

Blundeston & Flixton Parish Council

Filming, Photographing and Media Policy

Introduction

1. Blundeston & Flixton Parish Council (“the Council”) is committed to the provision of accurate information in respect of its functions, decisions and actions.
2. The Council may communicate with those whose work involves gathering material for editorial publication in print, broadcast and electronic form (e.g. reporters, photographers, crew of TV/radio programmes)
3. Where information is not available via the Council’s publication scheme the Council shall endeavour to assist the media with enquiries about the Council’s functions, decisions and actions.
4. This policy explains how the Council, its councillors and employees will work with all forms of media to meet the above objectives.

Legal Restrictions

5. This policy is subject to the Council’s statutory obligations as 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 together with the Council’s Standing Orders (available on the Council’s website).
6. The Council, its councillors and employees cannot disclose information which is confidential or where disclosure of information is prohibited by law. Some but not all of the relevant obligations that councillors are subject to are contained in the Council’s Code of Conduct (available on the Council’s website).

Meetings

7. The meetings of the Council are open to the public unless they resolve that 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 a meeting of the Council if their disorderly behaviour obstructs the business of the meeting.
8. Where meetings include time for public participation, the media may speak and ask questions. Public participation is regulated by the Council’s Standing Orders.

9. The Council's Standing Orders allows the filming, photographing, or making an audio recording of a meeting; or use of any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later; or reporting or commenting on the proceedings in writing during or after a meeting or orally report or comment after the meeting, provided that it does not disrupt the conduct of meetings or impedes other members of the public being able to see, hear, film or photograph the proceedings.
10. As a courtesy to the public, and to assist anyone planning to film or take photographs, the Parish Council kindly asks that anyone wishing to do so contact the Council in advance of the meeting to enable the Clerk to discuss and assist with any specific requirements.
11. There is no actual requirement to notify the Council in advance, but it should be noted that the Chairman of the meeting will have absolute discretion to terminate or suspend any of these activities if, in their opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting.
12. It is expected that those who are recording proceedings will not edit the film/recordings/photographs in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings, or infringe the core values of the Council. This includes refraining from editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule, or show lack of respect towards those being photographed/filmed/recorded.
13. In advance of meetings of the Council newspapers, news agencies or organisations that collect news for sound and TV broadcast are entitled, on payment of postage or other necessary charges, to copies of the agenda and necessary supporting papers. The accredited representatives of the newspapers, news agencies or organisations that collect news for sound and TV broadcast shall be given reasonable facilities for taking their report of a meeting.

Interviews, statements and articles

14. No individual Councillor or staff, in their official capacity, is empowered to provide a verbal or written statement to the media unless the Council has delegated the authority to them so to do.
15. The media shall in the first instance contact the Parish Clerk if they want to interview councillors about its business decisions and action or obtain a verbal or written statement from the Council about its business decisions and actions. If the Clerk is not available, the media shall contact the Council's Chairman. Any verbal or written statement given by the Parish Clerk or the Chairman to the media represents the corporate position and views of the Council.

16. An interview by the media with councillors or staff in their official capacity about the Council's business, decisions and actions requires the Council's written consent. In any such interview, the media cannot ask about the personal views of the councillors or staff in their private capacity. Councillors cannot communicate their personal views about the Council's business, decisions and actions, other than the views they hold in their official capacity. Councillors and staff are not permitted to misrepresent the corporate position and views of the Council, or to damage the reputation of others in the Council or the Council itself.
17. The Parish Clerk may contact the media if the Council wants to give an interview, provide a verbal or written statement to the media or publish an article using the media about its business, decisions and actions.
18. Councillors cannot in their official capacity, provide verbal and written statements to the media, or write articles for publication using the media about the Council's business decisions and actions without the Council's prior written consent. Councillors and staff cannot communicate their personal views about the Council's business decisions and actions, other than the views they hold in their official capacity. Councillors and staff are not permitted to misrepresent the corporate position and views of the Council, or to damage the reputation of others in the Council or the Council itself.
19. If Councillors or staff, in their private capacity, provide verbal or written statements or interviews to the media or write articles for publication using the media about the Council's business decisions and actions, any personal views must be expressed in their private capacity. Personal views held in their official capacity cannot be communicated. Councillors are not permitted to use their title of Parish Councillor.

Website and Social Media

20. The Council has included its policy on the use of social media in the Information Technology and Records Management policy.
21. The Council has a dedicated website which is controlled by the Parish Clerk.

This policy was adopted by the council at its meeting held on 21 July 2025
Date of next review – July 2026