

# **Policy statement on Access to information**

## **1. Introduction**

Cold Ash Parish Council supports the statutory framework for responding to requests for information under access to information legislation including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, and the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A. Under this legislation there is a requirement to ensure that a level of openness is maintained and enhanced to promote transparent, open and accountable Local Government.

## **2. Aims**

The aims of the policy are to assist the Clerk and Councillors to meet the presumption in favour of disclosure of information required by the legislation, and thereby to promote greater openness, provide increased transparency of decision making and to build public trust and confidence.

These aims will be balanced against the need to ensure the confidentiality of some information relating to such areas as personal privacy, commercial sensitivity, security issues, and where disclosure would not be in the public interest.

## **3. Scope**

This policy applies to all requests for information made to Cold Ash Parish Council whether written or verbal. It aims to ensure that requests are managed in accordance with professional principles, and within the timescales required by specified legislation.

## **4. Policy Statement**

Cold Ash Parish Council is committed to a framework for access to information which ensures that:

4.1 All requests for information shall be dealt with promptly, and within the statutory timescales.

4.2 Requests will be assessed to ensure that: the confidentiality of personal or commercially sensitive data is not breached; disclosure is in the public interest and provision of the information would not be prejudicial to the Parish Council or its partners.

4.3 Information shall only be withheld if a legitimate exemption applies and that in such a case the application of the exemption will be explained to the enquirer

4.4 Any enquirer shall be kept informed of the progress of their request and of any delays to which it may be subject

4.5 All enquirers shall be advised of their right to take any complaint to the Information Commissioner, if they are dissatisfied with the service received or the information provided

4.6 The majority of information which can be made publicly available shall be published to the Parish Council website

4.7 All requests shall be monitored to demonstrate compliance with the legislation.

## **5. Monitor and Review**

This policy shall be the responsibility of the Chair of the Parish Council

and shall be reviewed regularly. In particular this will confirm that:

5.1 The scope and content of the policy is still appropriate in the light of legal requirements and the Parish Council's practical experience

5.2 The Clerk and Councillors are aware of their responsibilities, and requests for information are being answered within the statutory timescales applicable under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

This Policy was AGREED by the Cold Ash Parish Council on ...8th Nov 2022

And will be reviewed by the Cold Ash Parish Council in ...Nov 2024.....

Signed:.....M Fenner.....

Chair of Cold Ash Parish Council

#### Contact details

If you require a paper version of any information, or want to ask whether information is available please contact the council by telephone, email, fax or letter. Contact details are set out below, or you can visit our website at: [www.coldash.org.uk](http://www.coldash.org.uk)

Email: [coldash.pc@btinternet.com](mailto:coldash.pc@btinternet.com)

Tel: 01635 860004 during published office hours

Fax: 01635 860004

Contact

Address: Cold Ash Parish Council, The Parish Office, Hermitage Road,  
Cold Ash, Thatcham RG18 9JH

To help us process your request quickly, please clearly mark any correspondence "PUBLICATION SCHEME REQUEST" (in CAPITALS please)  
If the information you are looking for is not available via the scheme and isn't on our website, you can still contact the Parish Council to ask if we have it.

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