

Northleach with Eastington Town Council

Press and Media Policy

Northleach with Eastington Town Council (“the Council”) recognises the role of its relationship with the local community in influencing the work and decisions it takes. Effective media relations are an important factor in establishing a good relationship between the Council and the community. This policy sets out the framework for Council members and employees to follow, when in contact with the media, to inform the public about the Council’s activities, decisions and the services it provides.

The term “Media” encompasses many different means of communicating a message to a wide audience and includes radio, television, social media, the internet and a wide range of printed media such as newspapers, leaflets, posters and the Parish Magazine.

Contact with the Media

1. The general principle is that the Clerk shall act as the Press Office for the Council. Any official contact with the media concerning the Council’s policies, decisions and services should be initiated through the Clerk. The Clerk will clear all press reports or comments to the media with the Chairman of the Council.
2. Press releases and statements will be prepared by the Clerk and /or Chairman in association with other Members as required, and will be usually be restricted to matters that have been debated and agreed by the Council.
3. If a councillor or employee receives an approach or enquiry from the media about any matter relating to the Council, it should be referred to the Clerk. A decision will then be made by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and other Members as necessary, about the format and content of any response.
4. Unless a Councillor has been authorised by the Council to speak to the media on a particular issue, if comments are made to the Press, Councillors must make it clear that it is a personal view and ask that it is clearly reported as such.
5. Any Councillor taking part in a radio or television broadcast should only do so on behalf of the Council with prior approval of the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and other Members where necessary. Ideally arrangements should be made for the broadcast to be recorded and retained for reference. Alternatively, a note of the broadcast’s content should be made and sent to the Clerk.
6. Members of the Council who identify a media opportunity should refer to the Clerk and Chairman so as to ensure accuracy and consistency in any subsequent press release or contact with the media.
7. Councillors are not prevented from expressing a personal opinion through the media (e.g. by writing to a newspaper or posting on social media channels). They must not imply they are speaking on behalf of the council and should state that it is their personal opinion. Members should take care not to bring the Council into disrepute and should bear in mind their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct.
8. Version control: *This document was reviewed and re-adopted on 14 June 2023.*