

ARTHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Freedom of Information Policy

1. Introduction

Arthington Parish Council is committed to openness and transparency in its work and to complying with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and related legislation. This policy explains how the Council will respond to requests for information and manage information it holds.

The Council recognises that members of the public have a right to access information held by public authorities, subject to certain exemptions.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All information held by the Council, regardless of format (paper, electronic, emails, photographs, audio, etc.)
- All councillors, employees, and contractors acting on behalf of the Council

It covers:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000 requests
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) requests
- Requests for information made in writing or electronically

3. Publication Scheme

The Council has adopted the **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Model Publication Scheme** and will:

- Proactively publish information where possible
- Make information available on its website or upon request
- Review published information regularly to ensure it is accurate and up to date

4. Making a Request

Requests for information must:

- Be in writing (including email)

- State the name of the applicant
- Provide a correspondence address
- Describe the information requested

Requests should be sent to:

The Clerk to the Council

Email: clerk@arthingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk

5. Handling Requests

- All requests will be acknowledged promptly
- The Council will respond **within 20 working days**, as required by law
- If clarification is required, the 20-day period will begin once clarification is received
- Requests will be logged and monitored by the Clerk

6. Fees and Charges

Most requests are free of charge. However, the Council may charge:

- Disbursement costs (e.g. photocopying, postage)
- Fees permitted under the FOIA Fees Regulations

Applicants will be informed of any charges in advance.

7. Exemptions

Some information may be withheld where an exemption applies, including but not limited to:

- Personal data (Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR)
- Confidential or commercially sensitive information
- Information intended for future publication
- Information relating to legal privilege

Where a qualified exemption applies, the Council will carry out a **public interest test**.

8. Environmental Information

Requests for environmental information will be handled under the **Environmental Information Regulations 2004**, which may:

- Allow oral requests
- Require responses within 20 working days (or 40 in complex cases)

9. Refusals and Complaints

If a request is refused:

- The applicant will be informed in writing
- Reasons for refusal will be explained
- Details of the right to appeal will be provided

Internal reviews should be requested within **40 working days**.

If the applicant remains dissatisfied, they may complain to:
The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

10. Responsibilities

- The **Clerk to the Council** is the Council's FOI lead officer
- Councillors and staff must assist the Clerk in locating information
- All records must be managed in accordance with the Council's record-keeping policies

11. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every **three years** or sooner if legislation changes.

Adopted by Arthington Parish Council: 13th January 2026
Minute reference: 72.25