

## **Caunton Parish Council**

### **Freedom of Information Policy**

Caunton Parish Council has a commitment to openness and transparency. The Transparency Code for smaller councils (under £25,000) and The Transparency Code for larger councils (over £200,000) does not legislatively apply, however the Council recognises best practice outlined in the Transparency Code for smaller councils, giving electors' information they need to examine the Council, by publishing information about Council decisions and governance online.

The Freedom of Information Act, which came into force on 1 January 2005, gives everyone a statutory right of access to information held by bodies such as the Parish Council.

#### **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 and to help us to help you in identifying the precise information you require, please contact the Clerk on [parishcouncilcaunton@gmail.com](mailto:parishcouncilcaunton@gmail.com) Please be sure to include your name, address and a clear description of the information you are seeking when you make your request. The Parish Council advise that you look at guidance available on the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website about making requests and 'dos and don'ts' when applying for information.

#### **Responding to your request**

The Parish Council will inform you in writing whether we hold the information you have requested and if so, provide it to you no later than 20 working days after we receive the requests. In some circumstances we may ask you to clarify your request.

The Parish Council will refer to the ICO document 'The Guide to Freedom of Information' when processing your request and will seek further advice directly from the ICO if necessary.

The Freedom of Information Act does identify a number of categories of information which the Parish Council is not required to disclose under the Act. In this case, we will write to you stating the exemption which provides the basis for refusal within the Act and why it applies to the information you requested. The Parish Council are obligated to safeguard the privacy of individuals (under the Data Protection Act) and this may also have a bearing on being able to supply you with the information you request. Reasons for refusal will be communicated to you within the 20-working daytime 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 Parish Council will provide the information free of charge. However, you should note that if the information you are seeking is not readily available in the form in which you are seeking it, the Parish Council may charge you a fee based on the cost 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 your request if it is estimated this will cost in excess of the appropriate cost limit (currently £450) to fulfil your request.

### **Freedom of Information Fees Notice**

If you need to pay a fee for disbursements or because the costs exceed the appropriate limit, we will write to you advising you of the fee required within 20 days of receipt of your request. This is known as a 'Fees Notice'. When you are issued the Fees Notice, the 20-working day limit for responding stops, and then will start again when we receive payment. If we do not receive the fee from you within three months we are not obliged to comply with the request.

### **Complaints**

If you are dissatisfied with the way the Parish Council has responded to a request for information, please follow our complaints procedure.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is responsible for enforcing the operation of the Act and you may raise issues with this office at any time. More information can be found on the ICO website [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk), by telephone on 0303 123 1113