



Noak Bridge Parish Council

Media and Press Policy

Version	Date Adopted	Minute Reference	Review Date
1	25/02/2026	22/2026/02	25/02/2029

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out how Noak Bridge Parish Council (“the Council”) will work with the press and other media, including print, broadcast and online platforms.

1.2 The policy provides guidance to Councillors and the Clerk on handling media enquiries and communications. It is not intended to restrict freedom of expression, but to ensure that communications are accurate, lawful and protect the reputation of the Council.

2. Key Aims of the Policy

2.1 The Council is accountable to the residents of Noak Bridge and recognises the importance of open, transparent and effective communication.

2.2 The media play a vital role in informing the community about the Council’s services, decisions and priorities. The Council will therefore seek to maintain positive and constructive relationships with the media.

2.3 The Council will also respond appropriately to inaccurate or unfounded criticism and will ensure that residents are properly informed of the relevant facts.

3. Legal Framework

3.1 Media and publicity activities will be conducted in accordance with, but not limited to:

- The Local Government Act 1986 and 1988;
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- The Transparency Code 2015;
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR; and
- The Government’s Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity.

3.2 The Council’s adopted Standing Orders and Code of Conduct must be complied with at all times.

4. Contact with the Media

4.1 This policy is adopted pursuant to Standing Order 22 (Relations with the Press/Media) and should be read in conjunction with the Council’s Standing Orders, Code of Conduct and all information governance policies.

4.2 Councillors and the Clerk must always have due regard for the long-term reputation of the Council in all dealings with the media.

4.3 Confidential information, exempt minutes, draft reports, legal advice and private correspondence must not be disclosed to the media. Any suspected breach will be investigated and dealt with in accordance with the Council’s procedures.

4.4 Where a media enquiry relates to a matter that is subject to, or likely to be subject to, legal proceedings, no comment should be made without first seeking advice from the Council’s solicitor.

4.5 Wherever possible, information provided to the media should be given in writing to reduce the risk of misunderstanding or misreporting.

5. Authorised Spokespersons

5.1 The Chair of the Council and the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, are the Council's authorised spokespersons and may speak to the media on behalf of the Council.

5.2 In specific cases, the Clerk and/or the Chair may authorise another Councillor to respond to a particular media enquiry.

5.3 Statements made by the Chair or the Clerk must reflect agreed Council policy or decisions.

5.4 Councillors who are not authorised spokespersons may speak to the media in a personal capacity, but must make it clear that the views expressed are their own and not those of the Council. Councillors must not give the impression, directly or indirectly, that they are speaking on behalf of the Council.

6. Personal and Sensitive Matters

6.1 This section should be read alongside Standing Orders 11 (Management of Information), 19 (Handling Staff Matters), 20 (Responsibilities to Provide Information) and 21 (Responsibilities under Data Protection Legislation).

6.2 Particular care must be taken when media enquiries relate to personal or sensitive issues, including (but not limited to):

- Personal data of Councillors, the Clerk or staff;
- Disciplinary matters;
- Employment issues or long-term sickness absence.

6.3 In such cases, advice must be sought from the Clerk before any response is made.

7. Council Meetings and the Media

7.1 Media attendance and reporting of meetings is governed by Standing Order 3, in particular Standing Orders 3(l)–(n), which permit reporting, filming and recording of meetings that are open to the public, subject to the Chair's discretion and statutory requirements.

7.1 In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, agendas, reports and minutes will be provided to the media on request.

7.2 Members of the media are welcome to attend Council meetings. Reasonable facilities will be made available where practicable.

8. Press Releases and Official Statements

8.1 The issuing of press releases and official statements must comply with the NALC Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity and must not be party-political, misleading or designed to improperly influence public opinion.

8.1 Press releases may be used to:

- Provide important information to residents;
- Publicise Council services, facilities or events; or

- Explain or clarify the Council's position on specific issues.

8.2 Draft press releases may be prepared by the Clerk or Councillors, but all press releases and official statements must be issued through the Clerk to ensure legal compliance, consistency and accuracy.

9. Social Media and Other Communication Channels

9.1 The Council maintains a separate Social Media Policy. Any use of social media by Councillors or staff which may relate to the Council, or give the impression of representing the Council, must comply with that policy, the Code of Conduct and this Media and Press Policy.

10. Review

10.1. This policy shall be reviewed at least every three years or sooner if required by legislative or guidance changes.