

EPPING TOWN COUNCIL

MEDIA POLICY

Epping Town Council is committed to a strong and positive relationship with the press and media and all members of the press will be treated equally.

Copies of agendas, minutes and reports sent to members for meetings of the Council or its Committees will be e-mailed to the press and media on request (except excluded items). Facilities will be provided at meetings for the press to take notes or recordings of the proceedings.

As provided in the Council's Standing Orders, both the press and public may be excluded from a meeting whilst certain confidential matters (as provided for in the relevant legislation) are under discussion. The Town Council as a Parish Council is governed by the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

The Council will only comment on matters of fact or matters agreed at Council meetings in open session. No representations will be made on matters which are discussed in closed session, ie where press and public have been excluded under the above act.

The Town Clerk as the Proper Officer of the Council is authorised to receive all communications from the press and media and to issue press statements on behalf of the Council, if possible in consultation with members. If an urgent issue arises, the Town Clerk has delegated authority to handle those issues on behalf of Council. Other officers should refer all press and media enquiries to the Clerk for continuity.

The Council will respect the rights of individuals and others and will have particular regard to Data Protection issues when issuing press releases.

Members of the press are advised to contact the Clerk in the first instance. Councillors should refer such enquiries to the Clerk in the first instance.

In the event that councillors have direct dealings with the press on any matter which is associated with Epping Town Council, councillors will make it clear that they are issuing a personal opinion and that they are not commenting as a representative of Council or reflecting its views.

If a member has been authorised to speak on Council's behalf, they will make it clear the capacity in which they are providing the information: eg Chairman of Planning.

The Town Clerk and members of Epping Town Council may wish to put comments in writing and the press are respectfully requested to allow additional time for this.