

DURSLEY TOWN COUNCIL - DRAFT MEDIA POLICY

Introduction

1. Dursley Town Council (“the Council”) is committed to the provision of accurate information about its governance, decisions and activities. Where this information is not available via the Council’s publication scheme, please contact the Town Clerk or, in their absence, the Deputy Clerk.
2. The Council shall, where possible, co-operate with those whose work involves gathering material for publication in any form including use of the internet (“the media”).
3. This policy explains how the Council may work with the media to meet the above objectives in accordance with the legal requirements and restrictions that apply.

Legal requirements and restrictions

4. This policy is subject to the Council’s obligations which are set out in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1986, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, other legislation which may apply and the Council’s standing orders and financial regulations. The Council’s financial regulations and relevant standing orders referenced in this policy are available via the Council’s publication scheme.
5. The Council cannot disclose confidential information or information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law. The Council cannot disclose information if this is prohibited under the terms of a court order, by legislation, the Council’s standing orders, under contract or by common law.

Councillors are subject to additional restrictions about the disclosure of confidential information which arise from the code of conduct adopted by the Council, a copy of which is available via the Council’s publication scheme.

Communications with the media

6. This policy does not seek to regulate councillors in their private capacity.
7. The Council’s communications with the media seek to represent the corporate position and views of the Council. If the views of councillors are different to the Council’s corporate position and views, they will make this clear.
8. The Town Clerk, or in their absence, the Deputy Clerk may contact the media if the Council wants to provide information, a statement or other material about the Council.
9. Subject to the obligations on Councillors not to disclose information referred to in paragraph 5 above and not to misrepresent the Council’s position, councillors are free to communicate their position and views.
10. The Town Clerk should be made aware of any approach by the media to any Councillor, and the reason or issue under discussion.
11. Official announcements and statements from the Town Council will normally be made by the Town Clerk or Mayor.
12. Written communications or press releases by members, citing their role as Councillor, should be submitted to the Town Clerk for verification before publication.

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13. Interviews with the media made by members, intending to cite their role as Councillors, should be submitted to the Town Clerk before the interview takes place.
14. If a Councillor is approached by a member of the Press, and there is no opportunity to inform the office in advance, then the Town Clerk should be informed as soon as possible thereafter.
15. Written communication, press releases or interviews given by councillors, as individual, private members of the community, should not make any reference to their role of Councillor, nor allude to information gained thereby.
16. Guidance on members interaction on social media sites, both personal and business is included within the Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy.