under contract or by common law. Councillors are subject to additional restrictions about the disclosure of confidential information which arise from the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.

A meeting of the Council and its committees is open to the public unless the meeting resolves to exclude them because their presence at the meeting is prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business or other special reason(s) stated in the resolution. In accordance with the Council's standing orders, persons may be required to leave a meeting of the Council and its committees, if their disorderly behaviour obstructs the business of the meeting. Where a meeting of the Council and its committees include an opportunity for public participation, the media may speak and ask questions. Public participation is regulated by the Council's Standing Orders.

The photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a meeting of the Council and its committees (which includes e.g. using a mobile phone or tablet, recording for a TV/radio broadcast, providing commentary on blogs, web forums, or social networking sites such as X, Facebook and YouTube) which enable a person not at the meeting to see, hear or be given commentary about the meeting is permitted unless (i) the meeting has resolved to hold all or part of the meeting without the public present or (ii) such activities disrupt the proceedings. Oral reporting or commentary about a Council or committee meeting by a person who is present at the meeting is not permitted. The Council shall, as far as it is practicable, provide reasonable facilities for anyone taking a report of a Council or committee meeting and for telephoning their report at their own expense.

## **Social Media**

This policy is intended to help representatives of the Parish Council (employed staff and non-employed staff) to make appropriate decisions about all forms of the media including the popular use of social media such as Facebook, X, Google+ and LinkedIn. Other social media includes but is not exclusive to blogs, video, picture blogging and audio. This policy outlines the standards the Parish Council requires all employees and Councillors to observe when using the various social media platforms, the circumstances in which the Parish Council will review your use of social media and the action that will be taken in respect of breaches of this policy. The principles of this policy apply to the use of social media regardless of the method used to access it - it covers static and mobile IT/computer equipment, as well as work and/or personal smartphones etc.

The Clerk only is permitted to post material on a social media website in the Parish Council's name.

**Approved January 2011**

**Revised April 2015, July 2024**