

Langham Parish Council Freedom of Information Policy

Freedom of Information Act

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 members of the public have the right to access information held by the Parish Council.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) was passed on 30th November 2000. It gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. It sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities. The Act came into force in January 2005. Anyone can make a request for information – there are no restrictions on your age, nationality or where you live

Under the Act public authorities have two main responsibilities – to produce a publication scheme (s19) and to deal with individual requests for information.

Requests for Information

- If such a request is made, the Council is under obligation to inform that person whether or not the requested information exists and to supply access to the information, unless it is subject to an exemption.
- Anyone wishing to exercise the right has to make a written request (which includes email). The request must give the applicants name and return address and must describe the information requested in such a way that the Parish Council is able to locate it.
- Receipt will be acknowledged but if it is possible to respond with the information requested this would be done instead.
- If further information is required in order to locate the information requested, this will be undertaken as quickly as possible.

Dealing with a Request

- The Parish Council has 20 working days to deal with a request for information. If it is not clear what information is required, the 20 day period does not begin until clarification is received from the applicant as to what exactly is required. If the organisation needs more time, they will contact you and tell you when you can expect the information. They might then ask you to be more specific so they can provide the information you're looking for.
- The Parish Council holds a certain amount of guidance on dealing with requests, but it may be necessary that further specific guidance will be required from the Information Commissioners Office or other outside agencies. This is particularly relevant if it is a complex request. The

Data Protection Act covers certain personal information.

- If a request is refused, the refusal notice will give the reason for the refusing the request and advise the applicant as to their rights of appeal.
- Public authorities need not comply with Vexatious or repeated requests.

Complaints

If the applicant is dissatisfied with the way the way the Parish Council has responded to a request for information they should contact the Parish Clerk and have the option to invoke the Parish Council Complaints procedure.

The Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) is responsible for enforcing the operation of the Act and the applicant may raise issues with this office at any time. More information can be found on the ICO website or by writing to the Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually (or earlier if required by changes to legislation or additional documentation) and amended as necessary based on good practice.

Contact Details

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Signed :..... at: Langham Parish Council meeting

Chairman Langham Parish Council

Date: March 2024