

Payhembury Parish Council

Freedom of Information policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Payhembury Parish Council is committed to being open and transparent about the work that it does and services that it provides for the local community. The Council will make as much information available as possible, to promote a greater awareness and understanding of the Council's policies, decisions and actions.
- 1.2. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Payhembury Parish Council has two main responsibilities – to produce a Publication Scheme showing what information is readily available (and how to obtain it) and to deal with individual requests for information.
- 1.3. The Payhembury Parish Council website shall be considered as the main source for information relating to Payhembury Parish Council unless that information is deemed sensitive or is not yet in a suitable electronic format.

2. Scope

- 2.1. General requests for information will be considered as part of Payhembury Parish Council's normal day to day business. However, there are also statutory information access regimes that can be used to access specific information. This Policy concerns itself with that information which can be accessed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

3. Information Commissioner's Office guidance

- 3.1. The Information Commissioner's Office have produced a Model Publication Scheme and a template for 'Information available under the Model Publication Scheme' for use by Parish/Community Councils. Parish Councils only need to publish information that they have. They do not need to produce all types of information listed unless specified on the template or relevant to the Parish Council.
- 3.2. Payhembury Parish Council have adopted the Model Publication Scheme (V1.2, 20151023) without amendment.
- 3.3. Payhembury Parish Council have used the template for 'Information available under the Model Publications Scheme' (V2, 20140612). All sections in the template have been retained, with those not relevant to Payhembury Parish Council greyed out and those for which information is not currently available in italics. Information in italics is considered relevant for Payhembury Parish Council and will be made available as soon as practical. Columns 2 and 3 contain details on how the information can be obtained and the cost where applicable.
- 3.4. The Model Publication Scheme and the Information available under the Model Publication Scheme are hereafter referred to as the 'Publication Scheme'.
- 3.5. Further information about Freedom of Information can be found via the Information Commissioner's website - <https://ico.org.uk/> - which also provides information on GDPR.

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4. The Publication Scheme

- 4.1. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Payhembury Parish Council has a Publication Scheme. The Publication Scheme commits Payhembury Parish Council to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities.
- 4.2. Wherever possible Payhembury Parish Council will provide information through its website. Where information is available in a non-electronic form or when an individual does not wish to access information electronically, an individual can contact the Parish Clerk and ask for the information to be made available to them.
- 4.3. Some information may only be available to view in person. In these circumstances an appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.
- 4.4. Payhembury Parish Council will ensure that members of the public are aware of the information that is made readily available to them and provide details of how this information can be accessed and any charges which may be applicable. This information is defined in 'Information available under the Model Publications Scheme' which is available on the Parish Council's website.

5. Requesting Information not found in the Publication Scheme

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. Anyone can make a request for information – there are no restrictions on age, nationality or place of residence (they do not necessarily need to be a resident of Payhembury Parish Council).

6. Making a Freedom of Information Request

- 6.1. Freedom of Information Requests need to be made in writing to the Clerk who is responsible for responding to requests – either by letter or e-mail.
- 6.2. When making a Freedom of Information request, the following information must be included:
 - Name
 - Contact details
 - A detailed description of the recorded information required
- 6.3. When requesting information, the enquirer does not have to mention the Freedom of Information Act, nor the reasons why the information is sought.

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

7. Exemptions

- 7.1. Anyone making a request to a public authority for information must be informed whether the public authority holds that information and whether they can supply the information. Some information does not have to be revealed, such as personal information or commercially sensitive data. You can view a full list of these exemptions on the Information Commissioner's website – www.ico.org.uk.
- 7.2. Payhembury Parish Council can turn down a Freedom of Information Request if it will cost more than £200 to respond to.
- 7.3. Payhembury Parish Council may ask for the request to be more specific in order for the information to be provided.
- 7.4. If Payhembury Parish 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.

8. Policy Review

- 8.1. Payhembury Parish Council will review this Policy as necessary and appropriate, and at a minimum on an annual basis.