
FELTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

MEDIA POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Felthorpe Parish Council's relationship with the community is vital to its work and the decisions it takes. An open and constructive dialogue is a key requirement for influencing and developing services, identifying attitudes and measuring satisfaction.
- 1.2 Effective media relations are an important factor in establishing a good relationship between the Parish Council and the community. Since members of the public often rely on the media and social media for local information and news, it is important for the Parish Council to present information about its activities and aspirations in a consistent way. The community in this sense includes all residents and elected representatives, businesses, schools, shops, places of worship, statutory agencies, voluntary organisations, groups and associations.
- 1.3 This document sets out the framework for Parish Council Members and employees to follow in contacting the media and informing the public about the Parish Council's activities, the decisions it takes and the services it provides.
- 1.4 "The Media" is more than the local newspaper. The phrase encompasses many different means of communicating a message to a wide audience, and includes broadcast media (radio and television), , printed media such as newsletters and leaflets, the internet including email, social networks, media sharing, microblogging, and community blogs.

2. Contact with the Media

- 2.1 The Parish Clerk will act as the first point of contact. Any official contact with the media concerning the Parish Council's policies, the decisions it takes and the services it provides, are to be initiated through the Parish Clerk.
- 2.2 Press releases and statements will be prepared by the Clerk to the Council and/or Chairman in association with other Members as required, and will normally be restricted to matters that have been debated and agreed by the Parish Council.
- 2.3 In response to a Parish Council press release:
 - a) any enquiry from the media is to be referred to the Clerk and the author of the press release;
 - b) no-one else should offer any comment without prior discussion, except to confirm basic matters of fact (dates of events, spelling of names, etc.)
- 2.4 Other Members of the Parish Council and employees who identify a media opportunity should refer to the Clerk so as to ensure accuracy and consistency in any subsequent press release or contact with the media.
- 2.5 If a Member or employee receives an approach or enquiry from the media about any matter relating to the Parish Council, it should be referred to the Clerk and / or Chairman. A decision will then be made, in consultation with other Members where necessary, about the

format and content of any response.

- 2.6 In response to an unsolicited approach from a journalist or reporter (this includes enquiries about press releases issued by other organisations)
- a) The view of the Parish Council may be expressed subject to the guidelines above;
 - b) The Clerk to the Council should be informed so that the facts can be checked and appropriate action taken.
- 2.7 These guidelines do not prevent a Member from expressing a personal opinion through the media. Members must make it clear that any views expressed when relating to parish matters, where different from Council Policy, are their own personal views. However, Members should take care not to misrepresent and/or bring the Parish Council into disrepute, and must bear in mind their responsibilities under the Local Government Code of Conduct.

3. Social Media

- 3.1 Felthorpe Parish Council runs a Facebook page and a website. These are valuable ways to communicate with the community - decisions are relayed, meeting papers published and opinions sought via these means. Public comments are turned off on both sources
- 3.2 When using social media, Councillors must ensure they do not make reference to the Council or its services or represent themselves on behalf of the Council on social media without formal permission from the Council to do so.