



# Hullbridge Parish Council

## Press and Media Policy/Social Media Policy

### **Reviewed Annually**

Hullbridge Parish Council welcomes enquiries from the Press & Media and recognises that our relationship with the press helps us communicate with residents. The Parish Council recognises the need for this and should be reflected in how we deal with the Press. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the Parish Council is seen to communicate in a professional and objective manner. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Members Code of Conduct. The Councils approach to the media should be:

- Open and honest
- Proactive
- Responsive and timely
- Informative

There are two types of press release;

### **Official Council Releases**

An official Council release is made on behalf of the Council as a whole this will be written by the Parish Clerk. It is non-party political and may include a quote from the relevant Councillor(s). This is usually the Chair of the Council or Committee Chairman.

### **Councillor Press Releases**

Councillor's press releases are **personal** (it must be clear that the comments are personal views and not the Parish Council's). The release is written and issued by the Councillor responsible. This release may or may not be political and **should not** include the name of the Parish Council / Officer, Parish Council details (address or telephone number) nor the Office as a point of contact. It would be beneficial for copies of intended releases, especially those of a factual nature, to be provided to the Parish Clerk. Councillors seeking advice can either contact the Parish Clerk or Monitoring Officer.

### **Press Release Protocol**

The following forms the Protocol for Council Members and Officers:

- All official Council press releases may include a quotation from a relevant Councillor, otherwise it will be from the Full Council. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to also include District Councillor or other Councillors promoting the scheme/matter.
- All official Council press releases are to be issued on a template provided by the Parish Clerk. This template includes the Parish Council logo etc.



- Official press releases will not identify the political party or group affiliation of any Member(s) quoted in the release.

## **Social Media Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

The Parish Council will maintain a formal Facebook account to promote the services and functions of the Parish Council to encourage greater public awareness and involvement.

### **2. Administration**

The day-to-day administration and use of the facility shall be the responsibility of the Parish Clerk and Assistant Clerk to address the following key target areas:

- Promotion of Council events and public meetings;
- To inform the public of progress with works to street furniture and equipment owned and maintained by the Parish Council
- To be able to upload other groups/organisations events to the Parish Council Facebook Page
- To be able to post events and items of interest on the Parish Facebook page.
- To share the Parish Council posts to other Hullbridge pages to increase engagement.

In addition, the facility will be used to provide other information specifically agreed by the Council or its Committees for release on the Council's Facebook page. Parish staff will not engage in commenting on Facebook posts due to resources, Facebook will be used as a notification method not as a form of 2-way communication.

The use of social media shall not replace other forms of communication, but should be complementary to it.

The account will be updated and monitored as and when required and care will be exercised to avoid risks associated with conflict with current legislation including the Data Protection Act 1998, human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

The facility will not be used to represent the political views of any individual member or group or members of the Council and any negative comment received through social media links will be responded to with factual information. On-line arguments are to be avoided.



The Council Facebook account will be used for information purposes only so as to avoid online conflict and mis-information. Questions or queries relating to posts should be directed to the Parish Office.

Members Own Accounts – Members of the Council may wish to provide their own media accounts and comments. Members must remember that they are legally responsible for the content of any messages and that the requirements and principles associated with the adopted code of Conduct of Conduct shall remain in force.

**Think before you post, is it true, is it necessary, is it kind.**