



Press and Social Media Policy

The following guidance explains the way press releases and other forms of official Council communications are issued on behalf of Headley Parish Council and sets out basic guidelines.

One voice

The Parish Council has a corporate approach to media relations. All press releases are issued by the Parish Council. The Parish Council is, of course, one organisation and aims to present that image to the public by issuing press releases corporately. This ensures that the Parish Council speaks with one voice and that messages are consistent, effective and focused.

The Parish Council

The Clerk & Executive Officer has responsibility for exercising editorial judgements about the timing, content and newsworthiness of all Parish Council press releases in consultation with Parish Councillors and the Parish Council Chairman. Their combined professional expertise helps to ensure that appropriate standards are set and maintained for all news releases and that they are kept within the law.

Quotes

The Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Parish Council may be quoted if they are speaking on behalf of the Parish Council as a whole or on behalf of a committee. If another member of the Council is approached by the press for a quote or comment, then the Councillor should make it very clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the Council but as an individual.

The Parish Clerk will make every effort to clear quotes with parish councillors before news releases or statements are issued. However, responses to issues in the news are often needed urgently. If a comment needs to be issued urgently, a quote will be cleared with the Parish Council Chairman.

Online communications, collectively referred to as social media

Social media is a collective term used to describe methods of publishing on the internet. This policy covers all forms of social media and social networking sites which include (but are not limited to):

- Parish Council Website

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Nextdoor Headley
- LinkedIn

The Clerk and Executive Officer will be responsible for managing the Council's day to day activity on social media. Social media attributed to the Parish Council will be used to:

- Post minutes and dates of meetings
- Advertise events and activities in the locality
- Share news stories
- Advertise councillor and staff vacancies
- Retweet, like or share information from partners i.e. EHDC, HCC, Community First, SLCC, NALC, Police, CAB, River Wey Trust etc.
- Post relevant information about local community groups/ clubs / associations/voluntary bodies
- Announce new information
- Positively promote the Parish Council, Councillors and the Parish through information, photos and video
- Consult with residents
- Gather useful information about local events and activities

Guidance for Councillors

All Councillor communication including emails must adhere to the Members' Code of Conduct. Councillors are asked not to post comments on Council activity on Social Media. Councillors must not use their Council email address for non-Council business including activity or any form of social media.

Councillor Email's

- Headley Parish Council email addresses must not be used for expressing personal opinions to outside bodies.
- Emails from the Clerk and RFO seeking opinions and views on a matter from all councillors, on an individual basis, should be replied to directly without copying in all recipients of the email.
- Parish Council email addresses should not be used as discussion forums for matters outside the control of the Parish Council.