

CHIDDINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT PUBLICATION SCHEME

**Adopted 19.11.08
Updated 08.12.25**

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 <https://ico.org.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. Chiddingstone Parish Council adopted the generic model publication scheme at their Council meeting on 1st December 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 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 personal visits to the Council Office 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.
- To publish any dataset held by the authority that has been requested, and any updated versions it holds, unless the authority is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so; to publish the dataset, where reasonably practicable, in an electronic form that is capable of re-use; and, if any information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and the public authority is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use under the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, if they apply, and otherwise under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act section 19. The term ‘dataset’ is defined in section 11(5) of the Freedom of Information Act. The term ‘relevant copyright work’ is defined in section 19(8) of that Act.

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
- they 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.

Information available from Chiddingstone Parish Council under the model publication scheme

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Class1 - Who we are and what we do Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts This will be current information only	Website	
Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address)	Website	
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)	Copy emailed	
Annual return form and report by auditor	Website	
Finalised Budget	Copy emailed	
Precept	Copy emailed	
Financial Regulations	Website	
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing Neighbourhood Plan surveys and reports	Website	
Class 4 – How we make decisions Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee/sub-committee meetings and Annual Parish meetings)	Website	
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Website	
Minutes of meetings (as above) – this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Website	
Reports presented to council meetings - this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Website	
Responses to planning applications	Website	
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities (Current information only)	Website	
Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business:	Website	
Procedural Standing Orders	Website	
Code of Conduct	Website	

Complaints Procedure	Website	
Health and safety policy	Website	
Policies and procedures for handling requests for information	Website	
Information Technology policy	Website	
Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)	Copy emailed	
Data protection policies	Copy emailed	
Class 6 – Lists and Registers		
Tree Survey (current information only)		
Assets Register	Copy emailed	
Register of members' interests	Website	
Register of gifts and hospitality	Copy emailed	
Class 7 – The services we offer		
Closed churchyards	Copy emailed	
Additional Information This will provide Councils with the opportunity to publish information that is not itemised in the lists above	Copy emailed	

Contact details:

Website Address: www.chiddingstonekentparish.gov.uk

Requests for soft copies can be made to: The Parish Clerk email: clerk@chiddingstonekentparish.gov.uk

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying (black & white)	Actual cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2nd class

5. 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.

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 him/her to investigate the matter.