Kingsclere Parish Council Freedom of Information Policy

Reviewed PPP April 25– Adopted at the Annual Meeting May 19th 2025

Freedom of information Policy

The Parish Council is committed to openness and transparency and wishes to make relevant information available wherever possible to individuals who may request it, subject to safeguarding the privacy of individuals and to legitimate considerations of national security, law enforcement and commercial interests where relevant. The Freedom of Information Act gives everyone a statutory right of access to information held by bodies such as the Parish Council.

Model publication scheme

The Parish Council adopted the revised model publication scheme issued by the Information Commissioner's Office. The model scheme is at https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1153/model-publication-scheme.pdf and on the Parish Council's website.

Information about the Parish Council

A significant amount of information about the Parish Council is available on its website. The Parish Council Clerk should be contacted if information is needed in an alternative format.

Making a request for information

Individuals or organisations may make a written request for other information which they believe the Parish Council holds. To request information under the provisions of the Act, an email should be sent to the Clerk at clerk@kingsclere-pc.org.uk or send a letter to Kingsclere Parish Council Office, 37 George Street, Kingsclere Hampshire, RG20 5NH. This should include the
full name and valid postal address of the person or organisation making the request, as required under the Act, and a clear description of the information sought.
When a request is made, a preference about the desired format of the information may be made, for example: hard copy or an electronic copy, an opportunity to inspect a record containing the information, or providing a digest or summary of the information. The Council will try to meet the preference as far as is reasonably practical or explain if it cannot do so.

Responding to requests

The Council will inform the person or organisation making the request in writing whether it holds the information requested and if so, provide it to not later than 20 working days after it receives the request. The Freedom of Information Act identifies several categories of information which the Parish Council is not required to disclose under the Act. In this case, the Council will write stating the exemption which

provides the basis for refusal within the Act and why it applies to the information requested. The Council will communicate this within the above 20-day time period.

Charges for providing information under the Freedom of Information Act

There is no ‘flat rate’ fee to receive information and in many cases the Council will provide the information free of charge. However, it should be noted that if the information sought is not readily available in the form in which it is requested, the Parish Council may charge a fee based on the costs associated with providing the information, for example photocopying and postage (known as 'disbursements'). The Freedom of Information Act does permit the Parish Council to refuse a request if it estimates that it will cost in excess of the appropriate cost limit (currently £450) to fulfil that request.

Freedom of information Fees Notice

If it is necessary to charge a fee for disbursements, or because the costs exceed the appropriate limit, the Council will write advising of the fee required within 20 working days of receipt of the request. This is known as a 'Fees Notice'. When a Fees Notice is issued, the noted 20-day limit for a response will stop, and will start again when the Council receives payment. If the fee is not received within three months, the Council is not obliged to comply with the request.

Complaints

If anyone is dissatisfied with the way the Parish Council has responded to a request for information, they should write to: The Clerk, Kingsclere Parish Council, 37 George Street, Kingsclere, Hampshire, RG20 5NH.

The Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) is responsible for enforcing the operation of the Act, and issues may be raised with the ICO at any time.
More information can be found on the ICO website listed below, or by writing to: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5A

https://ico.org.uk