



Ramsgate Town Council

Procedure for Communication with the Media

Adopted	28 th June 2023
Due to review	Annual as per Standing Orders

Effective communication with the media is crucial for Ramsgate Town Council to ensure accurate information dissemination and minimize the risk of misunderstanding and misinformation. The following procedure should be followed by councillors and staff when approached by the media:

This procedure shall be applied in accordance with the Local Government Act 1986, the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, and relevant data protection legislation including the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Council communications with the media must be lawful, objective, even-handed, appropriate, cost-effective, and mindful of equality and diversity.

Obtain Information: When contacted by the media, gather essential details such as the name of the person calling, the media organization, and, if available, the anticipated time of release of information in print or broadcast.

Inform the Chair and Town Clerk: Promptly notify the Chair and Town Clerk about the media contact, respecting reporters' deadlines. Communication should occur as soon as possible, preferably within a half-day, by returning the call or message.

Understand the Question: Ensure a clear understanding of each question posed by the media before responding. If you are unable to answer or are uncomfortable providing a response, politely request the reporter's contact information and inform them that someone who can provide the necessary information will reach out soon. Subsequently, report this communication to the Town Clerk.

Provide Helpful and Honest Responses: Maintain a helpful and honest approach when interacting with the media. Avoid speculation, gossip, and responding with "no comment." Treat reporters with respect and ensure they comprehend your responses. Provide your contact details, such as phone number and/or email address, for any follow-up questions.

During any pre-election period or other period of heightened sensitivity, all communications must avoid seeking to influence public opinion in favour of or against any candidate, political group, or individual councillor, and must not present controversial matters in a partisan manner.

Councillors' Limitations: Councillors, in their official capacity, should not provide oral or written statements, or written articles to the press, other media, or third parties on behalf of the Council.

Individual councillors may express personal views to the media, but they must make clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the Council unless expressly authorised to do so.

Avoid Specific Topics: Refrain from discussing specific topics with reporters, including:

- a) Legal issues
- b) Personnel issues
- c) Questions involving council integrity, such as ethics
- d) Emergency situations

Direct all matters falling within these categories to the Town Clerk/Chair.

Confidential information, exempt information, legally privileged material, and personal data must not be disclosed to the media unless disclosure is clearly lawful and authorised.

Staff Information: Any enquiries regarding staff should be referred to the Town Clerk/Chair. Only public information, such as verification of employment, name of job title/position, full or part-time status, and office contact details, may be provided without the employee's written approval.

Any disclosure of information about staff must be limited to what is necessary, lawful, and proportionate. Private contact details, sickness records, disciplinary matters, and other non-public employment information must not be shared unless there is a clear legal basis and proper authorisation.

Council's Collective Responsibility: Remember that the council is a single corporate body, and the decisions made by the council are the responsibility of the council as a whole. All councillors and staff members must bear this in mind during media interactions.

Issuing Press Releases: The Town Clerk's office can issue press releases to the media containing information about the actions and decisions of the council upon a resolution passed by the full council. All written press releases should be reviewed by both the Town Clerk and the designated Marketing and Communications Officer.

Press releases should reflect established Council decisions or approved positions and should not promote individual councillors or political viewpoints.

Adopted: 28 June 2023

Reviewed and Amended (Legislative Updates): 27 May 2026