

St Mawgan-in-Pydar Parish Council

Press and Media Policy

1. Introduction

This policy describes how councillors and the clerk should act when in contact with the press or media. Policy on the use of social media (e.g blog, facebook, twitter) are covered by the Digital Media Policy. Standing Orders cover policy on attendance at meetings. Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme cover the sharing of existing information.

2. Responding to approaches from the press and media

2.1. Requests for factual information

Where possible Councillors and the Clerk may refer enquirers to the policies, Agendas and Minutes already published on the Council's website, if these provide the necessary information. Councillors should advise the Clerk of their response. No further comment should be offered. Other requests should be directed to the Clerk, who as appropriate will

- respond in accordance with Freedom of Information Policy, or
- place the request on the agenda of the next meeting for discussion, or
- contact the Chair who (in an emergency) will decide if it is in the clear interest of residents to prepare a response in advance of the next meeting. The Clerk will inform councillors of all such requests and responses.

2.2. Requests for opinion

Neither a councillor nor the clerk should offer an opinion on behalf of the Council on a matter that has not been discussed and Minuted. Such requests should be directed to the Clerk who will arrange for them to be placed on a future agenda. This is not intended to restrict the freedom of the Councillors to offer personal opinions. They are however, responsible for,

- Ensuring that these opinions are their own and not those of the Council
- Abiding by the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

2.3. Requests for interviews

Requests for interviews on behalf of the Council should be declined unless agreed at a meeting.

3. Making approaches to the press and media

3.1. The Council's own information and opinion

Subjects which the Council wish to publicise through the press or media should be discussed at a meeting where the purpose, content, timing and method of doing so can be agreed. If it is agreed that a draft by a Councillor or the Clerk should be reviewed prior to publication the Clerk will circulate this to confirm that it reflects the Council's intentions. If responses indicate conflicting opinions about its content, then these must be discussed at a further meeting before publication.

3.2. Third party information

Information may be received from third parties which the Council could publicise. These should be directed to the Clerk. Where this information is factual, publicly available, non-confidential and likely to be of interest to residents, the Clerk may publicise it by any convenient means. This must be done in a manner that does not imply support from the Council of any particular view.