

Canvey Island Town Council

Publicity Policy

Canvey Island Town Council welcomes enquiries from the Press & Media and recognises that our relationship with the press helps us communicate with residents. The Council recognises the need for this and should be reflected in how we deal with the Press. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the Town Council is seen to communicate in a professional and objective manner. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Members Code of Conduct.

The Councils approach to the media should be:

- Open and honest
- Proactive
- Responsive and timely
- Information

There are two types of press release;

Official Council Releases

An official Council release is made on behalf of the Council as a whole this will be written by an Officer and issued by the Town Clerk. It is non-party political and includes a quote from the relevant Councillor(s). This is usually the Chair of the Council or Committee Chairman.

Councillor Press Releases

Councillor's press releases are personal and are written and issued by the Councillor responsible. This release may or may not be political and should not include the name of a Council Officer, or a Council telephone number as a point of contact. It would be beneficial for copies of intended releases, especially those of a factual nature, to be provided to the Town Clerk. Councillors seeking advice can either contact the Town Clerk or Monitoring Officer.

Press Release Protocol

The following forms the Protocol for Council Members and Officers:

- All official Council press releases will include a quotation from the relevant Councillor. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to also include the Ward Councillor or other Councillor promoting the scheme.
- In line with service standards all official Council press releases are to be issued on a template provided by the Town Clerk. This template includes the Town Council logo.
- Official press releases will not identify the political party or group affiliation of any Member(s) quoted in the release.

- The Town Clerk is the first line of decision making in terms of what is newsworthy for official press releases, and shall make the final decision on whether a press release shall be issued, unless otherwise directed by the Council or Committee.
- In the years when elections occur, during periods from the issue of the Notice of Election until the day of the Election, Officers will issue no releases quoting Council Members. During this time any quotes will be from Officers.
- The role of Officers is to advise and provide support and advice to Council members in their communication activities.
- Council Members are solely responsible for the writing and distribution of all councillor press releases and any Editors Letters to the media.
- Council Member releases must not use the Town Councils logo, or use the Council or an Officer as a point of contact.
- Officers and Council Members must act reasonably and responsibly.
- Council Members are reminded that they must not miss-use Council resources for political or other inappropriate purposes. Should the Council receive a Freedom of Information request on a topic on which there is correspondence (email or written) from or with Members, normally that correspondence would have to be disclosed, unless it was exempt. The fact that the disclosure of the correspondence may prove embarrassing would not, of itself, prevent disclosure. In addition, care should be taken when processing personal data. The Data Protection Act 1998 prevents the use of personal information other than for the purposes for which it was supplied. Members should bear this in mind when using any personal data which may be supplied to them by their constituents.
- In general, the Town Clerk will be responsible for interpretation of the Protocol.