

Ditchling Parish Council

Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

Adopted: September 2025

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Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act grants members of the public rights of access to all kinds of recorded information held by a wide range of public authorities. Information about the Act is available from the Commissioner's Office at www.ico.gov.uk

Publication Scheme

The Act requires every public authority to adopt and maintain a generic model publication scheme, which should be adopted and operated by all public authorities from 1 January 2009. Ditchling Parish Council adopted the generic model publication scheme and it is subsequently reviewed accordingly. It is intended to provide everyone interested in the Council with a comprehensive guide to the information that the Council will automatically or routinely publish or otherwise makes available to the public.

Freedom of Information Requests and the Publication Scheme

It is important to note that a publication scheme simply sets out the information that is routinely available. Information that is not listed in the Information Available Guide of this document can still be requested and it will be made available unless it can be legitimately withheld. This can be done by making a written request to the Parish Clerk who will reply within 20 working days after receipt of the request.

The Council's Commitment to the Act

Ditchling Parish Council is committed to openness and accountability and already makes large amounts of information available to the public, through its website, via the telephone, email, by post or by personal visits to the Parish Office where much of the information can be viewed free of charge. Occasionally it may be necessary to book an appointment.

Model publication scheme

This model Publication Scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It may be adopted without modification by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice.

This Publication Scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the authority. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

The Scheme commits an authority -

- a) To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- b) To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- c) To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- d) To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- e) To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.

- f) To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- g) To make this publication scheme available to the public.
- h) To publish any dataset held by the authority that has been requested, and any updated versions it holds, unless the authority is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so; to publish the dataset, where reasonably practicable, in an electronic form that is capable of re-use; and, if any information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and the public authority is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use under the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, if they apply, and otherwise under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act section 19. The term 'dataset' is defined in section 11(5) of the Freedom of Information Act. The term 'relevant copyright work' is defined in section 19(8) of that Act.

Classes of information

Class One – Who we are and what we do

Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts.

Class Two – What we spend and how we spend it

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit.

Class Three – What our priorities are and how we are doing

Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews.

Class Four – How we make decisions

Decision making processes and records of decisions.

Class Five – Our policies and procedures

Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities.

Class Six – Lists and Registers

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

Class Seven – The services we offer

Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses

The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available

The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this Scheme and how it can be obtained.

Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

In exceptional circumstances, some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this Scheme

Charges which may be made for information published under this scheme

The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- Photocopying,
- Postage and packaging,
- The costs directly incurred as a result of viewing or otherwise obtaining information,

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

Schedule of charges

Type of Charge	Description	Basis of Charge
Disbursement cost	Photocopying: black & white – 5p per page (A4)	Actual cost incurred by the Council
Disbursement cost	Photocopying: colour – 10p per page (A4)	Actual cost incurred by the Council
Disbursement cost	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class
Statutory Fee	An additional charge may be made if the cost to the Parish Council for retrieval and collation is unreasonable. Notice of this charge will be given in advance of providing the information with an estimate wherever possible for approval by the person making the request	Hourly rate of officer time based upon actual hours required to gather and compile information which will be recorded for scrutiny by the person making the request.

Written requests

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this Scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Contact details

Address Parish Clerk, Ditchling Parish Council, Ditchling Village Hall, 18 Lewes Road, Ditchling, BN6 8TT

Telephone 01273 844733

Email parishoffice@ditchling-pc.gov.uk

Website www.ditchling-pc.gov.uk

Complaints procedure

The Parish Council would normally expect the Parish Clerk (or other named officer) to understand what information you have asked for and be able to tell you where you can find it. If the information you receive is not what you asked for or need, you should first contact the Parish Clerk (or named officer). If the information is not available you will be told why.

If you believe that the Parish Council has not dealt with your request fairly and it cannot deal with it satisfactorily on an informal basis, you should follow our Complaints Procedure (a copy of this can be obtained by contacting the Parish Clerk or via our website).

If you have followed our Complaints Procedure and are still not happy with how we have dealt with your request, you may also contact the Information Commissioner's Office to ask them to investigate this matter further.

Address - The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Telephone - 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745

Email - casework@ico.org.uk

Website - www.ico.gov.uk

Information available from Ditchling Parish Council

Class One – Who we are and what we do

Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts.

Information to be published Current information only unless otherwise stated	How information can be obtained	
	Website	Paper Copy
Members of the Council and its Committees	✓	✓
Contact details for Council members	✗	✓
Declarations of Interests of Council members	✗	✓
Members as Representatives on Outside Bodies	✓	✓
Contact details for the Parish Clerk	✓	✓
Location and Accessibility of Parish Council Office	✓	✓
Staffing structure (name and job title)	✓	✓

Class Two – What we spend and how we spend it

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit.

Information to be published Current and previous financial year as a minimum	How information can be obtained	
	Website	Paper Copy
Financial Regulations	✓	✓
Monthly Accounts	✓	✓
Annual Accounts (current and previous year)	✓	✓
Annual Return Form and Auditor's Report	✓	✓
Finalised budget	✓	✓
Precept	✓	✓
Deposits and Investments	✓	✓
Grants/Sponsorships (given and received)	✓	✓
Insurances • Employers Liability • Fidelity Guarantee Cover • Personal Accident Cover • Property Damage Cover • Public Liability • Vehicle Insurance	x	✓
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	x	✓
Members' allowances and expenses	x	✓

Class Three – What our priorities are and how we are doing

Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews.

Information to be published Current information only unless otherwise stated	How information can be obtained	
	Website	Paper Copy
Business Plan	✓	✓
Audits, Inspections and Reviews	✓	✓

Class Four – How we make decisions

Decision making processes and records of decisions.

Information to be published Current and previous council year as a minimum	How information can be obtained	
	Website	Paper Copy
Timetable of Council, Committee Meetings	✓	✓
Agendas of Council, Committee and Sub-Committee Meetings	✓	✓
Minutes of Council, Committee and Sub-Committee Meetings (excluding information properly regarded as confidential)	✓	✓
Reports presented to council (excluding information regarded as confidential)	✓	✓

Class Five – Our policies and procedures

Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities.

Information to be published	How information can be obtained	
	Website	Paper Copy
Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business: • Standing Orders • Terms of Reference • Code of Conduct for Members	✓	✓
Policies and procedures about the employment of staff: • Health and Safety Policy • Equality and Diversity Policy • Dignity at Work Policy • Training and Development Policy • Absence from Work Policy • Employee Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures • GDPR Staff Privacy Policy	✓	✓
Policies and procedures for the provision of services: • Freedom of Information Publication Scheme • Communication Policy & Strategy • Complaints Procedure • Safeguarding Policy • Business Continuity Risk Register • Health and Safety Risk Register • Severe Weather Plan	✓	✓

Class Six – Lists and Registers

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

Information to be published Currently maintained lists and registers only	How information can be obtained	
	Website	Paper Copy
Assets Register	✗	✓
Deeds and documents relating to land ownership	✗	✓
Licenses and Agreements • Waste Disposal Agreements • CCTV Test Certificate • Electrical Test Certificate • Fire Alarm Test Certificate	✗	✓
Tender Documentation for Council owned facilities	✗	✓
Register of members' interests	✗	✓

Class Seven – The services we offer

Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses

Information to be published Current information only	How information can be obtained	
	Website	Paper Copy
Parks, Play Areas, Recreational Grounds, Commons	✓	✓
Seating and Litter Bins	✗	✓
Cemetery Services	✓	✓
Clock	✗	✓
Christmas Lighting	✗	✓
Newsletter	✓	✓
A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. administration charges)	✗	✓

Document Control

New document approved	September 2025