



Policy on Communications with the Press and Media & Representation at Planning Committees

Review & Re-Adopted at the Meeting of 11 December 2023

1. Any approaches from the press or media should be referred, in the first instance, to the Clerk.
2. The Clerk will not give any initial response other than that he/she will liaise with the Chair of the Council.
3. If, in conjunction with the Chair, the Clerk deems it appropriate to make a comment to the press, the wording for this shall be agreed beforehand by the Clerk and two Councillors (to include the Chair and/or Vice-Chair where possible).
4. The Chair may, if there is a matter which needs immediate response and s/he considers it appropriate, issue a statement to the press on the Council's behalf – provided that:
 - a. the Chair agrees the wording of the statement with two other Councillors
 - b. the statement should, where possible, focus on presenting facts rather than opinion
 - c. the Council's Code of Conduct is adhered to at all times
 - d. any statement made to the press should be reported to the Clerk and all other Councillors.
5. If the Chair is invited to give an oral response or radio/television interview, s/he may do so as long as s/he has sought the agreement of two other Councillors. The principles of 4b-d above should be adhered to.
6. No Councillors other than the Chair shall, in their official capacity or in a manner that may be construed to represent the council, provide written or oral statements or written articles/letters to the press (or other media), UNLESS given express authority to do so by a resolution of the Council.
7. If an application pertaining to Wivelsfield is to be heard at a local Planning Committee, the Council may nominate a member of the Council to attend and speak on its behalf.
8. A written statement should be prepared sufficiently far in advance of the Committee date, to allow for it to be circulated via email, amendments made as appropriate and for it to be approved by a minimum of three Council members.
9. The statement should begin by indicating that it represents the view of Wivelsfield Parish Council as a body corporate, and should be read out, at Committee, as written.
10. Should questions be asked by the Committee of the Member present, they should answer on the basis of fact or the Council's known position, not personal opinion.
11. The use of a pre-prepared and approved statement will allow for any nominated councillor to speak, whether or not they have a pecuniary interest in the application under consideration.