



Woodstock Town Council

Freedom of Information Policy

1. Introduction

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), Woodstock Town Council (the Council) has a duty to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme. This Scheme describes:

- The classes of information the Council publishes
- How and where such information is published (e.g., website, paper copy)
- Whether a charge is made for the information

The purpose of the Publication Scheme is to inform the public about the information routinely available without the need to make a specific request. Other information can be requested individually under the FOIA and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). If you require information not listed in the Scheme or have suggestions for improvement, please contact the Town Clerk.

Contact Details:

Town Hall, Market Place, Woodstock, OX20 1SL

Email: clerk@woodstock-tc.gov.uk

Tel: 01993 811216

2. Obtaining Information

Most information listed in the Publication Scheme is free and downloadable from the Council's website: <https://woodstock-tc.gov.uk/> Information only available in paper format is indicated in the Scheme and can be viewed by appointment with the Clerk or requested as a copy.

The Council publishes information under the following broad classes:

2.1 Council Practice and Procedures

- Town Council Meetings
 - Agendas & approved minutes: Notice boards, website, or by request
 - Public and press are invited to attend all meetings
- Standing Orders & Policies: Website and by appointment
- Code of Conduct & Register of Interests: Website or by appointment
- Declarations of Acceptance of Office: By appointment

2.2. Financial Information

- Annual Precept Figure: District Council leaflet
- Budgets, Expenditure, and Payments: Available at Town Hall by appointment
- Annual Accounts & Audit Information: By appointment
- Financial Regulations & Risk Assessments: Website and Town Hall by appointment

2.3. Planning and Development

- Summary of Planning Applications: Agendas and notice boards
- Individual Applications and Responses: Town Hall by appointment and WODC website
- Local Plan (Adopted & Draft): Town Hall by appointment and WODC website

2.4. Health & Safety

- Health & Safety Policy: Website
- Playground Inspection Records: Available by appointment

2.5. Employment

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- Staff Terms & Conditions / Job Descriptions: By appointment

2.6. Electoral and Boundary Review Information

- Previous Review Documentation: Town Hall by appointment

2.7. Archive Materials

- Minute Books, Burial Registers, Historic Maps, Photographs: By appointment

3. Information Not Contained in the Publication Scheme and Exemptions

While FOIA grants a general right to access information, some information is exempt from disclosure, including but not limited to:

- Information that could harm the Council's security, staff, systems, or property
- Information that would breach individual data protection rights

If a request relates to exempt information, the Clerk will notify the requester in writing, explaining the refusal and citing the relevant exemptions.

4. Data Protection

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, individuals have the right to access personal data held about them. These requests are known as Subject Access Requests and are separate from FOI requests. For personal data requests, please contact the Town Clerk.

5. Charges

Type of Access

Inspecting documents (by appointment)

Photocopies (A4, b/w)

Detailed searches (e.g., burial register, other documents)

Postage

Requests exceeding £450.00 in cost

Fee

Free

10p per sheet

£10 per search

At cost (Royal Mail rates)

May be refused or charged under FOIA

6. Management of the Publication Scheme

The Council is responsible for adopting and maintaining this policy and the Publication Scheme.

7. Review of the Policy and Publication Scheme

This Freedom of Information Policy and the Publication Scheme were approved on 14.03.2017 and will be reviewed at least annually to ensure compliance and relevance.

8. Requesting Information

Anyone worldwide, including individuals and organisations, can request information, recorded either before or after the Act came into force. Requests must be:

- In writing (email acceptable)
- Legible and capable of being used for reference
- Requests do not have to mention FOIA or DPA.
- Requests that exceed the cost limit of £450 or are vexatious may be refused.

9. Providing Information / Responding to Requests

The Council aims to respond promptly and within 20 working days of receipt. Information will be provided in the requested format where possible.

If a fee is charged, the applicant must pay. Failure to pay means the Council is not obliged to respond.

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10. Exemptions

There are 23 exemptions under FOIA where access may be restricted or refused. Details are available in the ICO's Freedom of Information Legal Topic Note.

Certain categories of information are exempt under FOIA or the Data Protection Act 2018, including:

- Personal data (e.g., staff, personal information relating to councillors {other than required to be declared in Register of Interest} or private individuals)
- Confidential legal or commercial information (e.g., tenders and bids from contractors and suppliers)
- Information that could harm the Council's operations or security

11. Freedom of Information and Data Protection

FOIA complements the Data Protection Act. Personal information about an individual is handled under the DPA as a subject access request. Requests involving third-party personal data are carefully considered to avoid breaching data protection principles. Under the Data Protection Act 2018, individuals have the right to access personal data held about them. These requests are known as Subject Access Requests and are separate from FOI requests. For personal data requests, please contact the Town Clerk.

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