HULLBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Adopted 9th December 2024 - Reviewed Annually

This publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. This publication scheme, adopted by Hullbridge Parish Council commits the Council to make information available to members of 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 Parish Council.

This scheme commits Hullbridge Parish Council:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the Parish Council and falls within the classification below.
- To specify the information which is held by the Parish Council 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 scheme of fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.
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Methods by which information published under this scheme will be made available:

- Where it is within our capability, information included within the scheme will be published on our website so please check the website in the first instance.
- Where it is impracticable to make information available on our website, or if an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, hard copies or e-mail copies can be requested.
- In addition it will be possible to view/inspect other documents by contacting the Clerk, either via the telephone, e-mail or in writing. Some documents require some time to locate so it may be necessary to make an appointment at a mutually convenient time within a reasonable timescale. Please note the Parish Office opening hours of work are between 8am and 3.00pm Monday to Thursday.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where the Parish Council 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.

Classes of Information within the Scheme are included in the Hullbridge Parish Council Model Publication Scheme available on the Councils Website.

Exemptions

The classes of information not included within the scheme include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law.
- Information that is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act; for example personal data about individuals which is protected by the Data Protection Act 1998 or commercially confidential information.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in the archive storage or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

Written Requests

Information held by the Council that is not included in this publication scheme can be requested in writing to:

The Parish Clerk, 98 Ferry Road, Hullbridge, Essex SS5 6EX

Requests must include your name, address for correspondence and a description of the information required. The Council will respond within 20 working days of receipt of your written request and:

- Confirm to you whether or not it holds the information;
- Advise you if a fee will be charged; and
- Provide the information (after any relevant fee has been paid).

Fees

The Act only allows the Council to charge for answering Freedom of Information requests when estimated staff costs involved in locating and/or compiling the information exceeds £450. Under these circumstances the Council can refuse the request on the grounds of cost or charge the applicant £20 per hour, plus disbursements for the estimated work. In the unlikely event that this happens the

Council will work with the enquirer to find a way of getting the cost down to an acceptable level by refining the request.

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 Parish Council for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum. Fees for actual Disbursements are as follows:

	FEES
Photocopy or Printing of documents	**10p per sheet**
Postage & Packing	**Recover Actual cost**
Costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information	**Actual cost**
Electronic versions	**Free**
Website (Material access on the website)	**Free**

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 the provision of the information.

Further Help

If you need help in accessing information from the Council under the Freedom of Information Act, please contact the Clerk at that address above. You will also find more detailed guidance on the website of the Information Commissioner.

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: 0303 123 1113