**TERRINGTON ST CLEMENT PARISH COUNCIL ‐ MEDIA POLICY**

**Introduction**

1**. TERRINGTON ST CLEMENT** Parish Council (“the Council”) is committed to the

provision of accurate information about its governance, decisions and activities.

Where this information is not available via the Council’s publication scheme,

please contact the Council’s Clerk.

2. The Council shall, where possible, co‐operate with those whose work involves

gathering material for publication in any form including use of the internet (“the

media”).

3. This policy explains how the Council may work with the media to meet the above

objectives in accordance with the legal requirements and restrictions that apply.

**Legal requirements and restrictions**

4. This policy is subject to the Council’s obligations which are set out in the Public

Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1986, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, other legislation which may apply and the Council’s standing orders and financial regulations. The Council’s financial regulations and relevant standing orders referenced in this policy are available via the Council’s publication scheme.

5. The Council cannot disclose confidential information or information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law. The Council cannot disclose information if this is prohibited under the terms of a court order, by legislation, the Council’s standing orders, under contract or by common law.

Councillors are subject to additional restrictions about the disclosure of confidential information which arise from the code of conduct adopted by the Council, a copy of which is available via the Council’s publication scheme.

**Meetings**

6. A meeting of the Council and its committees is open to the public unless the meeting resolves to exclude them because their presence at the meeting is prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business or other special reason(s) stated in the resolution. In accordance with the Council’s standing orders, persons may be required to leave a meeting of the Council and its committees, if their disorderly behaviour obstructs the business of the meeting.

7. Where a meeting of the Council and its committees include an opportunity for public participation, the media may speak and ask questions. Public participation is regulated by the Council’s standing orders.

8. The photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a meeting of the Council and its committees (which includes e.g. using a mobile phone or tablet, recording for a TV/radio broadcast, providing commentary on blogs, web forums, or social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube) which enable a person not at the meeting to see, hear or be given commentary about the meeting is permitted unless (i) the meeting has resolved to hold all or part of the meeting without the public present or (ii) such activities disrupt the proceedings or (iii) paragraphs 9 and 10 below apply.

9. The photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a child or vulnerable adult at a Council or committee meeting is not permitted unless an adult responsible for them has given permission.

10.Oral reporting or commentary about a Council or committee meeting by a person

who is present at the meeting is not permitted.

11.The Council shall, as far as it is practicable, provide reasonable facilities for

anyone taking a report of a Council or committee meeting and for telephoning

their report at their own expense.

12. The Council’s standing orders will confirm if attendance by the public, their

participation,photographing, recording, filming or other reporting is permitted at a

meeting of a committee.

**Other communications with the media**

13. This policy does not seek to regulate councillors in their private capacity.

14. The Council’s communications with the media seek to represent the corporate position and views of the Council. If the views of councillors are different to the Council’s corporate positon and views, they will make this clear.

15. The Council’s Clerk may contact the media if the Council wants to provide

information, a statement or other material about the Council.

16. Subject to the obligations on councillors not to disclose information referred to

in paragraph 5 above and not to misrepresent the Council’s position, councillors

are free to communicate their position and views.

**What is Social Media?**

‘Social media’ is the term commonly given to websites and online tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way = by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. This interaction may be through computers, mobile phones and new generation technology such as i-Pads.

**Examples of social media websites include:**

Social networking – (eg. www.facebook.com)

Video sharing – (eg. www.youtube.com)

Blogs (eg. london2012.com/blog)

Micro-blogging (eg. www.twitter.com)

Message boards (eg. www.bbc.co.uk/dna/mbsn/home)

Wikis (eg. www.wikipedia.org)

Social bookmarking (eg. www.delicious.com)

**Council Use of Social Media**

**Principles**

* To publish information about the work of **TERRINGTON ST CLEMENT PARISH** Council to a wider audience.
* To avoid entering into online debates or arguments about the Council’s work. Social Media must NOT be used in the recruitment process for employees or new councillors - other than for the sole purpose of placing vacancy advertisements - as this could lead to potential discrimination and privacy actions, as well as breach of data protection issues.

**Approved Council Social Media**

* (Parish/Town Council website)

**Users of Council Social Media**

* In accordance with the Council’s adopted Communications Policy the Clerk to the Council is the Council’s nominated Press Officer with the authority to issue official press releases. No other member of staff or council member has the authority to issue public statements on behalf of the Council.

1. **Guidance for Council Officers on the use of Council Social Media**

* Officers should be familiar with the terms of use on third party websites – eg. Facebook - and adhere to these at all times
* No information should be published that is not already known to be in the public domain – ie. available on the Council’s website, contained in minutes of meetings, stated in Council publicised policies and procedures, etc.
* Information that is published should be factual, fair, thorough and transparent.
* Everyone must be mindful that information published in this way may stay in the public domain indefinitely, without the opportunity for retrieval/deletion.
* Copyright laws must be respected.
* Conversations or reports that are meant to be private or internal must not be published without permission.
* Other organisations should not be referenced without their approval – when referencing, link back to the original source wherever possible.
* Do not publish anything that would be regarded in the workplace as unacceptable.
* Staff must remember that they will be seen as ambassadors for the Council, and should always act in a responsible and socially aware manner.

1. **Third party Social Media and Individual Councillor Usage**

Councillors need to think about whether they are acting in a private capacity, or whether any impression might be conveyed that they are acting for and on behalf of Terrington St Clement Parish Council. The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct which is binding on all members. If you use Social Media in your official capacity as a councillor, you should always be mindful of the Code, and of the seven Nolan principles applicable to holding public office – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

**Do:**

* Set appropriate privacy settings for any blog or networking site
* Watch out for defamatory or obscene posts from others on any blog or page and remove them as soon as possible to avoid any perception that you condone such vies
* Be aware that the higher your profile as a councillor, the more likely it is that you may be seen as acting in an official capacity when you blog or network
* Ensure any Council facilities are used appropriate – if using a Council-provided blog site or social networking area, any posts that you make are extremely likely to be viewed as being made in your official capacity
* Avoid publishing any information that you could only have accessed in your position as a councillor
* Be careful if making ‘political’ points, and avoid being specific or personal about individuals.

**Don’t:**

* Blog in haste
* Post comments that you would not be prepared to make in writing or in face-to-face contact
* Use Council facilities for personal or political purposes

**Approved and adopted by the Terrington St Clement Parish Council on 15 July 2015**