SEAMER PARISH COUNCIL

www.seamercrossgates-pc.gov.uk

PRESS AND MEDIA POLICY

Adopted by the Council on 9 July 2024

Reviewed 14 July 2026

Next Review due 31 July 2027

Introduction

1. Seamer Parish 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 Council's clerk.

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").

3. This policy explains how the Council may work with the media to meet the objectives above in accordance with the legal requirements and restrictions that apply. It sets out the framework for Councillors, officers/employees to follow in contacting the media and informing the public about the local Council's activities, the decisions it makes and the services it provides.

4. Effective media relations are an important factor in maintaining a good relationship between the Council and the local community. Since members of the public generally rely on the media for local information and news, it is important for the local Council to present information about its activities and aspirations in a consistent way.

5. The community in this sense includes all residents and elected representatives, businesses, schools, shops, places of worship, statutory agencies, voluntary organisations, groups and associations.

Legal requirements and restrictions

6. 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 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation 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 Publication Scheme.

7. 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 adopted 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, a copy of which is available via the Council's publication scheme.

Media Communications

8. "The Media" is more than the local newspaper. The phrase encompasses many different means of communicating a message to a wide audience and includes:
    i. Broadcast Media (radio and Television)
    ii. Internet (website and social media)
    iii. Printed media (newspapers, community newspapers, magazines, leaflets, and the Council's Annual Report)
    iv. Council Agendas and Displaying information on Council noticeboards.

Meetings

9. A meeting of the Council and its committees is 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(s) stated in the resolution. In accordance with the Council's adopted standing orders, people may be required to leave a meeting of the Council and its committees, if their disorderly behaviour obstructs the business of the meeting.

10. Where a meeting of the Council and its committees include an opportunity for public participation, the media may speak and ask questions. Public participation is regulated by the Council's standing orders. The Chair of Council will manage the public participation period. The photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a meeting of the Council and its committees (which includes e.g. using a mobile phone or tablet, recording for a TV/radio broadcast, providing commentary on blogs, web forums, or social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube) 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. paragraphs 11 and 12 below apply.

11. 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.

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

13. The Council shall, as far as it is practicable, provide reasonable facilities for anyone taking a report of a Council or committee meeting and for telephoning their report at their own expense.

14. 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. [In accordance with the Recording of Meetings Policy/Procedure (if applicable)]

Other communications with the media

15. This policy does not seek to regulate Councillors in their private capacity.

16. The Council's communications with the media seek to represent the corporate position and views of the Council. If the views of Councillors are different to the Council's corporate position and views, they will make this clear.

17. The clerk, [or in their absence, the deputy clerk] may contact the media if the Council wants to provide information, a statement or other material about the Council. The clerk is not expected or authorised to speculate on matters that have not been considered by the Council.

18. When such questions are put to the clerk, they should inform the enquirer that they will be notified of a response within 24 hours where practical. The clerk should then consult with the chair or vice chair in their absence, on a suitable response, which may be "no comment".

19. Councillors should take great care not to misrepresent and/or bring the Council into disrepute and must bear in mind their responsibilities under the Council's Code of Conduct.

20. Subject to the obligations on Councillors not to disclose information referred to in paragraph 7 above and not to misrepresent the Council's position, Councillors are free to communicate their position and views, and must make it clear that they are their own personal views and that they are not representing the views of the local Council.

Monitoring

21. It is important to monitor the media for items (reports, articles, and letters) about the Council in order to know:
    i. Whether press releases and statements issued by the Council are picked up and used effectively.
    ii. What the community is saying about the Council.

22. Councillors and Officers/Employees are encouraged to look out for items referring to the Council in all media and to inform the clerk. Wherever possible supply original press cuttings rather than photocopies to the clerk.

Signed: Chairman of the Council

Clerk of the Council and Responsible Financial Officer

Proper Officer

Date: 29 July 2026