

Branston & Mere Parish Council

Press and Media Policy

- The Council believes in being honest, open, accountable and responsible in all dealings with the press and media.
- The Council will endeavour to respond to all enquiries quickly and effectively with an initial acknowledgement within 24 hours. If extensive liaison is required, it will endeavour to supply information (where at all possible) within a reasonable time while allowing the Clerk to consult with the Chairman in producing a carefully worded response, representing the corporate position.
- Where the matter concerned has not been discussed by the Council an immediate response cannot be made and this should be made clear to the enquirer. The Clerk should then consult the Chairman and Vice Chairman on an appropriate response; which may be “no comment”.
- Information will be made available to the press and media under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to inform them about the work of the Council and to increase awareness and the credibility of our work within the community.
- In the event of the press or media approaching any member of the Council on any matter, they should be referred to the Clerk who will provide comments or a statement following consultation with the Chairman or in their absence, the Vice Chairman and if required the full Council.
- Where an enquiry relates to an individual Councillor the Clerk will also consult the person concerned to advise them of the media interest. Where an enquiry relates to the Clerk, the full Council will be consulted.
- Councillors should be aware that the role of Councillor overrides the rights to act as an individual. Councillors must therefore be careful about expressing individual views to the press or media whether or not they relate to matters of Council business. If expressing personal views in a private capacity, Councillors are not permitted to use their title “Councillor” and staff are not permitted to use their job title. This would imply that they are stating Council policy.
- A copy of any written material sent to the Press and/or Media by a Councillor, as representing the Council, must be forwarded to the Clerk. A Councillor or Clerk must not disclose information that is of a confidential nature or not yet within the public domain. This includes any discussion with the Press on any matter which has been discussed In Committee or through any other private briefing.
- Whilst it may be legitimate for a Councillor to make clear that s/he voted against a policy if this took place in an open session, Councillors should not seek to undermine a decision through the Press.
- Press releases may be issued proactively to alert the media to a potential story, provide important public information or to explain the Council’s position on a particular issue and will normally be prepared by the Clerk following a meeting of the Council or a Committee. If press releases are drafted by a Councillor, they must be issued by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman.

Implementation Date: __ 3rd September 2018. ____ Review Date: _____2nd September 2019 ____

Signed: _____

Cllr Richard Naulls - For and on behalf of Branston & Mere Parish Council.