

BRACEBRIDGE HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

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Freedom of Information policy

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), Bracebridge Heath Parish Council (the Council) has a duty to adopt and maintain a publication scheme describing:
 - the classes of information it publishes;
 - how and where such information is published (e.g. website, paper copy, etc.);
 - whether or not a charge is made for such information.
- 1.2 The Council has adopted the model scheme attached at Appendix 1 and adapted the classes of information as appropriate to this organisation.
- 1.3 Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Bracebridge Heath Parish Council has two main responsibilities – to produce a Publication Scheme and to deal with individual requests for information.
- 1.4 The purpose of the publication scheme is to let everyone know what information will be automatically or routinely published and to ensure that a significant amount of information is available to the public, without the need for a specific request to be made.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy is concerned with information which can be accessed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- 2.2 This policy does not cover the procedures relating to the access to personal information. This is held within the Subject Access Request Procedure.

3 Responsibilities & review

- 3.1 The clerk to council is responsible for dealing with requests made under the Act, maintaining a disclosure log and keeping the council informed of any requests made.
- 3.2 The Full Council is responsible for the review of this policy every 3 years or in response to changes in relevant legislation.

4 Related legislation, policies & guidance

- 4.1 This policy is not a substitute for legislation, regulations and codes of practice but defines how the Council will apply the relevant legislation. Related legislation, policies and guidance is listed below:
 - Freedom of Information Act 2000
 - General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018
 - Data Protection Act 2018

Bracebridge Heath Parish Council internal documents:

- Document Retention Policy

- Data Protection Policy
- Subject Access Request Procedure

5 The publication scheme

- 5.1 In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Bracebridge Heath Parish Council has a publication scheme. The publication scheme commits the Council to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities.
- 5.2 Wherever possible Council will provide information through its website. Where information is only available in a non-electronic form or when an individual does not wish to access information electronically, the information may be requested in another format. Council has a duty to provide the information in an intelligible format and will try to meet specific requests where possible. Council acknowledges the need to ensure information is accessible to everyone including those with a recognised disability. In these circumstances, Council will endeavour to provide information in a suitable format.
- 5.3 Some information may only be available to view in person at Council's premises. In these circumstances an appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.
- 5.4 Council will ensure that members of the public are aware of the information that is made readily available to them, provide details of how this information can be accessed and any charges which may be applicable. These details are available in the publication scheme which can be found in the appendix of this policy and on the Council's website.

6 Requesting information not found in the publication scheme

- 6.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the public the right to access information held by councils and other public bodies. The Act also explains what is expected of councils and the types of information that needs to be made available.

7 Making a Freedom of Information request

- 7.1 Freedom of Information requests need to be made in writing (by letter or email) to the clerk who is responsible for responding to requests.
- 7.2 When making a Freedom of Information request, the following information must be included:
 - name;
 - contact details;
 - a detailed description of the recorded information required.
- 7.3 When requesting information, the enquirer does not have to mention the Freedom of Information Act, nor the reasons why the information is sought.

- 7.4 Most Freedom of Information requests will be free of charge. However, there may be a small charge for photocopies or postage. Council will notify the enquirer in advance if there are any charges associated with the request.
- 7.5 Bracebridge Heath Parish Council will respond to all Freedom of Information requests within 20 working days.

8 Exemptions

- 8.1 Anyone making a request to a public authority for information must be informed whether the public authority holds that information and supplied with it. Some information does not have to be revealed, such as personal information or commercially sensitive data. A full list of these exemptions can be viewed on the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website – www.ico.org.uk.
- 8.2 Bracebridge Heath Parish Council can refuse a Freedom of Information request under Section 12(1) where it is estimated that the cost of compliance would exceed the appropriate limit. This authority has set its appropriate limit as £450 in line with the ICO guidance.
- 8.3 Council may also ask for the request to be more specific in order for the information to be provided.
- 8.4 If Council refuses to provide the information requested, the enquirer can ask them to review their decision. If the enquirer is still not satisfied with the response received, they are advised to contact the Information Commissioner's Office.

9 Version control and amendment history

Date approved	Version Number	Revision / amendments made	Review date
June 2019	1.0	New policy	June 2021
August 2021	1.1	Updated contents of classes. Revised access details – by appointment only. Updated letterhead to reflect change of email account.	August 2023
June 2023	1.2	Updated access details for some classes of information	June 2025
June 2025	1.3	Updated responsibilities and review section – removal of reference to the Finance committee and altered the review period to every 3 years. Updated the section on exemptions including setting of an appropriate limit for the cost of complying. Updated the contact details on the publication scheme	June 2028

10 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Publication scheme

<u>Information to be published</u>	<u>How the information can be obtained</u>
<u>Class1 - Who we are and what we do</u> <i>Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts. Current information only.</i>	
Who's who on the Council and its committees Contact details for parish clerk and council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address (if used)) Location of main Council office and accessibility details Staffing structure	Parish Council website
<u>Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it</u> <i>Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit. Current and previous financial year as a minimum.</i>	
Annual return form and report by auditor Finalised budget & precept Financial Standing Orders and Regulations Grants given and received ¹ List of current contracts awarded and value of contract Members' allowances and expenses ²	Parish Council website ¹ Website – located within the minutes of meetings – usually July. ² Only the chairman has an allowance. This is shown in the annual budget.

<u>Information to be published</u>	<u>How the information can be obtained</u>
<p><u>Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing</u></p> <p><i>Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews. Current and previous year as a minimum</i></p>	
<p>Annual Report to Parish or Community Meeting (current and previous year as a minimum)</p> <p>Action Plan</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plan</p>	Parish Council website
<p><u>Class 4 – How we make decisions</u></p> <p><i>Decision making processes and records of decisions. Current and previous council year as a minimum.</i></p> <p>Timetable of meetings (Council and any committee/sub-committee meetings and parish meetings)</p> <p>Agendas of meetings (as above)</p> <p>Minutes of meetings. This will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.</p> <p>Reports presented to council meetings. (This will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.)¹</p> <p>Responses to consultation papers ²</p> <p>Responses to planning applications ³</p>	<p>Parish Council website and Parish Council noticeboard at St John's Church, Grantham Road</p> <p>Parish Council website</p> <p>¹ Some reports will be published on the website. All others available on request.</p> <p>² Parish Council website – held within minutes of meetings.</p> <p>³ Parish Council website (within minutes of meetings and NKDC planning online).</p>

<u>Information to be published</u>	<u>How the information can be obtained</u>
<p><u>Class 5 – Our policies and procedures</u></p> <p><i>Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities. Current information only.</i></p>	
<p><u>Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business:</u></p> <p>Standing orders</p> <p>Committee and sub-committee terms of reference</p> <p>Delegated authority in respect of officers (within Standing Orders and schemes of delegation (ordinary and emergency scheme))</p> <p>Code of Conduct</p> <p><u>Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff:</u></p> <p>Equality and diversity policy</p> <p>Health and safety policy</p> <p>Recruitment policies</p> <p>Policies and procedures for handling requests for information</p> <p>Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)</p> <p>Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)</p> <p>Data protection policies</p> <p>Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)</p>	<p>Parish Council website</p>

<u>Information to be published</u>	<u>How the information can be obtained</u>
<p><u>Class 6 – Lists and Registers</u></p> <p><i>Currently maintained lists and registers only</i></p>	
<p>Asset register (summary published on website. Full Register available on request)</p> <p>Register of members' interests *</p> <p>Register of gifts and hospitality</p>	<p>Parish Council website</p> <p>* Website – through North Kesteven District Council</p>
<p><u>Class 7 – The services we offer</u></p> <p><i>Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses. Current information only.</i></p>	
<p>Allotments</p> <p>Burial grounds and closed churchyards</p> <p>Community centres and village halls</p> <p>Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities</p> <p>Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting, bus shelters</p> <p>Services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)</p>	<p>Website</p>
<p><u>Additional Information</u></p> <p><i>Any other published information not mentioned above.</i></p>	

Schedule of charges

All documents listed as being available on the website are accessible free of charge. Documents required in hard copy may be inspected by appointment at the Community Library. Information that can be photocopied without breaching copyright laws can be copied using the photocopier in the library at the charges shown below.

Any photocopies sent by post will be subject to the actual cost of postage and packaging.

Type of charge	Description	Basis of charge
Disbursement cost	Photocopying @ 10p per sheet (black & white)	Cost of copying
	Photocopying @ 50p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class *
Statutory Fee		
Other		

Contact details

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