



Meopham Parish Council

Freedom of Information Policy and Guide

This Freedom of Information Policy and Guide has been adopted by Meopham Parish Council to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Act provides public access to information held by public authorities, subject to specific exemptions. It establishes the right to access recorded information, outlines exemptions, and sets arrangements for enforcement and appeal.

Publication Scheme

The publication scheme lists what information the Council is required to publish and details how it can be accessed.

The Council will publish much of the information on its website www.meopham-pc.gov.uk, but information will also be available in other formats such as printed copies. Information may be obtained by the following methods:

- Writing to the Council: Meopham Parish Council, St Johns Centre, Wrotham Road, Meopham, DA13 0AA
- Office opening hours: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 9-12pm
- By e-mail request to: clerk@meopham-pc.gov.uk
- By website contact form: www.meopham-pc.gov.uk
- By telephone: 01474 813779

Freedom of Information

Requests for information should be made in writing, by letter or email. The request must include:

- The applicant's contact details for the reply
- A detailed description of the information requested
- The preferred format in which the information should be provided

The Council has a duty to provide assistance to applicants under Section 16 of the Act, as far as is reasonable. The Council must confirm whether it holds the information and, unless an exemption applies, must supply it within 20 working days.

Exemptions

The Act allows the Council to withhold information in certain circumstances. Exemptions apply where disclosure would prejudice the health, safety, or security of the Council, its staff, systems, services, or property, or would breach an individual's Data Protection rights. If an exemption applies, the Clerk will notify the applicant in writing, stating the reason for refusal and the relevant exemption.

Vexatious or Repeated Requests

The Council may refuse requests that are vexatious or repeated. Requests are considered vexatious if they cause a disproportionate or unjustifiable level of distress, disruption, or irritation. A request will be deemed repeated if it is identical or substantially similar to a previous request made by the same individual, unless a reasonable interval (normally 40 working days) has elapsed.

Charges

The Council reserves the right to make a reasonable charge for disbursements, such as photocopying, printing, and postage. If a fee is required, the applicant will be informed in advance. The information will not be released until payment has been received.

Personal Data and Subject Access Requests

The Freedom of Information Act does not provide access to personal data about the applicant. Individuals wishing to access information held about themselves must make a Subject Access Request under the Data Protection Act 2018. Requests must be made in writing and accompanied by proof of identity and current address.

Complaints and Appeals

If an applicant believes their request has not been dealt with fairly, they should first raise the matter informally with the Clerk. If the issue remains unresolved, a formal complaint may be made under the Council's complaints procedure (available from the Clerk). If the applicant remains dissatisfied after the Council's review, they may appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF Tel: 0303 123 1113 Website: <https://ico.org.uk>

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically (every two years) to ensure it remains compliant with legislation and best practice.

POLICY AGREED: Full Council *date* (minute *number*)

Next Review: MAY 2027

Information available from Meopham Parish Council under the Freedom of Information Act model publication scheme

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost (not including postage)
Class 1 - Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts) Current information only		
List of Council members and their responsibilities as well a list of Council Committees Details of any representation on local public bodies	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free
Postal and email address Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free
Location of main Council office and accessibility details	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free
Staffing structure	Not Held	
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it (Financial information about projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit) Current and previous financial year as a minimum		
Statement of accounts and internal audit report in the format included in the Annual Return form	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Finalised budget	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Precept	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Borrowing Approval letter	Not Held	
All items of expenditure above £100	Noted in Minutes	
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet

Grants given and received	Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Members' allowances and expenses	Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews) Current and previous year as a minimum		
Annual governance statement in format included in the Annual Return form	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Parish Plan	Not Held	
Annual Report to Parish or Community Meeting	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Quality status	Not Held	
Local charters drawn up in accordance with DLUHC's guidelines	Not Held	
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	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions) Current and previous council year as a minimum		
Timetable of meetings (Council and any committee/sub-committee meetings and parish meetings)	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Minutes of meetings (as above) – exclude material that is properly considered to be exempt from disclosure	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Reports presented to council meetings – exclude material that	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet

is properly considered to be exempt from disclosure		
Responses to consultation papers	Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Responses to planning applications	Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Bye-laws	Not Held	
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities) Current information only		
Policies and procedures for the conduct of Council business: • Procedural standing orders • Committee and sub-committee terms of reference • Delegated authority in respect of officers • Code of Conduct • Policy statements	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff: • Internal instructions to staff and policies relating to the delivery of services • Equality and diversity policy • Health and safety policy • Recruitment policies and details of current vacancies • Policies and procedures for handling requests for information • Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for	Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet

information and operating the publication scheme)		
Records management, personal data and access to information policies Include information security policies, records retention, destruction and archive policies, and data protection (including data sharing and CCTV usage) policies	Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Class 6 – Lists and Registers Currently maintained lists and registers only.		
Assets register, including details of public land and building assets	Website/Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Disclosure log indicating the information provided in response to FOIA and EIR requests. These are recommended as good practice	Not Held	
Register of members' interests	Website	
Register of gifts and hospitality	Not currently Held	
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		
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Bus shelters	Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet
Public conveniences	Email/Hardcopy	Free / 30p per sheet

Schedule of charges

This describes how the charges have been arrived at and should be published as part of the guide.

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying 30p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost
	Photocopying 50p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class