

BLETCHINGLEY PARISH COUNCIL

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

PUBLICATION SCHEME

Adopted 10 November 2008

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act grants to members of the public rights of access to all kinds of recorded information held by a wide range of public authorities. Information about the Act is available from the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.gov.uk

Publication Scheme

The Act requires every public authority to adopt and maintain a generic model publication scheme which should be adopted and operated by all public authorities from 1 January 2009. Bletchingley Parish Council adopted the generic model publication scheme at their Council meeting on 10 November 2008. It is intended to provide everyone interested in the Council with a comprehensive guide to the information that the Council will automatically or routinely publish or otherwise makes available to the public.

Freedom of Information Requests and the Publication Scheme

It is important to note that a publication scheme simply sets out the information that is routinely available. Information that is not listed in the Information Available Guide of this document can still be requested and it will be made available unless it can be legitimately withheld. This can be done by making a written request to the Parish Clerk who will reply within 20 working days after receipt of the request.

The Council's Commitment to the Act

The Council is committed to openness and accountability and already makes large amounts of information available to the public, through its website, via the telephone, by post or by appointment where much of the information can be viewed free of charge. Occasionally it may be necessary to book an appointment.

2. MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME

This model publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It may be adopted without modification by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice.

This publication scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the authority. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

The scheme commits an authority:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.

Classes of Information

Who we are and what we do.

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

What we spend and how we spend it.

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

What our priorities are and how we are doing.

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

How we make decisions.

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

Our policies and procedures.

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

Lists and Registers.

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

The Services we Offer.

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available

The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.

Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

Charges which may be made for Information published under this scheme

The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- photocopying
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information.

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

Written Requests

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

3. INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM BLETCHINGLEY PARISH COUNCIL UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Class 1 - Who we are and what we do Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts (This will be current information only)	Website / hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Who's who on the Council and its Committees	Website / hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address (if used))	Website / hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Location of main Council office and accessibility details	Website / hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Staffing structure	Hard copy	Free
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit (Current and previous financial year as a minimum)	Hard copy	10p per sheet
Annual return form and report by auditor	Website / hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Finalised budget	Hard copy	10p per A4 sheet
Precept	Hard copy	10p per A4 sheet
Borrowing Approval letter	N/A	N/A
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Website / hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Grants given and received	Hard copy	10p per A4 sheet
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Hard copy	10p per A4 sheet
Members' allowances and expenses	Hard copy	10p per A4 sheet
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)	(hard copy or website)	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Parish Plan (current and previous year as a minimum)	None available at present	N/A
Annual Report to Parish or Community Meeting (current and previous year as a minimum)	None available only minutes of meeting available on website or hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Quality status	N/A	N/A
Local charters drawn up in accordance with DCLG guidelines	N/A	N/A

Class 4 – How we make decisions	(hard copy or website)	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Decision making processes and records of decisions (Current and previous council year as a minimum)		
Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee/sub-committee meetings and parish meetings) Parish Council Meeting – 2 nd Monday of every month except August Planning Committee Meeting – last Monday of every month subject to Bank holidays and planning applications to be heard	Website / hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Only current available on website / Hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Minutes of meetings (as above) – nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Website / Hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Reports presented to council meetings - nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Hard copy	10p per A4 sheet
Responses to consultation papers	Website minutes / Hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Responses to planning applications	Website minutes / Hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Bye-laws	N/A	N/A
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures	(hard copy or website)	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities (Current information only)		
Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business:		Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Procedural standing orders	Website / Hard copy	
Committee and sub-committee terms of reference	Website / Hard copy	
Delegated authority in respect of officers	Website / Hard copy	
Code of Conduct	Website / Hard copy	
Policy statements	N/A	
Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff:		Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Internal policies relating to the delivery of services	N/A	
Equality and diversity policy	N/A	
Health and safety policy	N/A	
Recruitment policies (including current vacancies)	N/A	
Policies and procedures for handling requests for information	Website / Hard copy	
Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)	Website / Hard copy	
Information security policy	N/A	N/A

Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive) – currently being drafted	Hard copy	10p per A4 sheet
Data protection policies	Hard copy	10p per A4 sheet
Schedule of charges for the publication of information	Website / hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Class 6 – Lists and Registers Currently maintained lists and registers only	(hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection)	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Any publicly available register or list (if any are held this should be publicised; in most circumstances existing access provisions will suffice)	Inspection only	N/A
Assets Register	Hard copy	10p per A4 sheet
Disclosure log (indicating the information that has been provided in response to requests; recommended as good practice, but may not be held by parish councils) – not currently held	Hard copy	10p per A4 sheet
Register of members' interests	Inspection only/TDC	10p per A4 sheet
Register of gifts and hospitality	Inspection only/TDC	10p per A4 sheet
Class 7 – The services we offer Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses (Current information only)	(hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection)	
Allotments	Website / hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	Website / hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Community centres and village halls	Website / Booking Secretary	Free / 10p per A4 sheet
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	Hard copy	10p per A4 sheet
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	Hard copy	10p per A4 sheet
Bus shelters	Hard copy	10p per A4 sheet
Markets	N/A	N/A
Public conveniences	N/A	N/A
Agency agreements	N/A	N/A
A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)	Website / hard copy	Free / 10p per A4 sheet

4. CONTACT DETAILS

Website Address: www.bletchingley.org.uk

Requests for hard copies can be made to Kim Wantling – Parish Clerk
20 Lambert Cottages
Rabies Heath Road
Bletchingley
Surrey
RH1 4PN

E-mail: info@bletchingley.org.uk

Tel: 01883 742 998

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying @ 10p per A4 sheet (black & white)	Actual cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

The Council would normally expect the Parish Clerk to understand what information you have asked for and to be able to tell you where you can find it. If the information you receive is not what you asked for or need, you should first contact the Parish Clerk. If the information you have asked for is not available, the Parish Clerk will tell you why.

If you believe that the Council has not dealt with your request fairly and cannot deal with it satisfactorily on an informal basis, you should follow our complaints procedure. These details are available on the website under our Standing Orders or you can contact the Parish Clerk at the above address.

If you have followed our complaints procedure and are still not happy with how we have dealt with your request, you may also contact the Information Commissioner to ask them to investigate the matter.