



Festival of Britain Village 1951
Motto: "Independence and Self Help"

TROWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Freedom of Information Policy

1. Introduction.

Trowell Parish Council is committed to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to the principles of accountability and to the general right of access to information held by the Parish Council, subject to the exemption contained within the legislation.

The FOI Act was introduced to promote greater openness and accountability across the public sector.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is responsible for regulating and enforcing the Act. The ICO is an independent authority which has legal powers to ensure Parish Councils comply with the Act.

This policy outlines the Parish Council's responsibilities to the Act and provides a framework for managing requests.

2. Scope.

This policy applies to all recorded information held by the Parish Council that relates to the business of the Parish Council. This includes:

- Information created and held by the Parish Council.
- Information created by the Parish Council and held by another organisation on the Parish Council's behalf.
- Information held by the Parish Council provided by third parties, where this relates to a function or business of the Parish Council (such as contractual information).
- Information held by the Parish Council relating to the functions or business of the Parish Council.

3. Requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act.

- Inspect of documents held by the Council. If you wish to view certain documents, you should contact the Clerk via email: clerk@trowell.org.uk or telephone: 0115 9989774, or in writing: Trowell Parish Office, Trowell Parish Hall, Stapleford Road, Trowell, NG9 3QA.
Some documents require some time to locate, so it may be necessary to make an appointment.

- Individual written request. Send written requests to the Parish Clerk, Trowell Parish Office, Trowell Parish Hall, Stapleford Road, Trowell, NG9 3QA.

4. Council's Response to a Written Request.

The council will respond within twenty working days of receipt of the written request. The Council will:

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

5. Fees

The Act only allows the Council to charge for answering Freedom of Information requests in the following circumstances:

- Disbursement costs such as printing, photocopying and postage; and
- When estimated costs involved in locating and or compiling the information exceed £450. Under these circumstances, the Council can refuse the request on the grounds of cost, or charge £25 per hour, plus disbursements for the estimated work.

For the majority of requests, or a series of requests from the same applicant within 12-month period, it is expected that the charge for locating and compiling information will be less than £450.00 and therefore, except for disbursement costs, no reimbursement can be sought. However, where costs are estimated to exceed £450 (based on an hourly charge-out rate of £25), the Council can decide to:

- Refuse the request; or
- comply with the request and charge for allowable costs as prescribed in the regulations; or
- comply with the request free of charge.

If the estimated cost of a request is more than £450, and it is decided to release the information and make a charge on the information then:

- A fee notice will be sent to the applicant requesting the appropriate fee.
- The request will not be answered until the fee has been received.
- If the actual cost of completing the request is more than the estimate then the Council will incur the additional cost.
- Where the cost is less than the estimated cost then the difference will be refunded to the applicant.

For disbursements costs, it is proposed that the Council will charge 12p per sheet for photocopying and printing documents and recover the actual cost of postage or any other transmission costs from the applicant.

6. Exemptions

Some information may not be provided by the Council as there are twenty-three exemptions in the Freedom of Information Act, for example, personal data about individuals which is protected by the Data Protection Act 1998, or commercially confidential information.

7. Further Help.

If you need help in accessing information from the Council under the Freedom of Information Act, please contact the Parish Clerk (address as before).

You will also find more detailed guidance on the website of the Information Commissioner.

8. Complaints.

If you are dissatisfied with the response from the Council then you should put your complaint in writing to the Clerk at the address above. If you are still dissatisfied, you may contact the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625545700

Email: mail@ico.gov.uk

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