

Chelmsford Garden Community Council Media Policy

Introduction

1. Chelmsford Garden Community 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 Executive Officer.
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 2018 and the Openness of Local Government Bodies regulations 2014 together with 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, 10 and 11 below apply.

9. Only Councillors and Officers of the Chelmsford Garden Community Council and any other persons permitted to sit at the table with Councillors may be filmed or photographed. No other person present at the meeting should be filmed or photographed thus all cameras and other equipment for filming or taking photographs may only be pointed at the Councillor's table.

10. 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.

11. Live oral reporting or commentary during a meeting about a Council or committee meeting by a person who is present at the meeting is not permitted.

12. 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.

13. 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 sub-committee.

Other communications with the media

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

15. 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 position and views, they must make this clear.

16. Only the Council's Executive Officer may contact the media if the Council wants to provide information, a statement or other material about the Council. The Executive Officer will communicate the Council's considered position and confine comments to the facts of the subject matter. Councillors may not publish information on behalf of the Council or in relation to the Council in their capacity as Councillor without the prior written approval of the Chairman.

17. If a Councillor does publish information, the Councillor must abide by paragraph 5 above and not misrepresent the Council's position.

This policy was agreed and adopted on behalf of the Council by the Communications Committee of the Council at its meeting on 2nd August 2023.

Date of review May 2025