

Brundall Parish Council

Procedures for compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, 2000.

Introduction.

At its 23rd October 2008 meeting Brundall Parish Council formally recognized the model Publication Scheme, as approved by the Information Commissioner for use by Parish and Town Councils, in line with Section 20 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This document explains how to request information, the terms and conditions under which we supply requested information, and what information we will and will not supply. The Parish Council has been compliant with the Act since 1st January 2009, and this document now clarifies our procedures relative to the Act.

How to request Information.

Much of the information retained by the Parish Council is freely available from our website. Requests made under the Freedom of Information Act must be made in writing to the Parish Clerk. (See Notice Boards and website for contact details). There may be labour and reproduction costs associated with the supply of information (See paragraph below on Charges). You will be expected to pay these charges before the requested information is supplied.

What we will do.

When we receive your written request, we will respond within 20 working days. We will either supply the information within that time or issue a refusal to supply the information, with an explanation. You can appeal against a refusal and if it is found that the public interest outweighs the reason for refusal, then the information must be supplied. At the time we respond to your request we will advise you if charges will apply. Once these charges have been paid to Brundall Parish Council, we will provide the information within a further 20 working days from receipt of the money.

Information we will supply.

We are only expected to provide information which is already recorded. We will not create information in order to fulfill a request. The following are the categories of information we will supply, provided they are not covered by any of the exclusions noted:

Councillors and the Clerk.

Full contact details (current information only), memberships of sub-committees/working groups, register of Councillor's interests, declaration of interest logs, Councillors' allowances and expenses.

Council meetings.

Calendar of planned meetings (current information only), agendas, minutes, reports presented at Council meetings (excluding information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting), responses to consultation papers, responses to planning applications.

Correspondence.

All received correspondence presented at Council meetings (unless otherwise excepted). All correspondence sent out in the name of the Council (unless otherwise excepted).

Policies, Procedures and Protocols.

Policies, Parish Newsletters and updates, Chairman's report to the Annual Parish Meeting.

Financial information.

Annual return forms and Auditors report, finalised annual budget and precept, financial regulations, grants given and received, current contracts and value, assets register, current income and expenditure reports (as presented to Council).

Lists and Registers.

Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, sub-committees/working groups terms of reference, delegated authority in respect of Officers, Complaints Procedure, policy statements, FOI policy and scale of charges, and any other information deemed to be covered by the Act, but not included in the following paragraph.

Sound Recordings.

A digital sound recording is made of every Meeting of Brundall Parish Council, any of its Committees or Sub Committees and that recording will be retained for a period of not less than one year following the Meeting. The sole purpose of the sound recordings is to provide evidence of the proceedings of a Meeting or Meetings.

Information we will not supply.

Documents already freely available on www.brundallpc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk

Information that is readily available by other means, or other authorities, for example, UK Government publications. Personal and personnel information. Documents received by Brundall Parish Council that the originator has specifically classed as confidential. Information that will damage or compromise the commercial interest of a third party. Information intended for future publication. Where there are perceived legal and/or

criminal issues involved, if there are issues of national security. (See Retention Policy). We do use designated sub-committees/working groups to address specific local issues. It is only the reports these working groups make to the Council at full Council meetings that will be available, and are generally included in the minutes of those Council meeting. Confidential items will remain confidential until the standard period of 30 years according to government policy.

Document retention policy.

Our current policy is to retain all documents (excluding drafts, other unpublished documents, and most resolved Planning Applications as these are available from Broadland District Council) for a period of 5 years. The policy on document retention will be reviewed by the Council by the end of 2012.

Charges. It is important to recognize that in our financial planning we do not budget for excessive costs associated with compliance to the Freedom of Information Act. People requesting information must bear anything more than incidental costs, and not the resident Council Tax payers. Charges for 2011-2 will be 10p per A4 photocopy page (B&W only) with a minimum charge of £1.00. If the costs of preparation and compilation of documentation for any request are estimated to exceed £450, then within the terms of the Act, the requestor will be required to pay the full cost. These charges will be reviewed annually, and revised charges published in Council Minutes and our website.