



NORTHCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL  
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# **NORTHCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL**

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY**

Version	V24.0
Date approved by Finance & General Purposes Committee	N/A
Date approved by Annual Meeting of Full Council	13-05-2024

## 1. Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

- 1.1. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), Northchurch Parish Council (the Council) has adopted a Publication Scheme describing:
  - The classes of information it publishes
  - How and where such information is published (e.g. website, paper copy, etc.)
  - Whether or not a charge is made for such information
- 1.2. The purpose of the Council's Publication Scheme is to let everyone know what information will be automatically or routinely published by the Council and to ensure that a significant amount of information is available to the public, without the need for a specific request to be made.
- 1.3. Other information is available from the Council by individual request, under the FOIA and the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA).
- 1.4. If there is any information required that does not appear in the Council's Publication Scheme or you have any comments or suggestions on how it can be improved, please contact: Clerk to Northchurch Parish Council  
Email: [clerk@northchurchparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@northchurchparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## 2. How to obtain information

- 2.1. There are three ways to obtain information:
  - Parish Council web site  
The web site holds the type of information which the Council routinely publishes e.g. minutes and agendas. The information you want may already be included in the publication scheme – so please check the documents on the web site first.
  - Inspect Documents held by the Clerk  
If you wish to view certain documents, you should contact the Clerk, either via the facility on the web site or by telephone, or in writing. Some documents require some time to locate, so it may be necessary to make an appointment.
  - Individual Written Request  
If the information is not included in the publication scheme or on the web site, you may send a written request to <http://www.northchurchparishcouncil.gov.uk/>

2.2. Within 20 working days of receipt of your written request the Council will:

- confirm to you whether or not it holds the information
- advise you if a fee will be charged
- provide you with the information (after any relevant fee has been paid) unless an exemption applies (see 'Exemptions' paragraph below).

Much of the information listed in the Council's Publication Scheme is supplied free of charge and can be downloaded from our website at <http://www.northchurchparishcouncil.gov.uk/>

Where information is available only in paper format, this is stated in the Publication Scheme and can be viewed by appointment with the Council's Clerk or a copy can be requested.

### **3. Information not contained within the Publication Scheme and Exemptions**

The FOIA sets out information that the Council does not have to make available for specific reasons, called exemptions, that, if published, might prejudice the health, safety or security of the Council, its staff, systems, services or property or breach an individual's Data Protection rights.

If information is requested but is covered by an exemption, the Clerk to the Council will tell the applicant in writing why the Council has refused the request and quote the relevant exemptions. If the information requested is not disclosed, the applicant can ask the Information Commissioner to review the Council's decision. The Information Commissioner's Office is the Government department that oversees and enforces FOI. They can be contacted by the following link: [www.ico.gov.uk/](http://www.ico.gov.uk/)

### **4. Charges**

The Council's Fees and Charges are stated at the end of the Publication Scheme. Unless otherwise stated, publications listed in our Publication Scheme are supplied free of charge.

If administration costs to enable a Freedom of Information request to be met exceed £450, then the Council is able to charge the requestor for the administration costs in meeting the request.

A charge may be made for photocopies.

### **5. Management of the Council's Publication Scheme**

The Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) Committee is responsible for the adoption and maintenance of this Policy and the Publication Scheme.

## **6. Review of the Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme**

The Council Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme will be amended periodically as necessary. The Scheme will be reviewed annually.