Ringshall Parish Council

Freedom Of Information Policy

V1.0

Version Control

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Policy History

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1.0	Clerk	New Policy	04/19	

Freedom of Information

1. About this Policy

Ringshall Parish Council has a commitment to openness and transparency and has always been concerned to make relevant information available wherever possible to individuals who may request it, subject to safeguarding the privacy of individuals and to legitimate considerations of national security, law enforcement and commercial interests where relevant.

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.

2. Information about the Parish Council

You can access a significant amount of information about the Parish Council on our website. If you need the information in an alternative format, please contact the Parish Council via email or in writing at the address shown below.

3. 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 email clerk at pc.ringshall@gmail.com or write to the Clerk.

Please be sure to include your name and valid postal address, as required under the Act, and a clear description of the information you are seeking. When making a request you can state a preference of how you want the information communicated to you. This could be by providing a hard copy, or an electronic copy of the information, providing you an opportunity to inspect a record containing the information or providing a digest or summary of the information. We will try to meet your preference as far as is reasonably practical, or notify you if we cannot do so.

4. Responding to your request

We will inform you in writing whether we hold the information you have requested and if so, provide it to you not later than 20 working days after we receive the request.

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. We will communicate this to you within the 20 working day time period.

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5. Charges for providing information under the Freedom of Information Act

There is no 'flat rate' fee to receive information and in many cases we will provide the information to you 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 costs 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 we estimate that it will cost us in excess of the appropriate cost limit (currently £450) to fulfil your request.

6. 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 working 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.

7. Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with the way the Parish Council has responded to a request for information, please write to, or email, the Clerk. The Clerk's contact details can be found on the Parish Council Website.