



COGGESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Freedom of Information Policy

The Parish Council adopted the Model Publication Scheme with effect from 1st January 2009. This scheme will enable members of the public to view and access information held by the Parish Council.

Obtaining Information and Information held **There are three ways to obtain the information:**

Parish Council web site

The web site holds the type of information which the Council routinely publishes e.g. minutes and agendas. The information you want may already be included in the publication scheme – so please check the documents on the web site first.

Inspect Documents held by the Clerk

If you wish to view other documents, you should contact the Clerk, either via the facility on the web site or by telephone, or in writing. Some documents require some time to locate, so it may be necessary to make an appointment. Please note the office is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10 am – 1 pm

Individual Written Request

If the information is not included in the publication scheme or on the web site, you may send a written request to-

The Parish Clerk, The Village Hall, 25 Stoneham Street, Coggeshall, Essex, CO6 1UH.

Your request must include your name, address for correspondence, and a description of the information you require. The Council will respond within 20 working days of receipt of your written request and

- confirm to you whether or not it holds the information
- advise you if a fee will be charged
- provide you with the information (after any relevant fee has been paid) unless an exemption applies (see 'Exemptions' paragraph below).

Fees

The Act only allows the Council to charge for answering Freedom of Information requests when estimated staff costs involved in locating and or compiling the information exceed £450. Under these circumstances, the Council can refuse the request on the grounds of cost, or charge the applicant £20 per hour, plus disbursements for the estimated work. In the unlikely event that this happens, the Council will work with the enquirer to find a way of getting the cost down to an acceptable level by refining the request.

If the request involves producing paper, the Council will charge 10p per sheet for photocopying and printing documents, and recover the actual cost of postage or any other transmission costs from the applicant. Electronic versions will be available free of charge.

Exemptions

Some information may not be provided by the Council as there are several exemptions in the Freedom of Information Act; for example personal data about individuals which is protected by the Data Protection Act 1998, or commercially confidential information.

Environmental Information regulations.

The Environmental Information Regulations make provision for the public to have access to information about environmental effects and plans for environmental usage. The rules concerning disclosure are similar to those of the Freedom of Information Act, but there are fewer exemptions, and a greater emphasis on making the information accessible.

Further Help

If you need help in accessing information from the Council under the Freedom of Information Act, please contact the Parish Clerk (address as before). You will also find more detailed guidance on the website of the Information Commissioner.

Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with the response from the Council then you should put your complaint in writing to the Clerk at the address above. If you are still dissatisfied, you may contact the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545700

Email: mail@ico.gov.uk

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