

CRANFORD PARISH COUNCIL



Access to Information policy

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Introduction

This policy outlines how Cranford Parish Council complies with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000

- provides public access to information held by the council, unless the information is exempt under the Act, e.g. someone requesting their own personal information which is covered by the council's Data Protection policy¹, the information is commercially sensitive, or the council doesn't hold the information requested, or one of the other exemptions
- requires the council to adopt a publication scheme which commits the council to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities
- requires the council to respond to requests for information, normally within 20 working days

Publication scheme

The council has adopted the model publication scheme² which has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner's Office.

To complement this the council has produced a guide to information³, which provides details of the information available from the council under the model publication scheme, how it can be obtained, and any applicable charges for the information. The clerk, on behalf of the council, is responsible for reviewing and updating the council's guide to information.

How do I request information from the council?

Firstly, check the council's website, particularly the guide to information, as the information you require may be readily available. If you still can't find the information you want, submit your request in writing to

¹ <https://cranfordparishcouncil.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Data-Protection-Policy.pdf>

² <https://cranfordparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/model-publication-scheme.pdf>

³ <https://cranfordparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Guide-to-information.pdf>

the clerk⁴**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, clearly describing the information you want and in what format. Keep a copy of your request.

How will the council handle my request for information?

Normally within 20 working days the council will tell you whether it holds the information you have requested and either provide that information to you or provide an explanation as to why the information will not be provided. The clerk, on behalf of the council, is responsible for managing requests for information, using the process below

1. The clerk will check that the request is valid, i.e. in writing, includes the name and correspondence address of the person requesting the information, and a description of the information requested.
If further information is required to make the request valid or for the clerk to establish exactly what information is being requested, the clerk will, if possible, contact the requester seeking clarification, as soon as possible. The 20 working days period will not begin until the clerk has received the necessary clarification to allow them to answer the request.
2. The clerk will log each request for information (valid or not) on the council's Freedom of Information request log, with a request reference number, date request received, name and correspondence address of the requester and a description of the information requested. The clerk will then store a copy of the request in the council's document management system.
3. The clerk will determine if the request is vexatious or a repeated request, i.e. if the request is likely to cause a disproportionate or unjustifiable level of distress, disruption or irritation, or the request is identical or substantially similar to one they previously complied with from the same requester.
If it is, the clerk will send the requester a refusal notice and inform the requester of their right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.
4. If the request is not vexatious or a repeated request, the clerk will search for the requested information and establish whether there are any exemptions that need to be applied before preparing the information to be provided to the requester.
Exemptions exist to protect information that should not be disclosed, for example because disclosing it would be harmful to another person, or it would be against the public interest. If the clerk decides that an exemption prevents the requested information being provided to the requester, the clerk will send the requester a refusal notice giving reasons for the decision and explain how the exemption applies. In the refusal notice the clerk will also inform the requester of their right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.
5. If there are any applicable charges for the information to be provided to the requester, the clerk will advise the requester and await payment before sending the information to the requester.
6. Either after sending the information in the format requested or a refusal notice to the requester, the clerk will update the Freedom of Information request log with the action taken and store a copy of the response to the request in the council's document management system.
7. All Freedom of Information requests received by the council and responses will be reported to the

⁴ https://cranfordparishcouncil.gov.uk/contact_us/

council by the clerk.

The council will ensure that the clerk has sufficient knowledge of the Freedom of Information Act to be able to meet the council's duties under this Act.

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