



# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

St Margaret's at Cliffe Parish Council

This policy sets out how the Parish Council will meet its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and related legislation.

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Date of policy	9 February 2026
Approving committee	St Margaret's at Cliffe Parish Council
Date of committee meeting	9 February 2026
Supersedes	Not applicable
Policy effective from	09 February 2026
Date for next review	April 2027

## 1. Purpose

St Margaret's Parish Council is committed to being open and transparent. The Council will make as much information available as possible, to promote greater awareness and understanding of the Council's policies, decisions, and actions.

The FOIA gives member of the public a general right of access to recorded information held by public authorities, subject to certain exemptions.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all recorded information held by the Parish Council, regardless of how it is created, stored, or communicated. This includes information held in:

- Paper files
- Electronic records
- Emails
- Photographs

This policy applies to:

- Parish Councillors
- The Parish Clerk

Requests for personal data will be handled under data protection legislation rather than the FOIA. Please refer to our Data Privacy Policy for further information.

## 3. Availability of Information

The Parish Council is committed to make information available as part of its normal activities. Wherever possible this is provided through the Parish Council Website, Social Media pages, Noticeboards and published in the Village News.

Some information may only be available to view in person at the Parish Council Office. In these circumstances an appointment to view the information can be arranged within a reasonable timescale at a mutually convenient time.

If a member of the public is unsure where information may be published any member of the Parish Council can provide details of how this information can be accessed.

## 4. Making a Freedom of Information Request

A request for information must:

- Be made in writing (including email)
- State the name of the applicant
- Provide an address for correspondence (email address is acceptable)
- Clearly describe the information requested

Requests do **not** have to mention the Freedom of Information Act explicitly.

FOI requests should be submitted to:

**The Parish Clerk**  
St Margaret's Parish Council

St Margaret's Village Hall  
Reach Road  
St Margaret's At Cliffe  
CT15 6AP  
Email: parish.clerk@stmargaretsparishcouncil.gov.uk

## 5. Charges

Most information will be provided free of charge.

However, the Parish Council may charge:

- Reasonable photocopying or printing costs
- Postage costs
- Disbursements permitted under FOIA

Any applicable charges will be communicated to the applicant in advance.

## 6. Handling Requests

The Parish Council will:

- Acknowledge requests promptly
- Respond within 20 working days of receipt
- Provide the information requested unless an exemption applies
- Advise and assist applicants where requests are unclear or too broad

Where information is already publicly available, applicants will be directed to the relevant source.

## 7. Exemptions

Some information may be exempt from disclosure under the FOIA or EIR. Common exemptions include:

- Personal data (handled under UK GDPR)
- Confidential information
- Commercially sensitive information
- Information intended for future publication
- Information where disclosure would prejudice effective conduct of public affairs

The Parish Council can turn down a FOI request if

- It would cost too much (if the cost exceeds £500.00) or take too much staff time to deal with the request
- The request is vexatious
- The request repeats a previous request from the same individual.

The Parish Council may ask for the request to be more specific for the information to be provided.

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.

Where an exemption applies:

- The Parish Council will explain which exemption is being relied upon
- Where required, a public interest test will be carried out

## **8. Refusals and Complaints**

If the Parish Council refuses a request, the applicant will be informed:

- The request has been refused
- The reason for refusal
- Any relevant exemption(s) relied upon

## **9. Information Commissioner**

### **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)**

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

[www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

## **10. Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to legislation or guidance.