

# HOTON PARISH COUNCIL

## MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

### 1. Introduction

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.

### 2. Media Opportunities

"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), the internet, and a wide range of printed media (e.g. newspapers, free sheets, community newspapers, magazines, leaflets, posters, the Christian Link).

### 3. Making Contact with the Media

**3.1** 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 Clerk.

**3.2** Press releases and statements will be prepared by the Clerk 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.

**3.3** 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.

**3.4** 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. A decision will then be made by the Clerk and/or Chairman, in consultation with other Members where necessary, about the format and content of any response.

**3.5** Nothing in these guidelines is to be interpreted as preventing, or attempting to prevent, a Member from expressing a personal opinion through the media, for example by writing to a newspaper or posting an item on an internet site. Members must make it clear that any views expressed, 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.

### 4. Talking to the Media

**4.1** 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.)

**4.2** In response to an unsolicited approach from a journalist or reporter (this includes enquiries about press releases issued by other organisations)

- a) The views of the Parish Council may be expressed subject to the guidelines above.
- b) The Clerk should be informed so that facts can be checked and appropriate action taken.

Adopted by Hoton Parish Council on 7 June 2010 and last reviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023.