TATWORTH AND FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Freedom of Information Policy

Adopted on 5th November 2026
Minute No 205/26

1. Introduction

Tatworth and Forton Parish Council ("the Council") is committed to openness and transparency and will make information available in accordance with the **Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)**, the **Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR)**, and relevant data protection legislation.

The Council has adopted the Information Commissioner's Office model Publication Scheme and routinely publishes information through its website and other appropriate means.

The Publication Scheme is available on the Council's website and printed copies may be provided on request.

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2. Access to Information

2.1 Information Available via the Council Website

The Council's website:

www.tatworthandfortonparishcouncil.org.uk

contains information routinely published by the Council, including:

- Agendas and minutes of Council meetings
- Policies and procedures
- Financial information
- Annual reports and governance documents
- Council contacts and other publicly available information

2.2 Information Held by the Council

Information not available through the website may be requested by contacting the Parish Clerk.

Requests may be submitted by:

- Email
- Letter
- Any other written form of communication

2.3 Making a Request

To assist the Council in locating the information requested, applicants should provide:

- Their name;
- Contact details for correspondence; and
- A clear description of the information requested.

The Council will provide reasonable assistance to any person who may have difficulty making a written request.

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3. The Council's Response

The Council will respond promptly and, in any event, within **20 working days** of receiving a valid request.

The response will:

- Confirm whether the information is held;
- Inform the applicant whether any fee is payable;
- Provide the requested information where disclosure is required; or
- Explain why information is being withheld, including details of any exemption or exception relied upon.

Where a request relates to environmental information, it will be handled in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

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4. Exemptions and Exceptions

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 contain a number of exemptions and exceptions that may permit or require the Council to withhold information.

Examples include:

- Personal information where disclosure would breach the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) or the Data Protection Act 2018;
- Information provided in confidence;
- Commercially sensitive information; and
- Information where disclosure would otherwise be contrary to the public interest.

Each request will be considered on its own merits and applicants will be informed of the reasons for any refusal.

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5. Charges

The Council aims to provide information free of charge wherever possible.

However, the Council may charge:

- The actual cost of printing, photocopying and postage; and
- Any fees permitted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and associated regulations.

Where the estimated cost of locating, retrieving and extracting information exceeds the appropriate limit prescribed by legislation, the Council may:

- Refuse the request;
- Comply with the request and charge any fee permitted by law; or
- Provide the information free of charge at its discretion.

Where a fee is payable:

- A fee notice will be issued to the applicant;
- The request will be placed on hold until payment is received; and
- Any overpayment will be refunded.

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6. Internal Review Procedure

Anyone dissatisfied with the Council's handling of a request may ask for an internal review.

Requests for an internal review should be submitted in writing to the Parish Clerk within **40 working days** of the Council's response.

The review will normally be completed within **20 working days**, although complex cases may take longer.

The internal review will be conducted by a person not involved in the original decision wherever practicable.

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7. Further Assistance

Anyone requiring assistance in making a request for information should contact the Parish Clerk.

Further guidance is available from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Website: **www.ico.org.uk**

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8. Complaints

If, following an internal review, an applicant remains dissatisfied with the Council's response, they may complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.

The ICO can investigate complaints concerning the handling of requests for information and compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

This version reflects current FOI, EIR, Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR requirements and is suitable for formal council adoption.