



## **Media Policy West Bedlington Town Council**

<b>Approved Minute Ref</b>	<b>C122/13 – 7d</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>12.09.2013</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>1</b>

West Bedlington Town Council's interaction with the community is vital to its work and the decisions it takes. An open and constructive dialogue is a key requirement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for influencing and developing services, identifying needs and measuring satisfaction and performance. Effective information dissemination including news and media relations is an essential factor. This policy does not set out to be all-encompassing but rather one fashioned to be of value in a contemporary setting.

1. The term media includes, radio, television, internet, newspapers, magazines, leaflets and posters.
2. Normally any 'media' releases will go through the Mayor and/or deputy mayor as well as the communications and publicity sub group.
3. When asked to interact with the media any member can discuss and promote agreed council policy. Where no policy decision has been adopted that interaction should be forwarded to the council office before a formal (WBTC) reply is given.
4. Any member can speak on any matter in a personal manner as long as there is a clear line drawn between council policy and personal statements. Care should be taken to comply with data protection requirements, codes of conduct and confidentiality.
5. Members should inform council immediately or as soon as practical of any such interaction.
6. Council will make every effort to respond promptly to any requests for information.
7. The clerk's office will normally prepare all official press releases and keep copies.
8. The disclosure and sharing of information should normally be restricted to matters which have been discussed as agenda items by the Town Council with the exception of requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act. In the case of such a request the clerk should prepare a suggested course of action so that the council complies fully with the requirements of the Act.
9. There is an obligation to act with integrity and respect for council policy once made.
10. No information of a personal nature may be disclosed.
11. No matter relating to the conduct or capability of a councillor at a meeting can be disclosed.
12. Care should be taken not to misrepresent or bring the Council into disrepute and/or undermine any decision made and must take into account roles, rules and responsibilities under the Local Government Code of Conduct.

13. When attending any public meeting as a representative of West Bedlington Town Council individuals are required to act with integrity at all times and ensure that any comments that they make are entirely accurate and reflect the views and agreed policies of the council as a whole, or, if not, that this is made known. (\*no4)
14. Council retain the right to delegate authority for some/all press releases and will seek opportunities to correct any inaccurate reports and negative publicity.