



## **COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

This policy outlines the framework for NPHC internal and external communications, whilst responding to matters of governance. The objective of the Communications Policy is to help NPHC communicate effectively and transparently by:

- Achieving a better understanding of what harbour users and the public understand about the aims and objectives of NPHC;
- Providing clear and well-judged information.

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## COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

### 1 INTRODUCTION

NPHC recognises that consistent, effective and appropriate communication – external and internal - is important in helping to achieve its aims and objectives through a greater understanding of its policies which will enhance its credibility as a publicly accountable organisation.

This document outlines the principles for managing communications, including a summary of key strands of communications, and the responsibilities of NPHC & staff in relation to communications.

Key points:

- All communication is important and needs to be considered carefully;
- External and internal communications are a part of strategic business planning, including working with other organisations;
- Good communications play an important positive role in the day-to-day operations of the harbour;
- Commissioners, the Harbour Master and staff at all levels have a responsibility to foster good communications both internally and externally;
- NPHC will foster a culture which encourages effective communication.

### 2 SCOPE & OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Communications Policy is to help NPHC communicate effectively which will ensure a better understanding of what NPHC offers harbour users; stakeholders and the public, and to:

- Improve the clarity with which the aims and objectives of the NPHC are understood;
- Promote transparent and open communication;
- Promote the values of good governance and accountability;
- Provide clear and well judged information.

The NPHC Board; staff and any consultants / agents engaged by NPHC should be familiar with this policy, the aim of which is to reduce the risk to NPHC of damaging or ineffective communication, and to ensure that everybody is aware how communication is best conveyed externally and internally, and who has responsibility for which aspects.

### 3 BENEFITS

The benefits to NPHC are:



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- a greater likelihood of achieving its aims, objectives and priorities;
- an effective and purposeful 'face' of the harbour;
- a trusting and informed environment in which to work,

### 4 LEGAL BASIS

The responsibilities to NPHC stem from its duty to achieve its core purposes as outlined in the "Harbour Revision Order" (2010) and "Modernising Trust Ports – A Guide to Good Governance" (2000). They are additionally conditioned by the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Freedom of Information Act (2005).

### 5 DEFINITIONS

#### 5.1 External Communications

Include all messages and information that NPHC presents to different audiences, whether directly (through the website, telephone calls, letters, e-mails, newsletters, marketing materials and press releases), or indirectly through the press and word of mouth. They also include the messages and information given to visitors to the harbour and to users of the website, as well as to Board Members, Stakeholders and users of the harbour.

#### 5.2 Internal Communications

Includes all the messages and information (whether verbal or written) passed within NPHC between members of staff, between Commissioners and also between Commissioners and staff. It also includes messages given to those working in association with the harbour on projects (consultants; agents and contractors etc.). Specifically NPHC will:-

5.2.1 Aim to facilitate and encourage excellent internal communications among staff and Commissioners so as to maintain a good working environment, to promote efficiency, and to generate better understanding of NPHC objectives.

5.2.2 Encourage openness and the sharing of information.

5.2.3 Be committed to openness and consultation with staff and in a consistent manner which promotes effective management.



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- 5.2.4 Seek constantly to improve communication between Commissioners and staff, in particular in the provision of information. Staff views are considered through a various forms of communication.
  - 5.2.5 As far as possible ensure that staff are directly informed of important harbor issues and no later than the media or other external bodies.
  - 5.2.6 Recognise the importance of face-to-face communication which is frequently more effective than written communication.
  - 5.2.7 Hold meetings between harbour staff and the NPHC Chairman & Vice Chairman at least twice annually.
  - 5.2.8 The Harbour Master will hold regular “tea room briefings” with all staff on a regular monthly basis.
  - 5.2.9 The Commissioners Administrator will ensure that a copy of the agenda from all NPHC Board meetings (together with a copy of the minutes), are made available to staff via the “tea room briefings.”
- 5.3 Electronic communications
- 5.3.1 Email and the internet are the primary modes of written communication for NPHC.
  - 5.3.2 Personal and confidential information are protected in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
  - 5.3.3 The privacy of personal communications is preserved in accordance with the Human Rights Act.
  - 5.3.4 Some categories and items of information need to remain confidential, and Commissioners and staff need to be aware of this with regard to how, and to whom, the information is made available.
  - 5.3.5 As a general principle NPHC Board Papers should be distributed electronically, using the web and/or email, rather than on paper. The exceptions are:



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- Where there are many papers, or bulky papers, which all recipients need to have, and which the recipients need to have with them in meetings;
- Where papers are confidential, and it would be difficult to provide confidential access electronically;
- Where papers are difficult to format correctly and distribute electronically;

5.3.6 The individual Committee Chairmen and The Commissioners Administrator should decide if papers need to be distributed in hard copy.

5.3.7 The internet, with links from email, should be used for substantial papers.

5.3.8 A “Bibliography” has been prepared (in respect of the harbour redevelopment, redevelopment opportunities in Newlyn and the surrounding area, and proposals for a new Fish Market) as a point of reference where documents and reports for the period between 1997 to date are available to Commissioners. With any new reports that are commissioned these would be available via the NPHC website, with access restricted by password, if necessary.

5.3.9 Agendas and Minutes should be available on the web site with a signed copy held on file (signed by the relevant Chair).

5.3.10 The distribution of papers in hard copy should be clear, so that each recipient knows who the other recipients are.

5.3.11 The general principle is that a communication should make clear what action is expected of the recipient which should be obvious from the paper.

5.3.12 The subject field of emails, other than with casual exchanges, should be used to give information on content e.g. "OF INTEREST TO HARBOUR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE".

## 6 MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

### 6.1 Introduction



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The purpose of this policy is to define roles and responsibilities within NPHC for working with the media. It will also assist the media by clarifying the level of service they can expect regarding access to NPHC and staff and the provision of information and responses to enquiries. The policy deals with the day-to-day relationship between NPHC and the media and does not address how NPHC will work with the media in a crisis.

It is not the intention of this policy to curb freedom of speech or to enforce strict rules and regulations. Rather, the intention is to establish a framework for achieving an effective working relationship with the media. NPHC welcomes the opportunity to talk to the media and, through them, to debate issues in the public arena.

### 6.2 Key Aims of Media Relations

- 6.2.1 NPHC is accountable for its actions and this can only be achieved through effective two-way communications. Local accountability relies upon a genuine understanding of NPHC objectives. The media – print, radio, TV, internet – are crucially important in conveying information to the community so NPHC must maintain positive, constructive media relations and work with them to increase public awareness of NPHC aims and objectives and to explain the reasons for particular approaches and priorities wherever possible.
- 6.2.2 The media have a role to play in holding NPHC to account for its policies and actions. It is important that they have access to Commissioners and to background information to assist them in this role. To balance this, NPHC will defend itself from any unfounded criticism and will ensure that the public are properly informed of all the relevant facts using other channels of communication if necessary.
- 6.2.3 Commissioners should always have due regard for the long-term objectives of the NPHC in all their dealings with the media.
- 6.2.4 Confidential documents, Part II reports, papers and private correspondence should not be leaked to the media. If such leaks do occur, an investigation will take place to establish who was responsible and the appropriate action will be taken.
- 6.2.5 NPHC reserves the right to withhold certain sensitive information concerning commercial transactions, for example the purchase and sale of land and property. This applies to NPHC's own commercial interests



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and to the various parties involved in individual business transactions with NPHC. So, for example, to protect NPHC's negotiating position, details of an offer made for the purchase of a property would not be revealed to the media.

- 6.2.6 When the media wish to discuss an issue that is, or is likely to be, subject to legal proceedings then advice should be taken from the Chairman before any response is made.
- 6.2.7 All Board agendas and minutes are sent to the media on request, five working days prior to the meeting. The media are encouraged to attend NPHC meetings (Public part).
- 6.2.8 Any filming or taping of Board Meetings by the media must be with prior notice to the Chair of the meeting. Advance notice of any request should be made via the Harbour Master.
- 6.2.9 Certain agenda items (Part II items), are debated in closed session. It is the decision of the Chairman as to which items should be considered in this part of the meeting (see the Exclusion of Press & Public item on agenda papers). The press and public are excluded from this part of the meeting and NPHC Board Members must continue to respect the confidentiality of any Part II items discussed.
- 6.2.10 The objective of this policy is to enhance the profile and maintain the integrity of NPHC so as to help promote and secure longer term business aspirations and a vital function of Commissioners is to challenge and question policies. However, in dealing with the media all Commissioners and staff should be conscious that they are representatives of NPHC and should avoid making comments that may damage the long-term reputation of NPHC or, present their own personal views as if they were the policy of NPHC.
- 6.2.11 Commissioners are advised to ensure they are properly briefed before talking to the media.
- 6.2.12 Key points of the Media Relations Policy are to:-
- Build a relationship of trust and mutual understanding;
  - Explain NPHC business objectives to harbor users; Stakeholders and the local community;
  - Communicate important information;



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- Invigorate harbor users and encourage the development of the harbor by attracting new users;
- Enhance the development of the harbor in line with agreed objectives.

### 6.3 Responding to approaches from the media

6.3.1 The media may contact NPHC for many different reasons, for example, to follow up a story after receiving agendas or minutes; to ask for the NPHC position on a more general story affecting other organisations; to look for a local perspective on a national story; following a call from a member of the public; for an update on a long running story.

6.3.2 Local press, radio and TV stations may contact commissioners and staff directly when preparing news stories.

6.3.3 The Harbour Master should be contacted for preliminary discussions on any story or if a journalist or researcher is unsure who to approach.

6.3.4 Approaches from the media should be directed to the Harbour Master who will discuss the nature of the request and then contact the appropriate Commissioner asking them to respond.

6.3.5 All proposals for feature articles, or more lengthy broadcast interviews or debates, should be made through the Chairman.

6.3.6 It is not possible to provide hard and fast rules about who will speak to the media on behalf of NPHC in all particular situations. The important considerations are that the person has the necessary facts and understanding, that they are available when required and that they can speak with some authority.

6.3.7 The following guidelines should be observed following a request for information:-

Any requests for comment	:	Harbour Master
Specific requests for information	:	Relevant Committee Chairman
Complex or contentious matters	:	Chairman / Vice Chairman

### 6.4 Press Releases

Using the media appropriately can play an important role in helping NPHC achieve objectives and the development and implementation of an effective





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media relations policy and strategy has the commitment and full support of NPHC and Management.

In press releases the NPHC web site address should always be noted, to provide a link into the strategy of NPHC, and to promote the website as a source of where all up to date information can be found.

6.4.1 The web site address should always be written in the correct manner i.e. <http://newlynharbour.com> (with the http:// because on some sites they'll automatically make this a link.)

6.4.2 At the bottom of every press release quote the HTML so that it is readily available with the HTML links embedded which will promote communication to a wider audience.

6.4.3 All communications with the media will be carried out in a courteous and professional manner and respond to deadlines where feasible. Journalists will be advised if this is not possible. All calls from the media will be returned promptly.

6.4.4 Where major issues are involved NPHC will take advantage of appropriate opportunities to manage the presentation of stories or news e.g. by the use of press releases). Media planning will be included in NPHC strategic and operational plans where appropriate to present news or features to the media strategically and effectively.

6.4.5 The Harbour Master is the main point of contact for press enquiries and media relations and it is important that any NPHC Board member or member of staff, who is contacted by the media, also informs the Harbour Master.

### 6.5 Types of media

The following media are relevant to NPHC:

- specialist newspapers: e.g. Fishing News,
- regional newspapers: e.g. The Cornishman
- local websites e.g. [www.through the gaps.com](http://www.throughthegaps.com)
- broadcast media e.g. Radio Cornwall



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### 6.6 Authorisation

6.6.1 The following personnel are authorised to speak with the media directly on all matters associated with NPHC:-

- Chairman
- Vice Chairman
- Harbour Master

6.6.2 Chairmen of the relevant committee are authorised to speak with the media on any specific matters associated with their Committee, after consultation with the Chairman of the Board.

6.6.3 NPHC Commissioners and staff who are contacted by the media, but who under the terms of this policy are not authorised to speak with the media directly, should pass all media calls to the relevant person(s) as outlined above.

6.6.4 NPHC should resist from commenting and giving answers on the spot. Instead they should establish what questions the journalist is asking, what the article or feature is about, who else, if anyone, has been contacted, what their deadline is, and arrange to call them back. This allows time for consideration and to take advice.

6.6.5 If NPHC & harbour staff make a comment to the media outside of this policy THEY MUST ensure that the impression is not given that they are speaking on behalf of NPHC and that any comments made by them are their own personal views which are not necessarily those of NPHC.

### 6.7 Release of Information

Information about NPHC that is in the public domain will be made available to the media on request.

Information about NPHC that involves contractual arrangements, or that is subject to individual negotiation with external bodies or institutions, will not be made available to the media without the agreement of all parties concerned.



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Key points on press releases:

- Should be used to make announcements to a number of media correspondents simultaneously which will be jargon-free and accessible to all audiences.
- Will be issued for immediate release and will be approved for release by the Chairman / Vice Chairman. A copy will be retained on file.
- All news releases will be published on the NPHC web site as soon as they are released for publication.
- Copies of press releases will simultaneously be made available to all NPHC & staff.
- Any request by the media to visit the harbour to carry out interviews, filming or recording should be passed to the Harbour Master.

## 7 NPHC LOGO AND LETTERHEAD

### 7.1 Purpose

To provide guidelines for the use and reproduction of the NPHC logo.

### 7.2 Authority

The NPHC logo is the exclusive property and right of NPHC and can be displayed or used for official NPHC business by, or on behalf of, the Board of Commissioners. The logo, may not be displayed or used in any manner by any other individual, organisation, or other entity without the written consent of the Board of Commissioners.

The Harbour Master & Clerk to the Board of Commissioners will ensure that this Policy is being followed and has authority under this Policy to grant use of the logo.

### 7.3 Use

It is the policy of NPHC that the logo will only be used for official NPHC purposes related to the business of the harbour. That business may include: formal correspondence, website, signs, documents, application forms, job postings, publications, advertisements, public announcements, awards, certificates, clothing for the identification of NPHC staff, official promotional items and other uses as approved by the Board of Commissioners.



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Reproducing the NPHC logo on materials that are not intended for official use is not permitted.

For formal correspondence, the current approved stationary must be used.

The use and reproduction of the NPHC logo must follow the guidelines below:

- 7.3.1 The electronic j.peg format of the logo can be obtained from the Commissioners Administrator,
- 7.3.2 Other than the letterhead and Compliments Slips all manually generated documents should display the logo in the upper top right hand corner of the header.