



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST POLICY

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000

Policy Reference	FOI-POL-001
Version	1.0 Approved May 2026. Minute ref 26/57.
Review Date	Annually
Responsible Officer	Clair Wilkinson Parish Clerk

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Great Bedwyn Parish Council will handle requests for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). It aims to ensure that we respond to requests in a lawful, timely, and transparent manner.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff employed by or acting on behalf of the organisation
 - All recorded information held by the organisation, regardless of format (including emails, documents, databases, and audio/visual recordings)
 - Requests received from any member of the public, organisation, or media outlet
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3. Legal Framework

The organisation is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which gives any person the right to request access to information held by public authorities. We will also have regard to:

- The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) – for requests relating to environmental information
 - The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 – where requests involve personal data
 - The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) guidance and codes of practice
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4. How to Make a Request

Any person wishing to request information must:

- Submit the request in writing (including by email)
- Provide their name and a contact address (postal or email)
- Describe the information they are seeking as clearly as possible

Requests should be submitted to:

Clair Wilkinson, Clerk

Great Bedwyn Parish Council

PO Box 4326

Marlborough

Wilts

SN8 9FS

Email: clerk@greatbedwyn-pc.gov.uk

5. Timescales for Response

The organisation will acknowledge and respond to all valid FOI requests within 20 working days of receipt. Where clarification is required from the requestor, the 20-day clock is paused until the clarification is received.

In exceptional circumstances, the organisation may extend the response period where a public interest test is being considered. The requestor will be informed of any such extension and provided with an estimated response date.

6. Exemptions

Not all information held by the organisation will be disclosed. Exemptions may apply under the FOIA, including:

6.1 Absolute Exemptions

These apply without the need for a public interest test and include:

- Information relating to national security or defence
- Court records
- Information provided in confidence
- Personal data (where disclosure would breach UK GDPR)

6.2 Qualified Exemptions

These require the organisation to apply a public interest test to decide whether the public interest in disclosure outweighs the public interest in maintaining the exemption. Examples include:

- Information intended for future publication
- Internal communications and policy deliberations
- Information that could prejudice law enforcement or legal proceedings
- Commercial interests and trade secrets

Where an exemption is applied, the organisation will notify the requestor and explain which exemption has been relied upon.

7. Refusals and Partial Disclosure

Where a request is refused in whole or in part, the organisation will:

- Inform the requestor in writing within the 20-working-day deadline
- State which exemption(s) are being relied upon
- Explain the reasons for the refusal
- Advise the requestor of their right to request an internal review

Where only part of the requested information is exempt, the remaining information will be released wherever possible (“severing”).

8. Cost Limit

The organisation is not required to comply with a request where the estimated cost of locating, retrieving, and extracting the information exceeds the appropriate limit, currently set at £600 (equivalent to 3.5 days of staff time). In such cases, the requestor will be advised and, where possible, offered help to refine or narrow their request.

9. Internal Review and Appeals

If a requestor is dissatisfied with the organisation’s response, they may request an internal review within 40 working days of the original response. The review will be conducted by a senior officer who was not involved in the original decision.

If the requestor remains dissatisfied following the internal review, they may complain to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO):

Information Commissioner’s Office

Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113 | www.ico.org.uk

10. Publication Scheme

The organisation maintains a Publication Scheme in accordance with Section 19 of the FOIA. This proactively publishes information that is routinely made available to the public without the need for a formal request. The Publication Scheme is available on our website

11. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Clerk is responsible for coordinating responses to FOI requests and ensuring compliance with this policy.
 - All staff are responsible for identifying and forwarding any FOI requests they receive to the Clerk promptly.
 - The Council Chairman and Vice Chairman responsible for approving the application of exemptions and public interest decisions.
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12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes in legislation, ICO guidance, or organisational structure.

This policy should be read alongside the organisation's Data Protection Policy and Publication Scheme.