

# RUNWELL PARISH COUNCIL

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Runwell Parish Council

ADOPTED: 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026 Minute 185-26/03



### 1. Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 came fully into force on 1 January 2005.

Under the Act, public authorities, including parish councils, have two main responsibilities:

1. To adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme (Section 19).
2. To respond to individual requests for information.

Runwell Parish Council is committed to openness, transparency and accountability and will comply fully with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

### 2. Publication Scheme

The Council has adopted the Information Commissioner's Office Model Publication Scheme for parish councils.

The scheme commits the Council to:

- Proactively publish information held by the Council which falls within the classes of information listed below.
- Publish information in accordance with the definitions and statements contained within the scheme.
- Review and update information regularly.

### 3. Access to Proactively Published Information

Wherever possible, information will be made available via the Councils website.

If information is:

- Not available electronically, or
- An individual does not wish to access it electronically,

Requests may be made to the Parish Clerk for information in an alternative format.

As the Clerk partially works from home, some information may only be available for viewing by appointment. Where necessary, arrangements will be made within a reasonable timescale at an agreed location (for example Council office in the Village Hall).

Where in-person viewing is not reasonably possible, the Council will seek alternative means of providing the information.

#### **4. Charges for Published Information**

Information published electronically will generally be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for:

- Photocopying multiple paper copies
- Postage and packaging
- Information subject to a statutory charging regime
- Viewing information at Council premises (where applicable)

Any charges will be reasonable, transparent and communicated in advance. Payment may be required before the information is released.

#### **5. Classes of Information Published**

The Council publishes information under the following classes:

##### **Who We Are and What We Do**

- Organisational information
- Contact details
- Councillor information
- Constitutional and governance documents

##### **What We Spend and How We Spend It**

- Annual accounts
- Budgets and financial statements
- Expenditure records
- Procurement and contracts

##### **What Our Priorities Are and How We Are Performing**

- Strategic plans
- Policies and reports
- Performance reviews

##### **How We Make Decisions**

- Agendas
- Minutes
- Reports
- Decision-making processes

## **Our Policies and Procedures**

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Codes of Conduct
- Complaints Procedures
- Data Protection and other governance policies

## **Lists and Registers**

- Asset Register
- Register of Interests
- Other statutory registers

## **Services We Offer**

- Information on facilities and community services
- Booking arrangements
- Newsletters and media releases

## **6. Information Not Generally Published**

The following types of information will not normally be published:

- Information prevented from disclosure by law
- Personal data protected under data protection legislation
- Commercially sensitive information
- Information in draft form
- Archived information not readily accessible

Exemptions will be applied in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## **7. Making a Freedom of Information Request**

Anyone may request recorded information held by Runwell Parish Council.

Requests must:

- Be made in writing (email or letter)
- Include the requester's name
- Provide a contact address (postal or email)
- Clearly describe the information requested

Requests should be sent to:

**The Parish Clerk**

Runwell Parish Council

Email: [clerk@runwellparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@runwellparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Website: [www.runwellparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.runwellparishcouncil.gov.uk)

**8. Response Times**

The Council will respond within 30 working days of receiving a valid request.

If additional time is required (for example, to consider public interest tests), the requester will be informed.

**9. Fees and Cost Limits**

Most requests are free.

However, the Council may refuse a request if the cost of compliance exceeds £450 (the statutory limit for local authorities). This equates to 18 hours of staff time.

Where possible, the Council may assist the requester in refining the request to bring it within the cost limit.

Reasonable fees may be charged for:

- Photocopying
- Printing
- Postage

**10. Format of Information**

Information may be provided in:

- Electronic format
- Paper copies
- Large print (on request, where reasonable)

If the requested format is not reasonably practicable, the Council will provide the information in the closest available format.

**11. Refusal of Requests**

Some information may be withheld where exemptions apply under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

If a request is refused, the Council will:

- Provide the reason for refusal
- Cite the relevant exemption
- Explain the right to request an internal review

## **12. Promotion of Access**

Runwell Parish Council will:

- Promote awareness of the Publication Scheme
- Encourage residents to engage with Council business
- Ensure transparency in decision-making

The Council is committed to providing information in an accessible and open manner wherever legally permissible.