



PATCHWAY TOWN COUNCIL

MEDIA & PUBLICITY POLICY

Overview

This policy is based upon the premise that Patchway Town Council values the role of the media. Wherever possible, a positive approach will be taken to meet media requests for interviews with Councillors or others – where appropriate. Council publicity material and communication generally will not support or promote a political point of view. All press released will be issued through the Town Clerk. All media enquiries received should automatically be referred to the Town Clerk, who will then delegate if necessary to the three elected Press and Communication Officers. Journalists will be encouraged to attend Council meetings to enable them to report accurately on those meetings. The roles of the Press and Communication Officers are outlined in 'Appendix 1.'

Three Press and Communications Officers

Patchway Town Council should elect yearly three Press and Communications Officers to oversee all press releases and communication streams relevant to the Town Council. The Officers will work alongside the Office Administrator, Clerk and Deputy Clerk when it comes to content and output. The Officers will seek the opinion of fellow Councillors however no political statements may be made through the official Patchway Town Council streams. The roles of the Press and Communications Officers are outlined in 'Appendix 1', where the role is made clear and what the responsibilities are. The Communications Officers will contact the Clerk or Deputy Clerk when there is elements of non-compliance with policies relating to, but not limited to, communications, social media and general publicity. When a press release needs issuing, the Press and Communication Officers will follow this policy to create and issue the release through the Town Clerk. Officers of the Council should contact the Press and Communication Officers if any releases need to be drafted.

General Media Enquiries

All media enquiries received by staff should be referred to the Town Clerk, who will then delegate as appropriate to the three Press and Communication officers.

Issue of Press Releases on Behalf of the Council

Press releases will be drafted by the three Press and Communication officers, who will gather the opinions of all Councillors and The Clerk if appropriate. These will then be sent to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council for approval. After approval, the Town Clerk will issue.

Town Council Newsletter

A Town Council newsletter will be published three times per year to promote the Council and Council activities. The Town Council news will be drafted by the Deputy Clerk but in co-ordination with the three Press and Communications Officers. An annual report will also be published each year (In May) which will detail the Council's achievements and any other information considered relevant.

Social Media and The Website.

Patchway Town Council have a designated website which is updated on a frequent basis by the Office Administrator. Patchway Town Council also use Facebook to reach the parishioners and this is also updated by the Office Administrator daily. These streams are great services to inform the public and the Facebook page gets good engagement and a majority of the reactions are positive. The three Press and Communications Officers will liaise with the Office Administrator over content and press releases for these sites. The Press and Communications Officers will also be responsible for ensuring compliance with the approved 'Communications Strategy' and guiding the output, along with the Office Administrator, of Social Media and the Website in line with the strategy.



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Council Meetings

All agendas will be sent to the media along with any supporting documentation if necessary. In appropriate cases, news releases will be issued in advance of the meeting by the Town Clerk to highlight any key items quoting a member of the Council. These will be drafted by the three Press and Communications Officers. Where a journalist wishes to find out what was said by individual Councillors during a meeting, the reporter will be referred to the Councillor direct via email. If a journalist requires any clarification of proceeding at a meeting, he should be referred to the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.

Individual Councillors

It is the prerogative of individual Councillors to make their own statements relating to local issues. Any Councillor making statements to the press has responsibility for making sure it is clear that the views they express are their own through their own outlets, not via official Town Council sites.



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Appendix 1 – Press and Communication Officer ‘Job Description’

Outline of Role:

Press officers are utilised by organisations to act as their main point of contact for the media. The officers act as the official representatives of their organisations and handle all matters relating to the press. The main scope of work will be preparing, writing and distributing press releases, handling media queries and constantly liaising with journalists and other media contacts. The role also includes helping with Social Media content and Website content along with the Council’s aims and objectives. Furthermore, you’ll be tracking media coverage relating to The Council, keeping an eye on industry developments and organising press conferences. This role heavily relies on good communication with the Officers of the Council. This is a voluntary role and does not require any remuneration.

Responsibilities:

- To prepare, write and distribute press releases on behalf of the Council to the Town Clerk.
- To prepare content for Social Media and Website streams in relation to press releases.
- Create innovative ways of communicating with the residents on existing streams.
- Identifying areas of improvement for the existing streams and bringing new ideas forward.
- To ensure compliance with all policies and strategies relevant to the communication of the Council.
- To liaise with the press and local media on behalf of the Town Council.
- To represent the Council in a fair and transparent manner.
- To deal with any delegated media enquiries raised by the Clerk or Council.
- To report on local issues for all of the local residents, not just one group.
- To ensure Council news is transmitted effectively through the current streams.

Essential Criteria for the Role:

- To have a sound understanding of the Council and its functions.
- To have a good understanding of the role online media has within the Council.
- Be able to write coherently consistently in press releases.
- Have a good level of written and spoken English.
- To be able to represent the Town Council fairly and transparently.
- Good communicative skills with the Council’s Officers.
- To feedback regularly on compliance and non-compliance with policies and strategies.
- To be able to work effectively within a team.

Desirable Criteria for the Role:

- To have a good understanding of Social Media.
- To be able to monitor output and give feedback where appropriate.
- To have skills in photoshop or other media related programmes.
- To have good contacts within local press and local stakeholder groups.
- An innovative mind with the desire to improve current streams.
- Experience of Communications in relevant sectors (Any tier of local or national authority)
- Be able to provide analytics for the Council to consider and report on areas to improve.