Newport Parish Council

Policy on handling Freedom of Information Requests

Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is the legal responsibility of local authorities and other public organisations. It is part of a wider group of national policies which aim to modernise government and show people how it is working on their behalf. Since January 2005 people have had a right to know what decisions are taken on their behalf, and how services are run. They can ask to see not only printed leaflets and other publications, but also any background files and other records relating to the business of the organisation, unless statutory exemptions apply.

1. Newport Parish Council has produced and publicised a Publication Scheme, which makes it clear what information can already be accessed. The Publication Scheme outlines any charges which may be made in supplying any information.

2. Any additional information which is not part of the Publication Scheme can be requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

3. A request for information must be made by letter or e-mail and should be sent to the Clerk to the Council. The request must include a contact name, an address for correspondence and state clearly what information is required.

4. Responsibility for dealing with all requests for information has been delegated to the Clerk to the Council.

5. The first step will be to identify whether the requested data is held by the council. If not, the applicant will be notified accordingly.

6. If information is held, and is not subject to any exemption, the Council will respond promptly and within the statutory 20-working-day period, subject to the provisions of the Act unless there is a fee to pay, or further clarification must be sought.

7. If the request for information is unclear, the Clerk to the Council will contact the applicant to clarify what data is being sought. If clarification of a request is needed, the 20-working day period will commence on receipt of the additional information.

8. If the information is not held by the Council, but the Council is aware of another public body which may hold the information, applicants will be advised which other public authority may hold the information, where known

9. Where information cannot be provided, a refusal notice will be issued explaining which exemption applies, and advising of any right to appeal, if applicable.

10. Where information is subject to a ‘qualified exemption’ under the FOI Act, there may be an extension to the 20-day period whilst further consideration is given to applying the public interest test, to determine whether any information should be withheld or disclosed.

11. Where any complaint is received about the processing of any request for information, this will be referred on to full Council for attention where appropriate and will be brought to the Chairs attention in the first instance.

12. Where any correspondence is received from the Information Commissioner's Office in relation to any Freedom of Information matter, this will be referred on to full Council for attention where appropriate and will be brought to the Chairs attention in the first instance.

Change Control

This Freedom of Information Procedure was reviewed and adopted with no alterations by the Newport Parish Council at its Meeting held on 14th December 2021 (minute ref 2021/12/11).
Reviewed by the Newport Parish Council 13.12.22 – No updates required Minute Ref 2022 12 09
Reviewed by the Newport Parish Council 14.11.23 – No updates required Minute Ref 2023 11 09
Reviewed by the Newport Parish Council 12.11.24 – No updates required Minute Ref 2024 11 09
Reviewed by the Newport Parish Council 11.11.25 – No updates required. Minute Ref 2025 11 08
Reviewed and approved 10th November 2026 – REF 2026_11_08. Freedom of Information and Model Publication scheme unbundled as recommended. Updated policy adopted