

Aynho Parish Council

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Aynho Parish Council Policy for Dealing with Press and Media

1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out the principles and procedures by which Aynho Parish Council will manage communication with the press and media. The Council recognises that effective engagement with the media helps communicate its decisions and actions, while maintaining openness and transparency.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all councillors and the Clerk when speaking to, writing for, or responding to inquiries from the press and media in relation to Council matters.

3. General Principles

- The **Clerk** is the official point of contact for press/media enquiries unless otherwise delegated.
- Any response or statement made on behalf of the Council must reflect **Council policy or decisions** and not individual views.
- Councillors must make it clear when expressing personal opinions that they do **not speak on behalf of the Council**.
- The Council will maintain professional and respectful relationships with media outlets at all times.
- All communication will be honest, factual, and avoid speculation.

4. Press Releases

- The Clerk will prepare and issue press releases in consultation with the Chair or relevant committee Chair.
- Press releases must be factual and objective, representing the corporate view of the Council.
- Press releases may cover:
 - Significant decisions of the Council.
 - Community events or initiatives.
 - Responses to major issues affecting the parish.
 - Emergency information or public safety updates.

5. Media Enquiries

- All enquiries from the media should be directed to the Clerk.

- The Clerk may liaise with the Chair or relevant councillor to prepare an appropriate response.
- Councillors should **not** respond directly to media enquiries unless authorised to do so.

6. Social Media and Online Platforms

- The Council may use its official social media platforms to share updates, decisions, and news.
- Individual councillors must not use personal social media accounts to comment on Council matters in a way that brings the Council into disrepute or misrepresents Council policy.
- The Council's **Social Media Policy** (if in place) should be referred to in conjunction with this policy.

7. Interviews and Public Statements

- Councillors approached for interviews or comment must refer requests to the Clerk.
- Where a councillor is authorised to speak, they must:
 - Stay within the agreed position of the Council.
 - Avoid speculation or criticism of fellow councillors, staff, or partner organisations.

8. Confidentiality and Legal Considerations

- Councillors and the Clerk must respect confidential information and not disclose matters discussed in private session.
- Care must be taken to avoid defamation, breaches of copyright, data protection violations, or any action that could lead to legal consequences for the Council.

9. Complaints or Misrepresentation

- If the Council believes it has been misrepresented by the media, the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, will prepare a correction or clarification.
- Any complaints about councillors' conduct in the media may be referred to the Monitoring Officer at the relevant principal authority.

Aynho Parish Council
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Version number	Purpose/change	Author	Date
0.1	Initial draft	AY	27/06/25
0.1	Adopted - 25/100	AY	07/07/25