

# Payhembury Parish Council

## Freedom of Information policy

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. 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.
- 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. 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 Parish Council will make as much information available as possible, to promote a greater awareness and understanding of the Parish Council’s policies, decisions and actions.
- 1.4. General requests for information will be considered as part of the 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.
- 1.5. 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).

### 2. Information Commissioner’s Office guidance

- 2.1. The Information Commissioner’s Office have produced a ‘Model Publication Scheme’ and a ‘Guide to Information provided by Parish/Community Councils under the ‘Model Publication Scheme’.
- 2.2. The Parish Council have adopted the Model Publication Scheme (V1.2, 20151023) without amendment.
- 2.3. The Parish Council have used the template from the ‘Guide to Information provided by Parish/Community Councils under the Model Publication Scheme’ (V3.0, 20211029) to record what information is published by the Parish Council, where it is published and whether a cost applies. All sections in the template have been retained, with those not relevant to the Parish Council indicated as being not applicable (n/a) and those for which information is not

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currently available indicated in italics. Information in italics is considered relevant for the Parish Council and will be made available as soon as practical.

- 2.4. Further information about Freedom of Information can be found via the Information Commissioner's website - <https://ico.org.uk/> - which also provides information on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.

### 3. The Publication Scheme

- 3.1. The Model Publication Scheme and the completed template from the 'Guide to Information provided by Parish/Community Councils under the Model Publication Scheme' are hereafter referred to as the 'Publication Scheme'.
- 3.2. The Publication Scheme shall be available to members of the public on the Parish Council's website or by contacting the Clerk.
- 3.3. Wherever possible the Parish Council will provide information listed in the Publication Scheme 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 Clerk and ask for the information to be made available to them.
- 3.4. 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.
- 3.5. Some information may be covered by other legislation, eg GDPR, commercial confidentiality, etc, and therefore not available under Freedom of Information.

### 4. Making a Freedom of Information Request

- 4.1. Freedom of Information requests need to be made in writing (either by letter or email) to the Clerk who is responsible for responding to requests. Contact details can be found on the 'Contact Us' page of the Parish Council's website.
- 4.2. When making a Freedom of Information request, the following information must be included:
  - Name
  - Contact details
  - A detailed description of the recorded information required
- 4.3. When requesting information, the enquirer does not have to mention the Freedom of Information Act, nor the reasons why the information is sought.
- 4.4. Most Freedom of Information requests will be free of charge. However, there may be a small charge for photocopies or postage. The Parish Council will notify the enquirer in advance if there are any charges associated with the request.
- 4.5. The Parish Council will respond to all Freedom of Information requests within 20 working days.

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### 5. Exemptions

- 5.1. 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](http://www.ico.org.uk).
- 5.2. The Parish Council can turn down a Freedom of Information Request if it will cost more than £200 to respond to.
- 5.3. The Parish Council may ask for the request to be more specific in order for the information to be provided.
- 5.4. If the 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 – contact details can be found on the website [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).