



## Preesall Town Council Freedom of Information Policy

Preesall Town Council has a commitment to openness and transparency and has always been concerned to make relevant information available wherever possible to individuals who may request it, subject to safeguarding the privacy of individuals and to legitimate considerations of national security, law enforcement and commercial interests where relevant.

The Freedom of Information Act, which came into force on 1 January 2005, gives everyone right of access to information held by bodies such as the Town Council. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is responsible for enforcing the operation of the Act with guidance to be found on its website at <https://ico.org.uk> or by writing to: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

### **Model publication scheme**

From 13 August 2012 the Town Council adopted the revised model publication scheme issued by the Information Commissioner's office. This was updated and re-adopted by the council in August 2020; a copy is available on the website at [www.preesalltowncouncil.org](http://www.preesalltowncouncil.org). Look for 'Freedom of Information Model Publication Scheme'.

The purpose of the publication scheme is to make publicly available as much information as possible without the need for a specific request to be made.

### **Making a request for information**

Individuals or organisations may make a written request for other information they believe the Town Council holds. To request information under the provisions of the Act and to help us to help you in identifying the precise information you require, contact the clerk:

- by email [clerk@preesalltowncouncil.org](mailto:clerk@preesalltowncouncil.org)
- by post: The Clerk, c/o 98 Pilling lane, Preesall, Poulton le Fylde, Lancashire FY6 0HG

### **What to provide when making a request**

To help us effectively respond to your request, please provide the following:

- your preferred correspondence details, either an email address or a valid postal address
- a detailed description of the information you are seeking. The more accurately you describe the information you need, the more effectively we can respond to your request
- we would also be grateful if you could provide us with a contact telephone number, but this is optional

When making a request you can state a preference of how you want the information communicated to you. This could be by providing a hard copy or an electronic copy of the information or providing you with the opportunity to inspect records in person. We will try to meet your preference as far as is reasonably practicable or notify you if we cannot do so.

### **Responding to your request**

We will inform you in writing whether we hold the information you have requested and if so, provide it to you not later than 20 working days after we receive the request.

The Freedom of Information Act does identify a number of categories of information the Town Council is not required to disclose under the Act. In this case, we will write to you stating the exemption that provides the basis for refusal within the Act and why it applies to the information you requested. We will communicate this to you within the 20-working daytime period.

### **Charges for providing information under the Freedom of Information Act**

There is no 'standard' fee to receive information and in many cases we will provide the information to you free of charge. Further details are contained within our adopted model publication scheme - see above. However, you should note that if the information is not readily available in the form in which you are seeking it, the Town Council may charge a fee based on the costs associated with providing the information, for example photocopying and postage (known as 'disbursements').

You should also note that the Freedom of Information Act does permit the Town Council to refuse your request if we estimate that it will cost us more than the appropriate cost limit (currently £450) to fulfil your request.

If you need to pay a fee for disbursements or because the costs exceed the appropriate limit, we will write to you advising you of the fee required within 20 working days of the receipt of your request. This is known as a 'fees notice'. When you are issued the fees notice, the 20-working day limit for responding stops and will start again only when we receive payment. If we do not receive the fee from you within three months we are no longer obliged to comply with the request.

### **Complaints**

If you are unhappy with the way in which the Town Council has handled your request, please contact the Clerk at the above address. You may also raise issues with the ICO at any time.

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<b>Document title</b> Community Engagement Strategy			
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