



ARRANGEMENTS FOR ACCESS TO INFORMATION
ALSO KNOWN AS
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, a parish council has a duty to adopt and maintain a model publication scheme. The model scheme, in essence, commits a parish council to produce and publish the method by which the specific information will be available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.

Comprehensive guidance in respect of the application of the 2000 Act is available from the **Information Commissioner’s Office**. Detailed information regarding the practical effect of the 2000 Act on parish councils is provided in the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) LTN 37.

Parish councils are also “data controllers” as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and therefore have obligations for processing the data held in relation to any living individual. A parish council’s Standing Orders should regulate how they handle requests for personal data in relation to (i) a member of the public (ii) an employee or (iii) a Councillor.

2. Parish Councils Obligations

- To ensure that the public know what information is covered by the model scheme and how it can be obtained;
- Where the council has a website to provide the information on that website;
- If the council does not have a website or it is impractical to provide it in that format, or if the requester of information does not wish to access the information via the website, the council must indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means;
- The council must provide details of the person to be contacted by the requester of information if they wish to view the information in person and must take account the possibility that certain information only lends itself to be viewed in person. In such circumstances an appointment to view the information must also be arranged within a reasonable timescale;
- To provide information in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. To translate any information where the council is legally required to do so;
- To adhere to requirements under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats.

3. Classes of Information Parish Council Must Provide

A parish council must provide a guide to proactively published information for the public. This document must be in the public domain and in essence will set out the practical effect of the **model publication scheme**. It will specify what information a council will routinely publish, what format(s) that information will be available in, whether they intend to charge for providing the same and, if so, the level of charge.

Parish councils must have arrangements in place for handling requests for information and any complaints arising from the original request for information.

- Organisational information, locations and contacts;
- Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts;
- Council priorities (e.g. parish plan, annual report, Quality Status, local charters);
- Policy and procedure for delivery of services and in respect of employment, and for the conduct of council business (includes Standing Orders, committee and sub- committee terms of reference delegated authority in respect of officers, adopted Code of Conduct, complaints procedures, data management, records management);
- Current written protocols for delivering functions and responsibilities;
- Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority;
- Services offered.

4. Application under the Freedom of Information Act - Details

An application under the Freedom of Information Act should be addressed to the Clerk. Applications for personal information under the Data Protection Act 2018 should also be addressed to the Clerk.

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