



# FELSTED PARISH COUNCIL

## MEDIA AND PUBLICITY POLICY

Date: 7 February 2024

Councillors, officers and employees of Felsted Parish Council (FPC) recognise the responsibility to communicate effectively and in a timely manner with residents and members of the media.

In doing so we will aim to conform to the policies of Uttlesford District Council, which are available on their website.

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to define the roles and responsibilities within FPC for working with the public and media.

It is not the intention of this policy to curb freedom of speech or to enforce strict rules and regulations. Rather, the intention is to establish a framework for achieving an effective working relationship.

FPC is committed to the provision of accurate information about its governance, decisions and activities. Where this information is not available via FPC's website, noticeboards etc, please contact the Clerk or the Assistant Clerk.

### **Legal requirements and restrictions**

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 and financial regulations. The Council's financial regulations and relevant standing orders referenced in this policy are available via the Council's website.

The Council cannot disclose confidential information or information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law. The Council cannot disclose information if this is 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.

### **Meetings**

A meeting of the Council and its committees is open to the public and media 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 a meeting of the Council and its committees, if their disorderly behaviour obstructs the business of the meeting. Where a meeting of the Council and its committees include an opportunity for public participation,

residents or the media may speak and ask questions. Public participation is regulated by the Council's standing orders.

The photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a meeting of the Council and its committees (which includes but is not limited to e.g. using a mobile phone or tablet, recording for a TV/radio broadcast, providing commentary on blogs, web forums, or social networking sites) which enable 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) the below exclusions apply:

- 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.
- Oral reporting or commentary about a Council or committee meeting by a person who is present at the meeting is not permitted.

The Council's standing orders will confirm if attendance by the public, their participation, photographing, recording, filming or other reporting is permitted at a meeting of a sub-committee.

### **Other communications with the media**

This policy does not seek to regulate councillors in their private capacity. All requests for comment from the Council in respect to a statement of position or view on a situation should, in the first instance, be sent to the Clerk or Assistant Clerk.

The Council's communications with the media seek to represent the corporate position and views of the Council.

Subject to the obligations on councillors not to disclose confidential information and not to misrepresent the Council's position, councillors are free to communicate their personal position and views. If the views of councillors are different to the Council's corporate position and views, they will make this clear.

The Council's Clerk, or in their absence, the Assistant Clerk may contact the media if the Council wants to provide information, a statement or other material about the Council.

Adopted at the Council meeting held on: 7 February 2024  
Minute Reference 24/35

Review date: February 2027