

Freedom of Information Policy & Publication Scheme

1. Introduction

Welford Parish Council is committed to openness, transparency and accountability in its governance and decision-making.

This policy sets out how the Council complies with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and formally adopts the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Model Publication Scheme.

The Council also publishes information in accordance with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities 2015.

2. Legal Framework

This policy operates in accordance with:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation
- Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities 2015

3. Council Commitment

The Council will:

- Make information routinely available through its website
- Maintain and review its Publication Scheme
- Respond to Freedom of Information requests within 20 working days
- Provide advice and assistance to applicants
- Apply exemptions lawfully and consistently

- Ensure fees are charged only where permitted
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4. Publication Scheme

4.1 Adoption of the ICO Model Publication Scheme

Welford Parish Council has adopted the Information Commissioner's Office Model Publication Scheme.

The scheme commits the Council to proactively publish information it holds which falls within the following classes.

4.2 Classes of Information

Class 1 – Who We Are and What We Do

- Councillor names and responsibilities
 - Contact details for the Clerk
 - Committee structures (if applicable)
 - Code of Conduct
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Class 2 – What We Spend and How We Spend It

- Annual accounts
 - Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)
 - Internal audit report
 - Budget and precept information
 - Expenditure over £100
 - Asset register
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Class 3 – What Our Priorities Are and How We Are Doing

- Annual reports (if produced)

- Strategic plans (if applicable)
 - Responses to consultations (where appropriate)
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Class 4 – How We Make Decisions

- Agendas
 - Minutes of meetings
 - Supporting reports (where appropriate)
 - Standing Orders
 - Financial Regulations
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Class 5 – Our Policies and Procedures

- Data Protection Policy
 - Privacy Notice
 - IT Policy
 - Accessibility Statement
 - Record Retention Policy
 - Complaints Policy
 - FOI Policy
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Class 6 – Lists and Registers

- Asset Register
 - Register of Interests (held by the Monitoring Authority)
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4.3 Access to Information

Information is available:

- On the Council's website
- By email request
- By written request to the Clerk

Where possible, information will be provided electronically.

4.4 Charges

Information published on the website is free of charge.

Reasonable disbursement costs may be charged for:

- Printing
- Photocopying
- Postage

Charges will be in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

5. Making a Freedom of Information Request

If the information you require is not available under the Publication Scheme, you may submit a written request.

Requests must:

- Be in writing (including email)
- Include the requester's name and contact details
- Clearly describe the information requested

Requests should be sent to:

Clerk to Welford Parish Council
5 Railway Terrace, Great Bedwyn, Marlborough Wiltshire SN8 3NZ
welfordparish@yahoo.com

The Council will respond within 20 working days.

6. Exemptions

Certain information may be withheld where exemptions apply under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including:

- Personal data
- Commercially sensitive information
- Legally privileged information

Where a qualified exemption applies, the Council will apply the public interest test.

7. Internal Review and Complaints

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the handling of their request, they may request an internal review within 40 working days.

If still dissatisfied, they may complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.

8. Responsibilities

The Clerk is responsible for:

- Managing FOI requests
- Maintaining the Publication Scheme
- Ensuring information is published in accordance with the Transparency Code

Councillors are responsible for ensuring Council records are managed in line with the Record Retention Policy.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
- ICO guidance is updated
- Audit recommendations require revision

Adoption

Adopted by Welford Parish Council on: 4 March 2026

Next review date: March 2027