

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Publicity/Media Policy

Introduction

Communicating with the public is an important aspect of Parish Council business and it is vital that there be a strategy to ensure that information is relayed to residents in a timely and accurate manner. Chepping Wycombe Parish Council has a number of threads to its policy; it currently publishes a bi-annual Newsletter, maintains a website, and retains strong ties to local newspapers particularly the Bucks Free Press. This policy statement details the responsibilities for each of these areas and should be read in conjunction with Standing Orders and specifically with the provision of information under the General Data Protection Regulation.

All communications should be made by the Clerk of the Council

Dealing with the Press

It is not uncommon for reporters to seek ad hoc interviews with individual Councillors whose comments are then attributed to the Council when they are in fact simply personal views. This can clearly put the Council in an embarrassing situation and be misleading to Members of the public. Whilst Members cannot be prevented from talking to the Press, they must make it very clear that they are speaking as individuals unless the views being expressed have been previously endorsed by the Council.

Preferably, all dealings with the Press should be through the Clerk who is nominated as the formal press release officer. The Clerk will identify topics of community interest and will draft information releases that can be forwarded directly to local newspapers. The Clerk will aim to provide draft articles at least monthly. If the Clerk considers the topic to be highly contentious then an ad hoc meeting of the Publicity Sub Group will be called to approve the release. This may be done electronically.

Newsletters and Village Magazines

The Council will continue to publish a bi-annual Newsletter but, in addition, will endeavour to issue articles to our local village magazines at least bi-monthly.

The Clerk will act as Editor for the Parish Newsletter and will be responsible for arranging its printing and distribution. The Members of the Publicity Sub Group will write the articles for these newsletters although any Member is welcome to contribute pieces authored by them. All Council Members will have the opportunity to comment on the final draft of the Newsletter prior to its publication but the Editors decision is final.

In addition all Members are requested to provide articles for publication in the various village magazines.

Website

The Council website is edited by the Clerk of the Council. It will contain all documents that are not confidential and of general interest including but not limited to :

- a. News items and press releases
- b. Contact details and facilities
- c. Agendas and minutes,
- d. Newsletters
- e. Terms of Reference
- f. Location maps
- g. Reference Documents (ie Standing Orders) and Policy Documents
 - a. All as listed in the Publication Scheme.
- h. Councillors and Committees
- i. CWPC History

Other Media

The Clerk may from time to time use other media such as Facebook or Twitter to reach particular audience groups with the authority of the Publicity subcommittee and such approval may be given electronically.