



TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MEDIA POLICY

**Adopted at the Full Council Meeting on 13th June 2022
Latest Review 14th May 2024**



Amendment and Version History

Responsible Committee: Finance Committee

Version: Full 1.1

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Change History				
Version	Author	Reasons for Revision	Approved by (ref minute)	Date of Approval
DRAFT 1.0		Initial Draft Version	N/A	N/A
FULL 1.1			Full Council 22/23-48	13 th June 2022
FULL 1.2		Changes to outside bodies list	Full Council 23/24-59	12 th June 2023

1. Communications with the Media

- 1.1. Tewkesbury Town Council (“the Council) is committed to the provision of accurate information about its governance, decisions and activities. Where this information is not available via the Council’s publication scheme, please contact the Town Clerk, or in their absence the Assistance Town Clerk.
- 1.2. The Council shall, where possible, co-operate with those whose work involves gathering material for publication in any form including use of the internet (“the media”).
- 1.3. The Council cannot disclose confidential information or information that is prohibited under the terms of a court order, by legislation, the Council’s standing orders, under contract or by common law.
- 1.4. Meetings of the Council and its committees are open to the public 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 stated in the resolution.
- 1.5. The Council’s communications with the media seek to represent the corporate position and views of the Council. The Town Clerk, or in their absence the Assistant Town Clerk may contact the media if the Council wants to provide information, a statement or other material about the Council.

2. Use of Social Media by Town Councillors

- 2.1. This section sets out the requirements for Town Councillors when using online communications, collectively referred to as social media. Requirements for Council Staff are covered within the Employee Handbook.
- 2.2. This policy covers all forms of social media and email.
- 2.3. The current Code of Conduct applies to online activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication.
- 2.4. Individual Town Councillors are responsible for what they post in a council and personal capacity.
- 2.5. Social media may be used to:
 - Distribute agendas, post minutes and dates of meetings
 - Advertise events and activities
 - Share good news stories, linked websites or press pages
 - Advertise vacancies
 - Re-tweet or share information from partner agencies such as Principal Authorities, Police, Library, Health etc.
 - Announce new information
 - Post or Share information from other parish related community groups such as schools, sports clubs, community groups and charities

- Refer resident queries to the clerk and all other councillors
- 2.6. When using social media (including email) Town Councillors must be mindful of the information they post in both a personal and council capacity and keep the tone of any comments respectful and informative.
- 2.7. Town councillors must not:
- hide their identity using false names or pseudonyms
 - present personal opinions as that of the council
 - present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment to the council
 - post content that is contrary to the democratic decisions of the council
 - post controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks
 - engage in personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications
 - use an individual's name unless given written permission to do so
 - publish photographs or videos of minors without parental permission
 - post any information that infringes copyright of others
 - post any information that may be deemed libel
 - post online activity that constitutes bullying or harassment
 - bring the council into disrepute, including through content posted in a personal capacity
 - post offensive language relating to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age, religion or belief
 - conduct any online activity that violates laws, regulations or that constitutes a criminal offence
- 2.8. Councillor's views posted in any capacity in advance of matters to be debated by the council at a council or committee meeting may constitute Pre-disposition, Pre-determination or Bias and may require the individual to declare an interest at council meetings.
- 2.9. Anyone with concerns regarding content placed on social media sites that denigrate Town councillors, council staff or residents should report them to the Town Clerk.
- 2.10. The Town Clerk will have authority to remove any posts made by third parties from council social media pages which are deemed to be of a defamatory or libellous nature.
- 2.11. This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Date approved

Date of review: