



Annual IPSO statement, covering the period March 1, 2024, to February 28, 2025

The *Holderness & Hornsea Gazette* is an independently owned paid-for weekly newspaper (85p at the time of writing) which was first established in Withernsea, East Yorkshire, in 1910.

It has two editions, Holderness & East Riding, and Hornsea & North Holderness, which generally entail changes to the front and one inside page.

Responsible people

Editor/co-director: Sam Hawcroft

Sales/co-director: Zoe Broom

This is our first annual statement for IPSO, having joined the regulator soon after editor Sam Hawcroft and sales director Zoe Broom took over joint ownership of the company, Holderness Newspapers Ltd, in February 2024.

Sam has been editor since 2021, while Zoe has worked for the company on production and sales for more than 20 years. They can both be contacted via phone on 01964 612777.

The *Holderness & Hornsea Gazette* primarily covers general news, sport and features, with a hyperlocal focus on community life across the circulation area, which is the roughly triangular part of East Yorkshire from north of Hornsea, down to Hedon in the west and across to Spurn Point in the east.

We also do not shy away from covering the ‘bigger’ subjects when they arise – for instance, right at the time we took over the company, Nuclear Waste Services began a consultation on a geological disposal facility (GDF) in the region, which resulted in large-scale protests and East Riding Council’s eventual withdrawal from the process. Tabletop sales this was not – it required balanced and detailed investigation of the issues as well as the various voices of all the factions involved. Over the period we published five front pages and 14 inside pages on the issue, which was far more than any other local news outlet in the area.

In February 2024, we launched a digital edition on the Pocketmags platform, and the regularly updated website at holderness-gazette.co.uk features a selection of stories from the print edition, as well as local events, jobs, personal notices, a business directory and more.

We are on the social media platforms Facebook, Twitter (X), LinkedIn, Instagram and Bluesky (the latter we joined in January 2025).

Our content is created at our office in Withernsea, by a four-strong team comprising Sam and Zoe, as well as graphic designer Sally Waddingham and staff reporter Rebecca Hannant. (Our fifth member of staff is part-time accounts assistant Angela Hoe.) The paper is printed by Mortons of Horncastle.

We have a number of freelance news correspondents and photographers who regularly submit content, and we also welcome contributions from readers. We are also signed up to the BBC's Local Democracy Reporting Service, whose content we use on occasion if relevant to our region or if we deem it to be of wider interest.

Editorial standards and complaints handling

These are rigorously upheld by Sam, a trained editor of 25 years who has worked at the *Hull Daily Mail* and various roles at the Press Association, now PA Media (most recently on the PA's *Daily Telegraph* contract).

We strive to be fair, balanced and accurate in everything we publish, meeting the demand for local news while providing an effective local advertising service. The Editors' Code of Practice is displayed in the office and is regularly referred to, consulted and updated when necessary.

Editorially, the newspapers maintain an independent political stance, ensuring all political parties and local representatives are regularly included. Comments are sought from various sources to ensure balance, and where a particular key organisation or person cannot be reached despite repeated attempts to contact them before publication, this is clearly stated in the article.

In 2024 Sam created a separate Contributors' Handbook featuring key style points and highlighting the main rules to adhere to as well as other relevant information. This is on the HR portal available to staff and circulated among freelance correspondents. The reporter also has access to McNae's Essential Law.

In the case of contentious legal stories we would seek pre-publication advice from IPSO (we have not yet needed to do this) or, in the case of court reporting, enlist the services of experienced and trained freelance court reporters who have covered cases for us in the past.

If anyone has any complaints, we ask them to email or write to us in the first instance, and depending on the nature of the complaint we would then offer a right of reply in our letters page or publish a prominent correction. We always take complaints seriously and handle them with sensitivity and respect.

Our full complaints policy can be found here: <https://holderness-gazette.co.uk/complaints-policy>

In 2024 there were a handful of minor issues which were dealt with to the complainant's satisfaction, and no complaints were referred to IPSO. Details of how readers can make a complaint are published in every edition, on page 12, and on the footer of our website. This includes our contact details, IPSO's address and the IPSO mark.



The Holderness & Hornsea Gazette is a member of Ipsos (the Independent Press Standards Organisation), which regulates the UK's newspaper, magazine and digital news industry. We abide by the Editors' Code of Practice and are committed to upholding the highest standards of journalism. If you think that we have not met those standards and want to make a complaint, please contact us. If we are unable to resolve your complaint, or if you would like more information about Ipsos or the Editors' Code, contact Ipsos on 0300 123 2220 or visit [ipso.co.uk](https://www.ipso.co.uk)



This website and associated newspapers adhere to the Independent Press Standards Organisation's Editors' Code of Practice. If you have a complaint about the editorial content which relates to inaccuracy or intrusion, then **please contact the editor here**. Our Complaints Policy can be found here. If you are dissatisfied with the response provided you can **contact IPSO here**

Training

The previous owner did not pay for staff training, so this is something the new owners have sought to redress. In 2024 they enrolled the staff reporter on an NCTJ essential skills distance learning course with options to extend it into more areas.

Training for staff is otherwise on the job, while employees have access – and are encouraged – to regularly complete the various health and safety programmes available on our HR portal.

Staff are also encouraged to enrol on the free NCTJ refresher course on the IPSO editors' code at <https://www.nctj.com/cpd-courses/ipso/>.

Financial transparency

We pay our freelance contributors agreed rates for their published submissions, but we do not accept money from the general public for leads or news stories. On occasion we run paid advertorials, which are always clearly marked as such.

Sam Hawcroft
Editor/co-director

March 2025

The Holderness & Hornsea GAZETTE



CONTRIBUTORS' HANDBOOK



A basic how-to
guide to creating
content for the
Gazette, taking in
style points and
common issues

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*The Gazette adheres to the Independent Press Standards Organisation's Editors' Code of Practice, which is online here: **[ipso.co.uk/editors-code-of-practice](https://www.ipso.co.uk/editors-code-of-practice)**. Please read and refer back to it regularly.*



Handbook updated March 2025

ABOUT THE GAZETTE

The Holderness & Hornsea Gazette, to give it its full title, was established in Withernsea in 1910 and is still based in the town.

It serves the roughly triangular area of East Yorkshire east of Hull, from Hedon in the south-west, to just north of Hornsea and down to Spurn Point in the south-east.

It is an independent, community-focused newspaper, owned by local people who care passionately about the area they live in.

The readership is fairly broad – the paper is aimed at all sections of society, but it is fair to say the majority are generally over 40. We assume readers want to read, and we do not “dumb down” or sensationalise like certain national tabloids do, but neither do we use unnecessarily complicated language. We aim for plain English, and to convey information accurately and fairly.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Adjectives: known as editorialising, these should be avoided in news copy. Examples: “A fantastic amount was raised”; “delicious refreshments”.

Capital letters: these are a barrier to reading, and should be used sparingly and appropriately. Do not cap up ordinary nouns such as Police or River or Cat (leave that to the Germans). Do not cap up job titles – managing director, chief executive, mayor. Only cap up proper nouns (names), so Withernsea Town Council, but “the town council” thereafter. ANYTHING generic is capped down, e.g. animal species – so blue tit, not Blue Tit; types of wine, so vintage champagne, not Champagne, etc. Exceptions are police/Army ranks, so Deputy Chief Constable Joe Bloggs, Sergeant Jeff Smith, Brigadier Norbert Twistleton-Smythe, etc.

Clichés: avoid! Examples: “he was rushed to hospital in an ambulance” (that’s what they generally do; use “taken” – and you don’t really need to say it was an ambulance unless they went in a taxi or something else newsworthy); “unique” or “iconic” – most things described as such are not; “meteoric rise” – meteors don’t rise, they fall.

Companies/organisations: these usually take the singular, NOT the plural, e.g. “Withernsea Town Council has announced...” Exceptions are football/sports clubs, such as “Leeds United have once again failed in their bid for promotion”. If you are talking about the club in a business/company sense, it’s singular, so “Leeds United has posted its annual accounts.” The police are plural.

Language: as above, write for clarity and simplicity. “The way in which” = “how”; “as a result of” = “because”; etc. Avoid repeating your intro text in the second paragraph.

Dates: our style is Tuesday, September 13. Day, comma, month, number. Do not add th/st/nd to the number.



Reporters should never express opinions – just state the facts.

If you do not understand something, your readers almost certainly will not either, so explain what it is, or make it simpler.

Italics: we do not generally use italics unless in botanical names, which don't crop up often.

Numbers: write out numbers one to nine, and use digits from 10 and thereafter. Monetary amounts are £1 million, £2 billion, etc. Per cent is written out (two words), not %. Decades are 1980s, 1990s etc (no apostrophe). Distances are in miles, not km (unless it's a race with a set distance in kilometres such as a 5k). Temperatures are in Celsius, so for instance, 18C (no degree symbol).

Ages: our style is: "John Smith, 34, ..." or "Amelia Briggs, four" – do not put numbers in brackets

Quotes: double quote marks throughout; single quote marks within quotations.

These crop up regularly – try to pay attention to them!

Random bugbears:

- "Because of", not "due to"
- "More than", not "over" (when talking about numbers, e.g. more than a million people were there)
- "Try to", not "try and"
- Get – avoid; try to use "achieve, earn, obtain" etc
- Chairman, not chair (these are for sitting on)
- Do not use "however" interchangeably with "but"
- Do not use the Oxford comma unless necessary for clarity
- Among, not amongst, while not whilst, amid not amidst, etc
- Such as, not like – e.g. "countries such as Spain and France"
- East Riding Council, not East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- Fewer/less – fewer is when you can count the things; less is when you can't, e.g. "there were fewer than 10 people at the meeting; Tom has less money than Sam"
- That/which are not interchangeable – "the house that Jack built" and "the house, which Jack built" have subtly different meanings
- Hyphens – do not use after -ly words (adverbs), e.g. fully clothed – the adverb does the job here; use in adjectival constructions such as "Henry was a member of the middle class"; but "Henry went to a middle-class school"
- Appeal against a verdict, not appeal a verdict
- Benefited has one t
- Died, not passed away – and NEVER "sadly died"
- Exclamation marks – avoid
- People have conditions or diseases, they do not "suffer" from them; also avoid "lost his/her battle with cancer" – this is upsetting to relatives as it implies it was a fight the victim could have won if they'd tried harder
- Disabled/elderly people, not "the disabled/elderly"
- Wheelchair user, not wheelchair-bound
- Use "said" or "added" – not "commented", "explained" etc

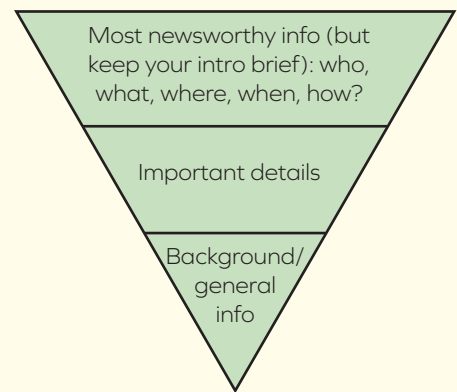
WRITING

Remember, above all – who, what, where, when, how?

Use the “inverted pyramid” model of writing – brief, punchy introduction with the most important, then elaborate as you go on.

Imagine you were relating the story to your partner/parent/friend when you got home – what’s the first thing you’d tell them? That’s usually your intro. If there was a fire at the police station, you would say to your friend, “There was a fire at the police station today!” So say that in your intro, and do not start with “Withernsea police station was built in 1973...” Open with the news angle, always.

We strive for accuracy and fairness. For a lot of people this might be their one chance to get their “name in lights” in the paper, and if we get it wrong, it can cause great distress.



The two things we **MUST** always get right are:

- 1) People’s names
- 2) Locations (street names, village names, venues etc)

If we get these basics wrong, we look ridiculous and people will feel they cannot put their trust in us to do anything else right.

If you are not sure about the spelling of someone’s name, the best thing to do is ASK when speaking to them – get them to spell it out to you. Even if it sounds obvious, it might not always be – John could be Jon, Brook could be Brooke, Lawrence could be Laurence, etc.

If you are not sure about the spelling of locations, GOOGLE it. Usually within five seconds you can confirm the correct name, and if not, ASK the person you were dealing with. They should not mind you checking; 99% of the time they will be very glad you did.

If you have used transcription or scanning software, check that it has not garbled the text. Spend five minutes reading back over your copy before submitting it to check for errors, including spellchecking. If something strikes you as odd or unfamiliar, it likely will to the readers, too. This especially applies to historical detail.



ANYTHING you do not understand or have not come across before, **CHECK**. Even if you think you are familiar with something, take five minutes to confirm the details are correct

PLAGIARISM

Never pass off the work of others as your own. Use of others’ work might be accepted as “fair dealing” if, for example, excerpts/quotes are used and full credit is given, but be careful here. Ask yourself whether the amount of work you have used is reasonable and appropriate, and whether it might cause the original owner to lose revenue. Plagiarism is a disciplinary offence for staff members; in the case of freelancers, it will almost certainly mean we will dispense with your services, and Holderness Newspapers Ltd cannot be held responsible for disputes with content creators.

NOTES FOR STAFF REPORTERS

Story count

Staff reporters should be aiming for a weekly total of:

- 1) At least one front-page lead (Withernsea essential; Hornsea possibly also essential if the freelance is not available; please liaise)
- 2) At least five inside-page leads of around 400-500 words
- 3) At least 10 NIBs (news in brief) of around 50-100 words

Day-to-day jobs

The “business end” of the Gazette is Monday-Wednesday. Here’s what a general diary should look like:

Monday: continue writing up anything that has not been finished from late in the previous week; go out on reporting jobs as required; continue to monitor the news email for incoming stories

Tuesday: aim to have all news and features finished by close of play; monitor the news email for incoming stories; go out on jobs as and when required

Wednesday: all main news copy needs to be filed by 10am unless it is breaking news. Jobs attended on Thursday-Monday MUST be written up by close of play Tuesday, not delivered on Wednesday morning. Be on hand to source and provide fillers where necessary. Start planning for next week

Thursday-Friday: these might be “quieter” days in terms of production, but CRUCIAL for the reporter to get ahead for the following week. Spend an hour or two ringing around your contacts – e.g. the town councils, local politicians, community centres, etc – and ASK them what they have. Go to them, do not wait for them to come to you. Do not wait for press releases to land; be proactive – MAKE THE NEWS.

These two days are also great **NIB days**. Scour the Facebook groups for events – village fairs, tabletop sales... all sorts of things like this are routinely mentioned in the groups. These should not need much work – just 50-100 words to explain where the event is, what it includes, how much it costs to get in, and a contact number/email for information if there is one. As always use the “inverted pyramid” model – and don’t put all of the information in the intro. For example: “Hollym Village Hall is staging a fundraising strawberry tea next month. [next par] The event, from 10am to 4pm on Saturday, August 31, will feature... [next par] Admission is free. For more information, contact xxxxx.”

If you have been out on jobs Thursday and Friday, aim to have these written up the same day. It will be fresher in your mind if you write it up as soon as you get back to the office – job done, put it in the folder, move on to the next thing.

By the following Monday, the COPY IN folder must have a reasonable number of stories written up during Thursday and Friday so we can begin putting the “back” pages together.

Do not wait for the news to come to you, start phoning/emailing your contacts. More often than not, they will have something they want to put in which you might not have got if you had not asked.

There is almost never an excuse for having gone to a job on a Thursday and not delivering the copy until Tuesday or Wednesday.

Quotes

TALK to people wherever possible; face to face is the best thing, phone or video call the second-best. This is when you get people saying things they might not say over email or messages. Stories are always improved by quotes from a wide variety of people. If you are writing about Withernsea Carnival, talk to the organisers, ask them how it went; talk to some people who attended to get their perspective on how they enjoyed it; you could even talk to Withernsea Town Council or any other agency who was involved in delivering the event.

Press releases are ok, but they are press releases, so sent to all and sundry – we want to be delivering exclusive content that no one else has read anywhere else.

Do not be afraid to chase people for quotes – make them fully aware of our print deadlines and tell them when you need the quote for. Obviously, do not harass people – try them two or three times and then if they do not respond, you cannot say you did not try. If it's a story where we needed a comment to ensure balance, the editor will make a decision on whether to run with it and state "the Gazette has contacted xxxx for comment" or to wait until we have the comment.

Captions

If you are including pictures with your story, ensure ALL of the captions are listed at the end of the Word document and are clearly marked up, ideally numerically, e.g. "Pic 1: From left, Joe Bloggs, Jeff Smith and Lucy Gray outside Withernsea High School" – and include the names of ALL the people in the picture.

If it is a group shot of lots of people, then it isn't necessary to name them all, but for small groups (especially if they are posing for the camera and not just an illustrative shot) we **MUST** have all of their names, and they must be clearly detailed at the end of your Word document. We cannot be going back to people to ask them their names when the paper is being put together – if you don't have the names at the time that you are writing the story, **ASK** before submitting your story. ***If you are not able to get all their names, in most cases we cannot use the picture.***

If you want to write a caption "kicker" – the word or words in capitals that introduce the caption, e.g. "PARTY TIME: Johnny Bloggs, four, has fun at Withernsea Carnival" – then that's great, but not essential.

TALK to as many people as you can – it adds greater depth to your story and it is content that people will not read anywhere else.

You **MUST** ensure that names in captions are the same as names in your copy, so **cross-check them**. If you have "Vicky Smith" in your copy but "Vicki Smith" in the caption, check which is right. If the caption has been supplied by the photographer, beware – not all photographers have caption-writing skills.



Remember to include the photographer's credit if there is one.

MORE REPORTING TIPS

Communication: Be “formally informal” – always be polite and courteous with the people you deal with. Thank them for their time and input and reaffirm that we are there to cover future stories/events they may have. Ask to be kept in the loop.

Research: Online and interviews. Is there any information that can be expanded on to make it more interesting, factual, relevant and informative?

Consent: Build relationships with those who are providing the story. Check content/details with them to confirm accuracy BEFORE going to print. However, be careful if people request to see complete proofs of your copy; it is best to judge this on a case-by-case basis, because some of them (especially PRs/charities/government organisations) might seek to rewrite it, but they do not always understand the principles of news reporting. We are not client journalists. By all means ask people to check facts and statistics, but do not let them rewrite your work.

Context: If you receive a general press release about something in the wider area and/or nationally, is there any LOCAL context that can be brought to it?

History: Past, present and future – what has happened before, what is happening NOW and are there any future plans?

Proofing: If you have time, return to an article a few hours after writing it – or if it’s time-sensitive, spend five or 10 minutes reading over it again before submitting it. Could anything be worded better? Is there any repetition? Have you checked all the facts?

Images: Articles usually work better with images. If there is none supplied, can this be sourced from subject of the article, or related organisations? Can you CREATE your own image?

Remember: SPAG – spelling, punctuation and grammar!

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY

Use of AI, whether to create text or images, is not allowed without the express permission of the editor. This is a disciplinary offence for staff members, and freelancers in breach of this policy are likely to have their services terminated.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Some pointers for imagery

If you are taking pictures at an event you are covering, try to set the scene as best you can. If something attracts a large crowd of people, for instance, get pictures of the crowd as well as the thing in question. Capture the moment. And their feet.

IMPORTANT



If you are at a public meeting or similar event, ask the organiser beforehand to make clear to the audience that pictures will be taken for press purposes, and then they can make the necessary arrangements and let you know who not to include/blur out of the image. It is **ESSENTIAL** that you pass this information on to the editor to avoid publication of people who requested not to be photographed.

Children under 16: please see the Ipsos guidance on this – but essentially, it is fine to publish pictures of children in public as long as they do not relate to stories about their welfare, and do not intrude on their privacy or time at school. However, it is common courtesy to ask the parents/carers if they are ok with their children's photo being published in the paper. At events where there are numerous children, ask the event organiser for guidance because there could be issues with children in care being photographed. If in any doubt at all, **ASK**.

Check that your camera is set to take high-resolution images, and also that your email software does not reduce image size when sending

Please send the highest-resolution images you have, ideally minimum A4 size at 300dpi. If you have digitally manipulated them to the point that the images look distorted, we will ask you to send the camera originals.

If taking pictures of groups of people, ensure you take their names and ensure the correct spellings (see note on captions above).

Drone photographers must possess valid flyer and operator IDs.

IMPORTANT



If you do not own the copyright to the pictures you are sending, ensure you have permission for their use. Holderness Newspapers Ltd cannot be held responsible for copyright claims in such cases and will refer the claimant to the sender of the image, and we will not enter into third-party disputes. Never take photos from the internet without asking the source. The internet is not "public domain".

THE EDITOR'S DECISION IS FINAL