



Vigo Village Hall, The Bay, Vigo, Kent, DA13 0TD

# Media Policy

| <b>Policy:</b> |   |
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| Approved by:   | Full Parish Council   |
| Date approved: | 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 / 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2023 / 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2024 / 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2025 |

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## **1 Statement of Aims and Objectives**

- 1.1. Vigo Parish 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 Council's Clerk.
- 1.2. 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').
- 1.3. 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.

## **2 Principles**

### **2.1. Legal requirements and restrictions**

- 2.1.1. 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 2018, other legislation which may apply, and the Council's standing orders referenced in this policy are available via the Council's publication scheme.
- 2.1.2. The Council cannot disclose confidential information or information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law. The Council cannot disclose information if this 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.

### **2.2. Meetings**

- 2.2.1. A meeting of the Council and its committees is open to the public unless the meeting resolves to exclude them because their presence at the meeting is prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business or other special reason(s) stated in the resolution. In accordance with the Council's standing orders, persons may be required to leave meeting of the Council and its committees, if their disorderly behaviour obstructs the business of the meeting.
- 2.2.2. Where a meeting of the Council or one of its committees include an opportunity for public participation, the media may speak and ask questions. Public participation regulated by the Council's standing orders.

- 2.2.3. The photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a meeting of the Council and its committees (which includes eg using a mobile phone or tablet, recording for a TV/radio broadcast, providing a commentary on blogs, web forums or social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube) which enables a person not at the meeting to see, hear or be given commentary about the meeting is permitted unless (i) the meeting has resolved to hold all or part of the meeting without the public present or (ii) such activities disrupt the proceedings or (iii) paragraphs 9 and 10 below apply.
- 2.2.4. The photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a child or vulnerable adult at a Council or committee meeting is not permitted unless an adult responsible for them has given permission.
- 2.2.5. A person present at a Council or committee meeting may not provide oral reporting or commentary about a Council or committee meeting as it takes place.
- 2.2.6. The Council shall, as far as it is practicable, provide reasonable facilities for anyone taking a report of a Council or committee meeting and for telephoning their report at their own expense.
- 2.2.7. The Council's standing orders will confirm if attendance by the public, their participation, photographing, recording, filming or other reporting is permitted.
- 2.3. **Other communications with the media**
  - 2.3.1. This policy does not seek to regulate councillors in their private capacity.
  - 2.3.2. 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.
  - 2.3.3. The Council's Clerk, or in their absence, the Council Chairman, may contact the media if the Council wants to provide information, a statement or other material about the Council.
  - 2.3.4. Subject to the obligations on councillors not to disclose information referred to in paragraph 2.1.2 above and not to misrepresent the Council's position, councillors are free to communicate their position and views.

## 2.4. **Social Media**

- 2.4.1. The Council will maintain a Facebook page and a website for the purpose of sharing information and publications of interest to its Parishioners.
- 2.4.2. The Parish Clerk and (a) nominated councillor(s) will be responsible for uploading documents to the page and moderating content. A link to the Parish Council website (minute page) will be posted on Facebook when minutes are published. The minutes which are posted online have personal information redacted.
- 2.4.3. Public contribution on social media is encouraged; however, any rude, offensive or defamatory content will be immediately removed. Persistent offenders will be prohibited from making any further contributions.
- 2.4.4. Only the Clerk and nominated Councillors will be able to upload onto the Facebook Page. However, individual councillors may comment on posts on the Parish Council Facebook page, but they **MUST** ensure that it is made clear they are commenting in a personal capacity (and **NOT** on behalf of the Parish Council as a whole). Individual Parish councillors are responsible for what they post. Councillors are personally responsible for any online activity conducted via their published Parish Council e-mail address which is used solely for council business. Councillors are strongly advised to have separate council and personal email addresses, and must adhere to The Members' Code of Conduct, see Guidance for Councillors (Appendix 2).
  - 2.4.4.1. Content which highlights the good work of the council (including photos) which Councillors wish to have posted online, should be forwarded to the Clerk and / or the nominated councillors. Examples might include; flower beds, benches, bus stops, defibrillators etc.
- 2.4.5. Official content or comment on Facebook or the Website will be posted by the Clerk or the Chairman only.

## 3 **Definitions**

- 3.1. 'The Media' refers to all local and national journalism organisations.
- 3.2. 'Social Media' refers to websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

## 4 **Responsibilities**

- 4.1. The **Chairperson of the Council** retains overall responsibility for this policy.
- 4.2. The **Parish Clerk** has overall responsibility for the Facebook Page.

- 4.3. **Delegated Moderators** will be the Parish Clerk, the Chairman and one other named Council Member.
- 4.4. It should be ensured that any material posted is of a high standard and conveys a positive image that shows how the Parish Council is acting in the best interest of the Residents.
- 4.5. Parish Council Members who are not authorised to post as “Vigo Parish Council” may post a “visitor post” on Facebook, or comment on a post, but the **MUST** make sure they make it clear they are commenting as an individual, and not as giving the view of the Parish Council as a whole.

## **5 Monitoring**

- 5.1. Information posted on the website and Facebook page will be reported at Parish Council Meetings. Any unsuitable activity will be removed by the moderators and reported at Council meetings.

## **6 Review**

- 6.1. The Policy will be reviewed at the Annual Parish Council meeting.

Agreed at Annual Parish Council 15.05.2023

Reviewed and re-approved at Annual Parish Council 13.05.2024

Reviewed and re-approved at Annual Parish Council 08.05.2025