

Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council

Freedom of Information Act - Publication Scheme

Under the Freedom of Information Act it is the duty of every public authority to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme.

The new model scheme, which commits a public authority to “produce and publish the method by which the specific information will be available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public” is being adopted and operated by all public authorities from 01 January 2009.

We are required to provide information under the specific headings below.

The scheme was officially approved and adopted at the Parish Council meeting on 04 December 2008.

A. Who We Are and What We Do

We are a Parish Council – the “bottom tier” of local authority and the level of local government closest to the people. We deal with various local issues in our parish area where appropriate, and help fund various local projects. We own the Cliffe Recreation Ground including the adjacent Ball Park, and the car parks in Cliffe and in Cliffe Woods. We are responsible for keeping all land owned by us within the parish in a clean and litter-free condition. We award grants to local organisations for local community projects. We are also responsible for making allotment gardens available for cultivation by local residents.

Information may be obtained via the Parish Council's monthly minutes, the “Clarion” newsletter or by attending the monthly meeting of the Council. Any specific information relating to the Council's activities may be obtained by writing or emailing the Parish Clerk (see Section I below)

B What We Spend And How We Spend It

Our chief source of income is from the “precept”, which is the amount raised as a charge included in the annual Council Tax bill from the Principal Council (Medway). The precept is based on the Council's annual budget. We also have some other minor sources of income, such

as interest on bank account deposits. We spend the money, inter alia, on community and capital projects, grants, maintenance of facilities, and staff salaries and wages. Some larger Councils deal with tendering, procurement and contracts, but these are areas not applicable to our authority.

Payments are made almost exclusively by cheque, with all cheques signed by the Clerk and two specified councillors. All details of Council expenditure may be obtained from the Council minutes.

The Parish Clerk is the Responsible Finance Officer of the Council. The Council's audited accounts for any particular year may be inspected on application to the Clerk (See Section I below).

C. What Our Priorities Are And How We Are Doing

Our chief priority is to spend our Public Funds wisely and thriftily and in the interests of the community at large, and to ensure that the two parts of our parish (Cliffe on the one hand, and Cliffe Woods on the other) receive equal treatment.

D. Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

None of these are applicable to our authority.

E. How we make decisions.

The Parish Council consists of sixteen Parish Councillors (including a Chair and Vice-Chair) either elected or co-opted to the Council. No one Councillor or group of Councillors – not even the Chair – can make decisions on behalf of the Council. All decisions are a collective process and are dealt with at the monthly meeting of the council. If there is a difference of opinion amongst those present, a vote is taken and the majority view prevails. It is a legal requirement that a quorum (six members) be present before a meeting can take place.

The Council also has a number of committees (each Parish Councillor serves on at least one committee) and these committees have the power to recommend courses of action, but not to finally approve them. This final approval is the responsibility of the full council. It is the responsibility of the Parish Clerk to advise councillors if proposed courses of action do not fulfil legal requirements.

All decisions are minuted and minutes may be viewed at Martin's

Newsagents Cliffe. Alternatively, application may be made to the Parish Clerk (see contact details at Section I below) for a copy of the minutes to be either emailed or posted to the applicant. The minutes are also available via the [Parish Council's website](#).

F. Our policies and procedures

The policies and procedures for delivering our functions and responsibilities are exhaustively detailed in the Council's Standing Orders.

G. Lists and Registers

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

H. The Services We Offer

We publish (twice or three times a year) a local newsletter ("The Clarion") giving extensive coverage of the Parish council's activities and what is happening in the local community. We also contribute a monthly article to the "Cliffe, Cliffe Woods and Cooling Parish News" on council activities. We have six noticeboards located at strategic points throughout the Parish, which are for general community notices as well as Parish Council information. We offer allotment gardens for rental to parishioners (this facility is so popular that we currently have a waiting list). We pass on to the Principal Council (Medway) any service requests which we may not be in a position to deal with ourselves.

I. The Method by Which Information Published Under This Scheme Is Made Available

This information is available on our website

www.cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk

Alternatively, written application may be made to the following address:

The Parish Clerk
Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council

Address on front page of WEB site

or email clerk@cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk

J. Charges Which May Be Made for Information Published Under This Scheme

A charge of £10 (ten pounds) per sheet or per email message will be made. This covers such items as staff time for research, photocopying, and postage and packing. There is no charge for items viewed via the Council's website.

K. Written Requests

Any such requests should be made (either by post or email) to the address at Section I above.

18th March 2016

To be reviewed in 2018