

Freedom of Information / Access to Information Policy – Eaton Parish Council

Eaton Parish Council has a commitment to openness and transparency. The Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities came into force in December 2014 requiring Parish Councils to make information available via its website to increase democratic accountability. The Freedom of Information Act, which came into force on 1 January 2005, gives everyone a statutory right of access to information held by bodies such as the Parish Council.

Making a request for information

Individuals or organisations may make a written request for other information which they believe the Parish Council holds. To request information under the provisions of the Act and to help us to help you in identifying the precise information you require, please email clerkeaton@gmail.com or write to The Clerk, Eaton Parish Council, c/o 22 Wesley Avenue, Alsager, Cheshire East, ST7 2NG. Please be sure to include your name, address and a clear description of the information you are seeking when you make your request. The Parish Council advise that you look at guidance available on the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website about making requests and 'dos and don'ts' when applying for information.

Responding to your request

The Parish Council will inform you in writing whether we hold the information you have requested and if so, provide it to you no later than 20 working days after we receive the requests. In some circumstances we may ask you to clarify your request. The Parish Council will refer to the ICO document 'The Guide to Freedom of Information' when processing your request and will seek further advice directly from the ICO if necessary.

The Freedom of Information Act does identify several categories of information which the Parish Council is not required to disclose under the Act. In this case, we will write to you stating the exemption which provides the basis for refusal within the Act and why it applies to the information you requested. The Parish Council are obligated to safeguard the privacy of individuals (under the Data Protection Act) and this may also have a bearing on being able to supply you with the information you request. Reasons for refusal will be communicated to you within the 20 working-day time period.

Charges for providing information under the Freedom of Information Act

There is no 'flat rate' fee to receive information and in many cases the Parish Council will provide the information free of charge. However, you should note that if the information you are seeking is not readily available in the form in which you are seeking it, the Parish Council may charge you a fee based on the cost associated with providing the information, for example photocopying and postage (known as 'disbursements').

The Freedom of Information Act does permit the Parish Council to refuse your request if it is estimated this will cost more than the appropriate cost limit (currently £450) to fulfil your request.

Freedom of Information Fees Notice

If you need to pay a fee for disbursements or because the costs exceed the appropriate limit, we will write to you advising you of the fee required within 20 days of receipt of your request. This is known as a 'Fees Notice'. When you are issued the Fees Notice, the 20-working day limit for responding stops, and then will start again when we receive payment.

If we do not receive the fee from you within three months we are not obliged to comply with the request.

Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with the way the Parish Council has responded to a request for information, please write to the clerk. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is responsible for enforcing the operation of the Act and you may raise issues with this office at any time.

More information can be found on the ICO website www.ico.org.uk, by telephone on 0303 123 1113 or by writing to the address below:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

The policy will be reviewed at least once per term, to ensure the information included is still relevant.

This template guide covers only information we currently hold. If we do not hold some of the information listed below, we will mark it as 'not held' in the table.

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
<p>Class 1 - Who we are and what we do</p> <p>(Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts)</p> <p>Current information only</p>	Website and noticeboards within the Parish	Free
<p>List of Council members and their responsibilities as well a list of Council Committees</p> <p>Details of any representation on local public bodies</p>	Website	Free
<p>Postal and email address</p> <p>Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members</p> <p>Where possible, provide named contacts including contact phone numbers and email addresses</p>	Website	Free
<p>Location of main Council office and accessibility details</p>	Not held – the Parish Council does not own any premises	Not held – the Parish Council does not own any premises

<p>Staffing structure</p>	<p>N/A – the Parish Council have one employee</p>	<p>N/A – the Parish Council have one employee</p>
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<p>Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it</p> <p>(Financial information about projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit)</p> <p>Current and previous financial year as a minimum</p>		
<p>Statement of accounts and internal audit report in the format included in the Annual Return form</p>	<p>Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk</p>	<p>Free on website. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.</p>
<p>Finalised budget</p>	<p>Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk</p>	<p>Free on website. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.</p>
<p>Precept</p>	<p>Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk</p>	<p>Free on website. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.</p>

Borrowing Approval letter	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable
All items of expenditure above £100	Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk	Free on website. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk	Free on website. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.
Grants given and received	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable
Members' allowances and expenses	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable

<p>Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing</p> <p>(Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)</p> <p>Current and previous year as a minimum</p>		
Annual governance statement in format included in the Annual Return form	Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk	Free on website. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.
Parish Plan	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable
Annual Report to Parish or Community Meeting	Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk	Free on website. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.

Quality status	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable
Local charters drawn up in accordance with DLUHC's guidelines	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable
Data Protection impact assessments (in full or summary format) or any other impact assessment (eg Health & Safety Impact Assessment, Equality Impact Assessments etc), as appropriate and relevant	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable

<p>Class 4 – How we make decisions</p> <p>(Decision making processes and records of decisions)</p> <p>Current and previous council year as a minimum</p>		
Timetable of meetings (Council and any committee/subcommittee meetings and parish meetings)	Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk	Free on website. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.

Agendas of meetings (as above)	Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk	Free on website and displayed for a limited time in village noticeboard. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.
Minutes of meetings (as above) – exclude material that is properly considered to be exempt from disclosure	Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk	Free on website and displayed for a limited time in village noticeboard. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.
Reports presented to council meetings – exclude material that is properly considered to be exempt from disclosure	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable
Responses to consultation papers	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable
Responses to planning applications	Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk	Free on website. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.
Bye-laws	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable
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<p>Class 5 – Our policies and procedures</p> <p>(Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)</p> <p>Current information only</p>		
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<p>Policies and procedures for the conduct of Council business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedural standing orders • Committee and sub-committee terms of reference • Delegated authority in respect of officers • Code of Conduct • Policy statements 	<p>Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk</p>	<p>Free on website. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.</p>
<p>Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and safety policy • Policies and procedures for handling requests for information • Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme) 	<p>Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk</p>	<p>Free on website. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.</p>
<p>Class 6 – Lists and Registers</p>		
<p>Currently maintained lists and registers only.</p>		

Information legally required to hold in publicly available registers (in most circumstances existing access provisions will suffice)	Hard copy only – on application to the Clerk	To be confirmed, depending on nature of request
Assets register, including details of public land and building assets	Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk	Free on website. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.
Disclosure log indicating the information provided in response to FOIA and EIR requests. These are recommended as good practice	Hard copy only – on application to the Clerk	To be confirmed, depending on nature of request
Register of members' interests	Hard copy only – on application to the Clerk	To be confirmed, depending on nature of request
Register of gifts and hospitality	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable

<p>Class 7 – The services we offer</p> <p>(Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses)</p> <p>Current information only</p>		
Allotments	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable
Community centres and village halls	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk	Free on website. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	Website or hard copy available on request to the Clerk	Free on website. Any charges for postage to be confirmed when hard copy requested.
Bus shelters	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable
Markets	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable
Public conveniences	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable
Agency agreements	Not held – currently not applicable	Not held – currently not applicable

<p>Services for which we are entitled to recover a fee and details of those fees (eg burial fees)</p>	<p>Not held – currently not applicable</p>	<p>Not held – currently not applicable</p>
<p>Additional Information Information not itemised in the lists above</p>	<p>Please contact the Clerk</p>	<p>To be confirmed, depending on nature of request</p>

Schedule of charges

This describes how the charges will be arrived at.

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
<p>Disbursement cost</p>	<p>Photocopying @ 8p per sheet (black & white)</p>	<p>Estimated cost, via use of Clerk's printer</p>
	<p>Photocopying @ 25p per sheet (colour)</p>	<p>Estimated cost, via use of Clerk's printer</p>
	<p>Postage</p>	<p>Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2nd class</p>