



Hampstead Norreys Parish Council

Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Policy

Version number	1.0	Minute reference	26/015
Date adopted	7 th May 2026	Review due	Annually

1. Introduction

The Parish Council is committed to openness and transparency. The Council has adopted the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Model Publication Scheme (2021) and publishes information in accordance with that scheme. Details of the information the Council makes routinely available can be found in the document titled [*Information Available from Hampstead Norreys Parish Council Under the Freedom of Information Model Publication Scheme*](#).

This policy explains how members of the public may access information held by the Council under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

2. Accessing Information

Information may be obtained in the following ways:

a) Parish Council Website

The Council routinely publishes information online, including agendas, minutes, policies, financial information and governance documents. Members of the public are encouraged to check the website first.

b) Inspection of Documents

Requests to inspect documents should be made to the Clerk. Some records may require notice to locate or prepare, and an appointment may be necessary.

c) Written Requests

If the information is not available on the website or through routine publication, a written request may be submitted to the Clerk.

A valid FOI request must include:

- the requester's name
- an address for correspondence (email or postal)
- a description of the information sought

Requests do not need to refer to the Freedom of Information Act to be valid. The Council will treat any request for recorded information as a request under the Freedom of Information Act or Environmental Information Regulations, where appropriate, and will respond in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Requests for environmental information may be made verbally or in writing under the EIR.

3. Council Response

The Council will respond within 20 working days of receipt of a valid request. The Council will:

- confirm whether the information is held
- provide the information, subject to any exemptions or exceptions
- advise if a fee is payable
- explain any refusal and outline the review process

Where a request is complex or voluminous, the Council may extend the deadline under the EIR to a maximum of 40 working days and will notify the requester within the initial 20 working day period, explaining the reasons for the extension.

4. Fees and Charges

The Council follows the relevant statutory fees regulations and associated guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office.

a) **Freedom of Information Act**

The Council may charge for:

- disbursements (e.g. photocopying, printing, postage)
- staff time spent locating and retrieving information, only where the estimated cost exceeds the statutory limit of £450 (calculated at £25 per hour)

The Council will estimate the cost of complying with a request to determine whether it exceeds the appropriate limit of £450 (calculated at £25 per hour, equating to 18 hours of work). This estimate includes staff time spent locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

If the estimated cost exceeds £450, the Council may:

- refuse the request,
- comply with the request and charge in accordance with the Fees Regulations, or
- offer advice to help the requester narrow the scope.

Where the estimated cost does not exceed the limit, the Council will not charge for staff time and will only charge for disbursements.

b) **Environmental Information Regulations**

Under the EIR, the Council may charge a reasonable amount for staff time and disbursements. Charges will be advised in advance.

Any charge under the EIR will be reasonable and will not be set at a level that would discourage requests for information.

c) **Standard Disbursement Charges**

- Photocopying/printing: 10p per sheet
- Postage: actual cost

Information will not be released until any applicable fee has been paid. Where a fees notice is issued under FOIA, the statutory time limit for responding to the request will be paused until payment is received.

5. Exemptions and Exceptions

Some information may not be disclosed. The Council will apply exemptions under FOIA and exceptions under EIR where appropriate. Examples include:

- personal data protected by the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- commercially sensitive information
- information provided in confidence
- information that would prejudice law enforcement or legal proceedings

Where information is withheld, the Council will explain the reason.

Any refusal of a request will be provided in writing within the statutory time limit, stating the reasons for refusal, the relevant exemption or exception, and the requester's right to request an internal review and to appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office.

6. Advice and Assistance

The Council has a duty to provide reasonable advice and assistance to anyone seeking information. Requests for help should be directed to the Clerk.

Further guidance is available from the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.org.uk.

7. Complaints and Internal Review

If a requester is dissatisfied with the Council's response, they may request an internal review within 40 working days. The review will be undertaken by a member or officer not previously involved in the original decision, where possible.

If the requester remains dissatisfied after the internal review, they may contact:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113

www.ico.org.uk

8. Document Updates

Version	Date	Amendments
1.0	07/05/2026	Adopted