EAST WINCH
WEST BILNEY
PARISH COUNCIL

Media Policy

Purpose

The aim of this Policy is to set out a Code of Practice to provide guidance to the Clerk and the Council regarding procedures and protocol to follow when dealing with the press and public. This includes use of online communications, collectively referred to as social media and the management of the Council's website, as well as the more traditional ways of communicating.

Benefits of a multimedia policy

There are many benefits to using a variety of ways to communicate with our public. We are committed to traditional ways of communication with newsletters, questionnaires and through our website. The Council uses Facebook as its Social Media site.

Press and Public

In the interests of openness and transparency, members of the public and press may film, record, photograph or use social media in order to report on the proceedings of a meeting of the Council or its committees when they are open to the public. This does not extend to live verbal commentary. It will be encouraged that all filming and photography is conducted from the area designated in the meeting room. No flash photography or additional lighting should be used without prior consent. People under the age of 18 or other members of the public not wishing to be filmed or photographed should notify the Clerk or Chairman and should sit in the area designated for this purpose. The council will do all it can to respect their wishes but it should be noted that there is not a requirement for anyone to notify the council that they are filming. Improper conduct or any disruptive behaviour could result in expulsion from the meeting.

Press Releases

It is the Clerk's role to issue press releases as instructed by the Council. In all cases, where quotations are included from Councillors in the press release, the Clerk will obtain approval from the Councillor. Press Releases will detail the name and contact details of the Clerk. No Press Release should be issued containing the Clerk's or Councillor's personal opinion.

The Parish Council's website

This is managed by the Clerk. The Clerk will, in a timely way, upload the information as required by law such as minutes and agendas, financial and governance information. Additional information uploaded will include news items supported by photographs.

Facebook

Social media posts will be clear and use language accessible and suitable for the platform on which they appear. Language will be informal in tone but reflect the Parish Council as a credible public body. Updates will be timely, addressing current topics of interest and contributing to the public discussion on activities and issues. Updates will be informative to members of the public and other statutory and non-statutory bodies with links to our website. Where possible and appropriate, the Parish Council will post media such as photos.

Operation of Facebook

The Parish Council will not respond to all comments posted on Facebook but will always aim to provide a response when maintaining or protecting its reputation. Facebook will be monitored during weekday office hours. The Parish Council cannot ensure comments will be viewed during evenings, weekends or during public holidays, or staff holiday times. The Clerk/approved Councillor will manage the social media posts. The views expressed on the social media account will be interpreted as those of the Parish Council. The Clerk/approved Councillor must be mindful when using social media, particularly when commenting on contentious issues, and must speak on behalf of the Parish Council, rather than personal opinion. No comments will be made to posts received. Posts which contain personal and inflammatory remarks will be removed.

Councillors are responsible for what they post in connection with the Council. Councillors are strongly advised to have separate council and personal email addresses and adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct and follow the principles of the Data Protection Act, as incorporated into the Council's Data protection Policy.

September 2026