

# Harting Parish Council

## Media Policy

1. Harting Parish Council ("HPC") is committed to the provision of accurate information in respect of its functions, decisions and actions.
  2. HPC may communicate with those whose work involves gathering material for editorial publication in whatever format to publicise its business, decisions and actions.
  3. Where information is not available via its publication scheme, HPC shall endeavour to assist the media with enquiries about its functions, decisions and actions.
  4. This policy explains how HPC will work with the media to meet the above objectives.
  5. This policy is subject to HPC's statutory obligations 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, the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 and the HPC's Standing Orders.
  6. HPC, its councillors and the Clerk 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 HPC's code of conduct a copy of which is available on HPC's website.
  7. The meetings of HPC, its committees and sub-committees are open to the public unless
    - 7.1 the committee or sub-committee is advisory, or
    - 7.2 HPC, its committees and sub-committees resolve that the presence of the public 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 HPC's standing orders persons may be required to leave a meeting of HPC, its committees or its sub committees 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 HPC's standing orders.
  9. Subject to the provisions of 7 & 8 above, the filming or recording of all formal meetings of HPC or its committees or sub-committees held in public is permitted. Any communication method, including the internet, to publish, post or otherwise share the results of the person's reporting activities may be used. Publication and dissemination may take place at the time of the meeting or occur after the meeting.

Where the press and public are excluded from any part of the meeting, members of the press and public must remove all recording devices that they have brought into the room. Mobile devices must be switched to silent while meetings of HPC or its committees or sub-committees are in progress. In the event that any mobile device interferes with microphones, hearing loops or any other audio-visual equipment used to assist the running of the meeting, the user must switch it off. A person attending a meeting for the purpose of

reporting on the meeting will, so far as is practicable, be afforded reasonable facilities for doing so. To assist with the management of a meeting, anyone wishing to film or record is asked to inform the Clerk of their intentions before the meeting starts. Oral reporting or oral commentary on a meeting while it takes place if the person is in the room is not permitted.

10. The media shall contact the Clerk if they want to interview councillors about HPC's business decisions and actions or obtain a verbal or written statement from HPC about its business decisions and actions.

11. Any verbal or written statement given by the Clerk represents the corporate position and views of HPC, not the individual views of its councillors.

12. An interview by the media with councillors or the Clerk in their official capacity about HPC's business, decisions and actions requires HPC's prior written consent. In any such interview the media cannot ask about the personal views of the councillors or Clerk in their private capacity. Councillors and the Clerk cannot communicate their personal views about HPC's business, decisions and actions other than the views they hold in their official capacity. Councillors and the Clerk are not permitted to misrepresent the corporate position and views of HPC or to damage the reputation of others in HPC or HPC itself.

13. The Clerk to HPC may contact the media if HPC 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.

14. Councillors cannot in their official capacity provide written or verbal statements to the media or write articles for publication using the media about HPC's business decisions and actions without HPC's prior written consent. Councillors and the Clerk cannot communicate their personal views about HPC's business decisions and actions, other than the views they hold in their official capacity. Councillors and the Clerk are not permitted to misrepresent the corporate position and views of HPC or damage the reputation of others in HPC or of HPC itself.

15. If councillors or the Clerk, in their private capacity provide verbal or written statement or interviews to the media or write articles for publication using the media about HPC'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 "Councillor" and the Clerk is not permitted to use his job title.

### **Media Policy**

**Adopted 21 May 2015**

**Reviewed 17<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

**Next Review due May 2019**