



HAWTHORN PARISH COUNCIL



Freedom of Information Protocol & Information

1. Introduction

Everyone has a right to know what Hawthorn Parish Council is doing, how we are doing it and how to take part.

This includes the right to attend most of our meetings, with access to most of the agendas, reports, minutes and background papers of these meetings, our financial information including budgets and estimates and our Action and Business Plans. You also have rights under the General Data Protection Regulations to access personal data about yourself, which is being held by the Council.

2. Background

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 extends people's rights and requires the Council to produce a Publication Scheme detailing the information that we publish regularly.

3. Hawthorn Parish Council's Publication Scheme

Hawthorn Parish Council adopted their Publication Scheme in January 2015. This shows what the Council does and how to obtain information. It is available on the Council's website [here](#).

4. Duties : Freedom Of Information Act 2000

- a. To adopt a publication scheme
- b. To confirm or deny they have the information being sought
- c. To supply the information requested within twenty working days, unless it is subject to one of various exemptions
- d. To supply the information in the format requested
- e. To provide advice and assistance to the person requesting information
- f. To give formal notice to the person requesting information where the Council refuses to provide the information requested

5. Making a Request

If you want to make a request for some information under the Freedom of Information Act, then your request:

- Should be in writing
- Should contain your name and address
- Should contain sufficient information to allow us to locate the information that you want
- Should be legible.

Once we have received a request, the Council has 20 working days to:

- Confirm whether we hold the information requested
- Advise whether you need to pay a fee for the information

- Advise who holds the information if we do not have it (If the information that you request is held by another public authority, then your request may be transferred to the correct body with your agreement).

6. Fees

People making a request **may have to pay a fee** for the information but will not be charged for the vast majority of requests, with only those that are very time consuming attracting a charge. You will be advised if there is a charge before any work is carried out and you will be offered guidance and advice on how to frame your request more specifically so that it does not attract a fee.

7. Exemptions

There are a number of exemptions to the Freedom of Information Act in law. Sometimes, the Council may need to consider whether the information requested should be released or whether it is exempt. If the information requested is exempt then the Council has the right to refuse the request.

8. How to make a request : Process

- a. To make a request either send a letter to the Council (address as above) or email to [Hawthorn Parish Council](#).
- b. A request must be submitted in writing by post or email stating your name, correspondence address and the information sought.
- c. On receipt of a request for information, the Clerk will acknowledge the request and confirm or deny that the Council has the information sought.
- d. You may decide the format of the information required: hard copy or electronic file.
- e. The Clerk will respond within 20 working days.
- f. There is no need to refer your request to the Council.
- g. If the request is refused, a refusal notice will be issued giving full details of the grounds for refusal.
- h. The decision can be challenged through the complaints procedure and if still dissatisfied the requestor can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.
- i. If information is available elsewhere –Community Centre, DCC etc – the request can be refused and you will be advised where the information may be sought.
- j. Fees will be charged for photocopying and postage and you will be informed in advance that a fee is payable.
- k. The Council may not charge for the time taken to research and respond to the request.
- l. If it will take more than 18 hours the Council can refuse a request for further work. Details of charges are shown in the Council's Publication Scheme.
- m. Requests are not limited to residents of the parish.

Please be as specific as possible when telling us what information you require. This will help us to find it. If it is not clear what information you are seeking, we may need to get in touch with you.