



WEST HANNINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Re-adopted with amendments – 13th April 2026

1. PURPOSE

West Hanningfield Parish Council (“the Council”) recognises its responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”).

The Act provides a general right of access to recorded information held by public authorities, subject to exemptions.

The Council will:

- operate a Publication Scheme
- respond to individual requests for information
- promote transparency and openness in all activities

2. PUBLICATION SCHEME

The Council adopts the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) Model Publication Scheme.

The Council will proactively publish information under the following classes:

1. Who we are and what we do
2. What we spend and how we spend it
3. What our priorities are and how we are doing
4. How we make decisions
5. Our policies and procedures
6. Lists and registers
7. The services we offer

The Publication Scheme will be maintained and reviewed regularly.

3. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Where possible, information will be published on the Council's website.

Where electronic access is not possible, the Council will make reasonable arrangements for inspection or provision of documents, including by appointment.

4. EXCLUSIONS

Information will not be published or disclosed where:

- it is exempt under the Act
 - it contains personal data protected under data protection legislation
 - it is commercially sensitive
 - disclosure is prohibited by law
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5. MAKING A REQUEST

Any person may make a request for recorded information.

Requests must:

- be in writing (email or letter accepted)
- include the requester's name and contact address
- clearly describe the information requested

Requests will be handled in accordance with the Act.

6. RESPONSE TIMES

The Council will respond to requests within **20 working days**, unless a statutory exemption applies or clarification is required.

Where clarification is needed, the time limit will be paused until sufficient information is received.

7. CHARGES

Information accessed electronically is normally provided free of charge.

Charges may be applied for:

- photocopying or printing
- postage
- other reasonable disbursements

Where a fee applies, the requester will be informed in advance.

The Council may refuse requests where the cost exceeds the statutory limit.

8. REFUSALS AND EXEMPTIONS

Where information is withheld, the Council will:

- explain the reason
 - cite the relevant exemption where appropriate
 - inform the requester of their right to review
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9. INTERNAL REVIEW AND COMPLAINTS

If a requester is dissatisfied, they may request an internal review.

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

Information Commissioner's Office

10. DATA PROTECTION

Requests for personal data about the requester will be handled under data protection legislation rather than FOI.

11. REVIEW

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