



# Annesley & Felley Parish Council

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## **EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

### **1 Introduction**

Annesley and Felley Parish Council (the Council) welcomes the opportunity to talk to the media. The purpose of this policy is to define roles and responsibilities for managing communication between the Council and the media.

The intention of this policy is to adopt a framework for maintaining an effective working relationship with the media. This should be based on coherent, professional, accurate and reliable presentation of information.

### **2. Key aims of media relations**

The Council is accountable to the local community for its actions and this can only be achieved through effective two-way communications. The media are important in conveying information to the community so the Council must maintain positive, constructive media relations. It is important that the media have access to appropriate officers and members and to background information to assist them to properly inform the public of all the relevant facts.

### **3. Guidance for members**

All media enquiries should be directed to the authorised members or officers of the Council. This is the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Parish Clerk.

All media comment must accurately reflect the Council's position on the topic, as adopted in official documents such as minutes and policy documents.

All decisions of the Council, made in an open meeting, can be quoted and made available to the media.

The person responding to the media enquiry should have the necessary facts and understanding and can speak with some authority, using plain English.

Councillors should not make personal comments, which could damage the reputation of the Council or negatively impact on the credibility of the Council or its members.

Comment on matters which are, or are likely to be, subject to legal proceedings should be subject to advice taken from the Council's legal advisors before any response is made.

Councillors wishing to make a personal statement to the media must clearly inform the media:

- that their comment is made as an individual and are not necessarily the view of the Council;

- that other Members may hold a different view;
- that the matter may still to be discussed or resolved by the Council.

#### **4. Responding to approaches from the media**

The Chairman, Vice Chairman or the Clerk can be contacted for preliminary discussions on any story or if a journalist or researcher is unsure who to approach for a comment.

However approaches from all press, radio or TV stations will only be accepted in writing and should initially be directed to the Clerk, who will if appropriate, direct the enquiry to the relevant Member or Officer, asking them to respond.

The important considerations are that the person has the necessary understanding and facts; they are available when required and that they can speak with some authority, using plain English.

#### **5. Date of review**

This policy will be reviewed annually.

**Dated: May 2014**