



Chilham Parish Council

Freedom of Information Policy

1. Introduction.

- Chilham Parish Council is committed to being open and transparent about the work that it does and services that it provides for the local community. The Council will make as much information available as possible, to promote a greater awareness and understanding of the Council's policies, decisions, and actions.
- Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Chilham Parish Council has two main responsibilities – to produce and share information and to deal with individual requests for information.

2. Scope.

- General requests for information will be considered as part of Chilham Parish Council's normal day to day business. However, there are also statutory information access regimes that can be used to access specific information. This Policy concerns itself with that information which can be accessed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

3. The availability of information.

- In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Chilham Parish Council has availability of information procedures. This information is a commitment of Chilham Parish Council to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities.
- Wherever possible Chilham Parish Council will provide information through its website. Where information is available in a non-electronic form or when an individual does not wish to access information electronically, an individual can contact the Parish Clerk and ask for the information to be made available to them.
- Some information may only be available to view in person at Chilham Parish Council premises (the home of the Parish Clerk). In these circumstances an appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.
- Chilham Parish Council will ensure that members of the public are aware of the information that is made readily available to them and provide details of how this information can be accessed and any changes which may be applicable. This information is available through Chilham Parish Council's website.

4. Requesting information not found through identified procedures.

- The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the public right to access information held by councils and other public bodies. The Act also explains what is expected of councils and the types of information that needs to be made available.
- Anyone can make a request for information – there is no restriction on age, nationality or place of residence (they do not necessarily need to be a resident of the Parish)

5. Making a Freedom of Information Request.

- Freedom of Information Requests need to be made in writing to the Clerk who is responsible for responding to requests – either by letter or email.
- When making a Freedom of Information request, the following information must be included: Name, Contact details, A detailed description of the recorded information required
- When requesting information, the enquirer does not have to mention the Freedom of Information Act, nor the reasons why the information is sought.
- Most Freedom of Information requests will be free of charge. However, there may be a small charge for photocopies or postage. Chilham Parish Council will notify the enquirer in advance if there are any charges associated with the request
- Chilham Parish Council will respond to all Freedom of Information requests within 20 working days.

6. Exemptions.

- Anyone making a request to a public authority for information must be informed whether the public authority holds that information and can be supplied with it. Some information does not have to be revealed, such as personal information or commercially sensitive data. You can view a full list of these exemptions on the Information Commissioner's website – www.ico.org.uk
- Chilham Parish Council can turn down a Freedom of Information request if it will cost more than £450 to respond to.
- Chilham Parish Council may ask for the request to be more specific in order for the information to be provided.
- If Chilham Parish Council refuses to provide the information requested, the enquirer can ask them to review their decision. If the enquirer is still not satisfied with the response received, they are advised to contact the Information Commissioner's Office.

7. Policy Review.

Chilham Parish Council will review this Policy as is necessary and appropriate, and at a minimum on an annual basis.

Policy Adopted: 4th February 2021

Minute Ref: 02/21

Policy to be Reviewed: February 2022