

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

PUBLICATION SCHEME

FILTON TOWN COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

Filton Town Council welcomes the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and its aim, which is to develop a culture of openness amongst public authorities. The Act requires all parish, town and community councils to have a publication scheme in place.

This scheme is published in accordance with the statutory requirement to do so but more particularly because the council is committed to providing clearer information and acting in a transparent and open way. It is very important that the scheme is useable and meets the public's needs. We would therefore welcome suggestions for additional classes of information that could be included in the scheme, or how our publications themselves might be improved.

The scheme is a guide to the information routinely published by the council. It is not a list of actual publications but a description of the types or classes of information published.

Those classes are as follows:

1) COUNCIL INTERNAL PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

- Minutes of council, committee and sub – committee meetings limited to the last 2 years.
- Procedural Standing Orders
- Councils Annual Report to Town Council meeting
- Agendas and supporting papers for council, committee and sub committee meetings – limited in each case to the forthcoming/immediate meeting
- Terms of Reference for Committees

2) CODE OF CONDUCT

- Members Declaration of Acceptance of Office
- Members Register of Interests
- Register of Members Interests Book

3) PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW

This is information concerning changes to the electoral arrangements for parish town and community councils. It includes recommendations for the creation of new wards, the amendment of existing wards, proposals for the names of new wards and alterations to the number of councillors to be elected to the council.

- Information relating to the last Periodic Electoral Review of the council area.
- Information relating to the latest boundary review of the council area

4) EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

- Terms & conditions of employment
- Job descriptions
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Staffing Structure

(Exclusions – ‘personal records’ i.e. appraisals, employee specific salary details, disciplinary records, sickness records and the like by virtue of being personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998)

5) PLANNING DOCUMENTS

- Responses to planning applications

(Exclusions – copies of planning consultations, the Development Plan, Structure Plan, Local Plan and Rights of Way/Footpath maps all of which are available from the local planning and or/highway authority respectively)

6) AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS

- Annual return form – limited to the last financial year
- Annual Statutory report by auditor (internal and external) – limited to the last financial year
- Receipt/Payment books, Receipt books of all kinds, Bank Statements from all accounts – limited to the last financial year
- Precept request – limited to the last financial year
- VAT records – limited to the last financial year
- Financial Standing Orders and Regulations
- Assets Register – this will include details of commons/village greens owned by the council including management schemes for commons as well as village halls, community centres and recreation grounds.
- Risk assessments.
- Loan sanction approvals
- Fees and Charges applied by the Council
- Safety inspection records for playgrounds
- Register/file of members allowances

(Exclusions – all commercially sensitive information e.g. quotations and tenders, loan documentation and insurance policies. With regard to quotations and tenders, this information is treated as confidential to ensure that the whole tender process is fair i.e. if tender information is released to a third party to the end of the tender period those who initially submitted tenders could be undercut and/or unfairly disadvantaged.)

7) DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

- Policy Statements issued by council
- Responses made by council to consultation papers
- Analysis of responses received to public consultations by the council
- Complaints handling procedure

8) COUNCIL CIRCULARS / NEWSLETTERS

- Town Council Newsletter
- Town Council Information Booklet

9) ALLOTMENTS

- Plans
- Standard tenancy Agreements

(Exclusions – individual tenancy agreements and rent payment records under both privacy and data protection laws)

HOW CAN I ACCESS THE INFORMATION?

Many of our routine publications can be downloaded from the Town council website (www.filton-town-council.co.uk). They are also available in hard copy from the Town Council office. Other information will be available for inspection at the council office or other suitable premises by prior appointment.

HOW MUCH DO PUBLICATIONS COST?

All those on our website may be freely downloaded. Most printed routine publications are also available from the Town Council office free of charge.

However, the council will reserve the right to charge for requests which exceed this definition at an hourly rate of £25 per person per hour, 10p per sheet to cover photocopying or printing costs, up to a maximum 'appropriate limit' of £450 as set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

The council will also reserve the right to decline requests for information if the cost of complying would exceed the 'appropriate limit' of £450.

HOW CAN REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION UNDER THE ACT BE MADE?

A request can be made in any **written** form (e.g. letter, e-mail, fax).

The request must state the name and address of the person applying for the information and the required information. The information requested, unless exempted under the Act, must be supplied by the council within 20 working days of being requested.

If the council decides to charge a fee it will inform the applicant in writing. The 20 days for responding to requests is put on hold until the fee is paid. If the fee is not paid within 3 months it is assumed that the applicant no longer wants the information.

If the applicant is not happy with the response they receive they must first complain to the council. If they are still unhappy they may complain to the Information Commissioner who will decide whether the request has been handled properly.

WHO DO I CONTACT?

The Town Clerk has been authorised as the qualified person with overall responsibility for this scheme on behalf of the council. Please address any requests in writing to:

Mrs Lesley Reuben
Town Clerk
Filton Town Council
Elm Park
Filton
South Gloucestershire
BS34 7PS

Telephone: **01454 866698** or
e – Mail: **lesley_reuben@filtontowncouncil.co.uk**