

Crewe Town Council



Media Policy

The purpose of the policy is to set out how the Council will handle matters related to the press and other media including social media¹. This includes the proactive release of information and responses to enquiries from the media or posts on social media. Policy shall be as set out below:

Policy 1a – Members are encouraged to use the media including social media in order that they may promote Council policy and attract attention to issues of importance in Crewe. In talking to the media or posting on social media members should simply be clear about their role and how comments may be attributed. For example:

- Councillor X may in the cases of Leader or Committee chair or other similar roles, express a view on behalf of the Council or their Committee (as the case may be). If in any doubt, such members should caveat responses making clear whether they are speaking on behalf of the Council/Committee as a whole or by virtue of their role on Council or Committee.
- Councillor X may not express views in the name of the Council or Committee unless they have been authorised by virtue of clear Council policy or resolution.
- Councillor X may express their opinion on any matter, but should make sure that they make clear the views expressed are their own and not necessarily representative of other members or Council/Committee in general.

Policy 1b – The Mayor and Deputy Mayor hold special roles within the Council and are permitted to engage with the media to promote that role and the civic nature of the Council. When commenting on other matters they should make clear they are not speaking as Mayor/Deputy Mayor and generally use the title 'Cllr'.

Policy 1c - The Clerk and his Deputy have the authority as proper officers of the Council to veto any release that they consider is not legal, political in nature or will bring the Council into disrepute. Officers are required to pay special attention in the run up to local, national and EU elections.

In the event of any contradictory opinions between members and assuming the caveats above are not compromised, the Clerk will ultimately act on the advice of the Leader of the Council, who will in turn be responsible to Council.

¹ When posting in the capacity of a Councillor rather than as a private individual.

Policy 1d – The Council’s social media shall only be accessed and utilised by Council officers who are expected to restrict their activities to promoting the best interest of the Council, explaining Council policy and presenting the Town in the best possible light.

Policy 1e – Political Groups may have their own policies, such policies are outside the scope of this document. However, it is expected that releases by parties will clearly state the source from which they arise and that they are not released on behalf of the Council, its members or officers.

Policy 2 – Officers may issue press releases on behalf of the Council. Except in cases of urgency or emergency all releases will be approved by the Leader, any member quoted and the Clerk. Any third party quotes shall have given their permission for quotes to be published.

Policy 3 – In the case of a mayoral press release, except in the case of urgency or emergency, the above procedure does not apply, but approval should be obtained from the Mayor or Deputy Mayor, and any other member or third party quoted.

Policy 4 – In commenting to the media, or posting on social media, officers and members must at all times abide by the code of conduct of members/officers.

Policy 5 – Press releases will be circulated as widely as possible and if of general public interest posted on the Council website.

Policy 6 – All press releases shall be retained, any releases that are not sent after formal approval shall be retained and the file marked as (NS)

Policy 7 – All press releases shall be circulated to all members as soon as practicable after distribution.

Approved at Council 17/3/15