

Longhoughton Parish Council Freedom of Information Policy

1. Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (“the Regulations”) provide individuals and organisations with the right to request information held by public authorities.

We are fully committed to the provisions of the Act and the Regulations, and support their underlying principles of openness and transparency.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to provide a framework to comply with these provisions, uphold their principles and meet our obligations under these laws.

In particular we want to ensure that:

- We make a significant amount of information about the Parish Council available to the public as a matter of course through our publication scheme
- We make other information readily available on request and deal with requests in a timely manner and in accordance with the provisions of the Act

3. Publication Scheme

We have adopted the model publication scheme produced by National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

The publication scheme sets out:

- The types of information we make available to the public as a matter of course
- How we make the information available
- Whether or not a fee must be paid for the information

The scheme will be reviewed and updated as necessary on a regular basis, taking into account any revised guidance from NALC.

4. Requests for Information

Any recorded information that we hold that is not already available to the public through our publication scheme can be requested. Requests must be made in writing, and we must respond to them within 20 working days.

Anyone who submits a written request has the right to:

- Be told whether the information is held
- Receive a copy of the information that is held, subject to exemptions
- Request an internal review if they are unhappy with our response
- Ask the Information Commissioner’s Office to investigate if they are still unhappy following the internal review

A request for information must be directed to the Parish Clerk and it does not have to mention the Act to be a valid request. Contact details for the Parish Clerk are available on Northumberland County Council’s website: www.northumberland.gov.uk.

5. Charges and Fees

We will publish any fees that might be charged for information we make available through our publication scheme. The charging tariff includes the recovery of costs for staff time.

We do not have to comply with requests if the cost of responding would exceed the appropriate limit (as specified in the Fees Regulations). We will offer advice and assistance wherever possible in these instances to help requesters to narrow their requests down.

We will charge for reasonable printing, photocopying and postage costs involved in responding to requests as set out in the Parish Council’s Publication Scheme.

6. Authority and Review

This policy was approved at a meeting of Council on 18 February 2013 and is effective as of that date.

The policy will be reviewed periodically.

Longhoughton Parish Council reviewed and accepted this FOI Policy with no amendments at a further meeting of the Council held on Monday 17 July 2017.

Longhoughton Parish Council reviewed and accepted this FOI Policy with no amendments at a further meeting of the Council held on Monday 26 November 2018.

Longhoughton Parish Council reviewed and accepted this FOI Policy with no amendments at a further meeting of the Council held on Monday 21 June 2021.

Longhoughton Parish Council reviewed and accepted this FOI Policy with no amendments at a further meeting of the Council held on Monday 21 October 2024.

Chairman, Longhoughton Parish Council, 21 October 2024