

# Goudhurst Parish Council



## STANDING ORDERS POLICY ON DEALING WITH THE PRESS AND MEDIA

Reviewed and approved by Council's Policy Committee 28 November 2022

*To be reviewed November 2024*

### Introduction

Goudhurst Parish Council's relationship with the community is vital to its work and the decisions it takes. An open and constructive dialogue is a key requirement for influencing and developing services, identifying attitudes and measuring satisfaction.

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

This document sets out the framework for Parish Council members and employees to follow when in contact with the media and informing the public about the Parish Council's activities, the decisions it takes and the services it provides.

### The Media

The term "media" encompasses many different means of communicating a message to a wide audience, and includes broadcast media, the internet and a wide range of printed media, including local newspapers, magazines, local broadsheets, and posters.

The general principle is that the Parish Council office will act as the Press Office. Any official contact with the media concerning Parish Council's policies, decisions and services is to be initiated through the Clerk or, in their absence, the Assistant Clerk or Chairman.

Press releases and statements will be prepared by the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and other members as required and will normally be restricted to matters that have been debated and agreed by the Parish Council.

All members who are approached by the media should refer them to the Clerk or to the Chairman of the Council to ensure consistency. Members can, as long as they make it clear that it is a personal opinion, state their view on a matter. However, members should take care not to misrepresent and/or bring the Parish Council into disrepute, and must bear in mind their responsibilities under the Local Government Code of Conduct. The requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 must be adhered to at all times.

The Local Government Act (LGA) 1972 requires that agendas, reports and minutes are sent to the media on request and the media are encouraged to attend Council meetings and the Council should make appropriate space available.

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 allows the filming, photographing and/or recording of Council proceedings by the public or press. It is also permissible for a person to tweet or blog meetings via social media. Those attending should be advised that the proceedings are being recorded. No oral report or running verbal commentary is permitted during the meeting.