

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL

Media Policy

Adopted by the Parish Council at the meeting on 4 March 2010

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to define the roles and responsibilities within the Council for contact with the media.

2.0 Contact with the Media

- 2.1 Approaches from the media should be referred to the Chairman who is the authorised contact with the media in consultation with the Parish Clerk. The Parish Clerk is, however, given permission to speak to the media in the Chairman's absence.
- 2.2 Statements made by the Chairman to the media should reflect the Council's opinion.
- 2.3 Other Councillors can talk to the media but must ensure that it is clear that the opinions given are their own and not necessarily those of the Council.
- 2.4 Caution should be exercised when submitting letters to the editor for publication in newspapers. There are occasions when it is appropriate for the Council to submit a letter, for example to explain important policies or to correct factual errors in letters submitted by other correspondents. However, such letters should be kept brief and balanced in tone and correspondence should not be drawn out over several weeks.
- 2.5 Letters representing the views of the Council should only be submitted by the Chairman or the Parish Clerk. If other Members choose to use the letters column to express their own opinions on Council policies, they should make clear that the views put forward are those of the individual Member. Care should be taken not to disclose any information of a confidential nature, if a Member is unclear whether information is confidential they should consult the Parish Clerk.
- 2.6 At all times consideration should be given as to how the correspondence may affect the reputation of the Council. The Parish Council's Code of Conduct is relevant here – section 5. states that "You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or authority into disrepute."

Helen Sandhu
Parish Clerk
February 2010