

LITTLETON & HARESTOCK PARISH COUNCIL (LHPC)

Freedom of Information Policy

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Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides public access to information held by public authorities. The Act aims to promote greater openness in Government, to provide increased transparency in decision making and to build public trust and confidence.

There are two ways that information will be made available:

- Through the Parish Council's **publication scheme**; available at <https://lhpc.org.uk/policy/>, and
- Through the public's **right of access**.

Publication Scheme

A publication scheme is a guide to the information that an authority makes routinely available to the public. This can be information like published reports, minutes of meetings or individual documents. Details of how each piece of information can be obtained and the cost that the Authority will charge for providing it are contained within the Scheme.

Littleton and Harestock Parish Council's Publication Scheme complies with the ICO's Model Publication Scheme and is available on request and can also be accessed via the Parish Council's Website at <https://lhpc.org.uk/policy/>.

Right of access

People who ask for information have the right to:

- Be told if that information exists; and if so,
- Be given the information unless it is exempt.

This document describes how Littleton and Harestock Parish Council (LHPC) will respond to Freedom of Information Requests.

Freedom of Information Policy

1. Making a Freedom of Information Request under the **right of access**.

Before submitting a Freedom of Information request you may find the information you need by searching our Publication Scheme.

To request information under the Freedom of Information Act, please note the following:

- All Freedom of Information requests need to be made in writing, for example, a letter or e-mail. You cannot make a request by telephone or by speaking to someone face to face.
- Please provide your name and a contact address (which can be an email address)
- Please provide a detailed description of the information you require and how you would like to receive the information.
- It is not necessary to mention the Freedom of Information Act when making a request, or to detail the reason for wanting the information however this may help the Parish Council to identify the information you require.

2. Advice and Assistance

The Parish Council has a duty to provide advice and assistance to help people receive the information they require. We will try to assist by:

- Providing details of the information already available via the Parish Council's Publication Scheme.

- Explaining the procedure the Council will follow in dealing with the request.
 - Assisting the requestor to make their request in writing.
 - Guiding the requestor to identify the information they require.
 - Supporting the requestor to identify the best means to receive the data they require.
3. Responding to a Freedom of Information Request
 - 3.1. The Parish Council will respond to Freedom of Information requests as promptly as possible, however, the act allows the authority to take up to 20 working days to respond, counting the first working day after the request has been received as the first day.
 - 3.2. Certain circumstances may allow the Parish Council extra time to respond, however, the Parish Council will inform the requestor within 20 days if this would be the case.
 4. Fees
 - 4.1. Most requests for information are free however we may charge for printing, photocopying or for postage.
 - 4.2. We will contact you to explain any charges and issue a fee notice as soon as possible. We may have to refuse to process very expensive requests, but if this is the case, we will assist you to reduce the scope of your request to a more practical level.
 5. Withholding Information
 - 5.1. The Freedom of Information Act gives the Council a number of legitimate reasons to withhold information. These mainly apply when releasing the information would not be in the Public Interest, for example, the release would prejudice an investigation, infringe someone's rights under the Data Protection Act or breach confidentiality.
 - 5.2. The Parish Council can refuse requests if their sole purpose is to hinder the continuing operation of the Council's functions; these are known as vexatious requests under the Act. Requests from the same person that are substantially similar may also be refused.
 6. Complaints
 - 6.1. Where a requestor is not satisfied with a response to a Freedom of Information Request the Parish Council will manage this as a complaint and follow the Complaint Procedure available at <https://lhpc.org.uk/policy/>.
 - 6.2. If the complaint remains unresolved, it is possible to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office on 0303 123 1113 or via email (see <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/email/>) or at the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Correspondence

7. All correspondence in relation to freedom of information requests should be addressed to the Parish Clerk.

Address: Littleton & Harestock Parish Council,
Littleton Recreation Ground,
The Hall Way,
Littleton, SO22 6QL.

Telephone number: 01962 886507

Email: clerk@lhpc.org.uk

Office hours are Monday to Friday 09:00-12:30 hrs.
Outside of office hours please use the answerphone.