



*Neath Town Council*  
*Cyngor Tref Castell-nedd*

# Communications Policy

<u>Version Control</u>		
<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Version 1	March 2015	Initial draft of policy
Version 2	August 2019	Updated draft of policy
		Agreed by Full Council October 2019
Version 3	February 2020	Agreed by Full Council March 2020



## NEATH TOWN COUNCIL 'Working for the Community'

### Communications Policy

This policy aims to establish a protocol for effective communication of the Town Council's activities and pertinent information to the media and members of the public.

The Town Council is accountable to members of the public and has a duty to convey its decisions and actions through various media.

All communication will be conveyed in an open and straightforward manner.

The Town Clerk is the Proper Officer of the Town Council and is responsible for **all** formal communication between the Council, the press and members of the public. All Press Releases should be signed off by the Neath Town Council Press Officers, these are Cllr. Mrs Jan Lockyer and Cllr. Mark Protheroe. This process is managed by the Town Clerk.

#### Method of Communication

The Council will use the following media to communicate its activities:

Activity	Method of Communication	Responsibility
Approved Minutes	Website	Town Clerk
Agendas	Website/Noticeboards	Town Clerk
Annual Report	Website	Town Clerk following approval by Town Council)
Press Release	Media Outlets	Town Clerk (following approval from NTC Press Officers)
Annual external audit	Website/Noticeboards	Deputy Town Clerk
Adopted Annual Accounts	Website	Deputy Town Clerk (following approval by Town Council)
Councillor Vacancies	Website/Noticeboards	Town Clerk
Financial statements and other financial information	Website	Deputy Town Clerk

Other information will be provided in accordance with the Council's adopted Publication Scheme.

#### Procedure

The Town Council's requests that any press or other social media request for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its Councillors or staff, shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media (this policy).

***Councillors who wish to communicate directly with the press should make it clear whether they are speaking as a private individual.***

The following procedure sets out how the Council's decisions and actions will be disseminated to interested parties.

1. Using themes approved by the Town Council, the Chairman will be responsible for presenting the Town Council's Annual Report at the Annual General Meeting of the Council.

2. Once a formal written draft has been approved by Full Council, the Annual Report will be published.
3. The Town Clerk is solely responsible for the preparation of notices of Council meetings, agendas and minutes.
4. The Town Clerk is responsible for the overall development and maintenance of the Council's website so that it remains current.
5. All correspondence addressed to the Town Council will be actioned by the Town Clerk.
6. Information that needs to be considered by the Town Council, or one of its committees, will be placed on the first agenda after its receipt.
7. Agendas for Council meetings be accompanied with sufficient written reports and information to enable Members to make an informed decision. Agendas will be issued via the Council's Website Portal 'Members Area' for those Councillors who wish to have the information forwarded this way or alternatively, as hard copies and will be available for collection by Members at least 3 clear days before all meetings of the Council.
8. Agendas and minutes for all meetings of the Council will be published on the Council's website. Agendas and minutes for Full Council will also be made available at Neath Library.
9. Other relevant information will be available on the 'Members Area' of the Council's Website in between meetings.
10. Council information will be made available to members of the public in accordance with the Council's 'Publication Scheme'.
11. The British Library will be issued with a copy of all publications published by the Council e.g. the Council's Annual Report and Neighbourhood Plan for Neath.

### **Requests for Information**

Information held by the Council shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the Council. The Council shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Neither the Town Clerk, nor Members, will disclose confidential information that is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act. The agenda and its supporting papers, and the minutes from a meeting where confidential or sensitive information is discussed, shall not disclose or otherwise undermine such information which, for special reasons, is not in the public interest.