



## **Thurlaston Parish Council**

# **Freedom of Information Policy**

Adopted January 2022

<b>Version</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Review date</b>
v1	Keith Boardman	Sep 2019	Sep 2021
V2	Keith Boardman	Jan 2022	Jan 2025

## 1. Freedom of Information Principles

Thurlaston Parish Council (TPC) recognises its responsibility to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This document does not attempt to cover all aspects of the Act<sup>1</sup>; it does however ensure the basic requirements of the Act as related to TPC are appropriately addressed and adopted by TPC.

TPC is committed to being open and transparent about the work that it does and services that it provides for the local community. The Parish Council will make as much information available as possible, to promote a greater awareness and understanding of the Council's policies, decisions and actions.

Under the FOI the Parish Council has two main responsibilities:

- Make available a Publication Scheme which describes information that is made available to the public as part of its normal business activities;
- Provide a service to respond to individual requests for information.

General requests for information will be considered as part of TPC's normal day to day business. However, there are also statutory information access regimes that can be used to access specific information. This Policy concerns itself with that information which can be accessed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## 2. The Publication Scheme

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, TPC has produced a Publication Scheme. The Publication Scheme commits TPC to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. A copy of this document is available within the *Your Council* area of the Thurlaston Parish Council website at <http://www.thurlaston-pc.gov.uk> .

Wherever possible TPC will provide information through its website. Where information is available in a non-electronic form or when an individual does not wish to access information electronically, an individual can contact the Parish Clerk and ask for the information to be made available to them. All documents published on the TPC website are available for download free of charge.

Requests for information in paper form may be arranged by contacting the Parish Clerk using email ([parish.clerk@thurlaston-pc.gov.uk](mailto:parish.clerk@thurlaston-pc.gov.uk)) or telephone 07785 936740. The Parish Council reserves the right to make a charge to cover overheads such as printing, packing and postage<sup>2</sup> .

Occasionally certain information may only be available to view in person with a representative of TPC. In these circumstances an appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale. In the first instance such requests should be made in the normal way to the Parish Clerk.

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<sup>1</sup> Freedom of Information Act 2000 is available at <https://ico.org.uk>

<sup>2</sup> The 2019 charges were set at 10p per b/w A4 sheet, and £1 per colour A4 sheet, with a minimum charge of £2.

### 3. Making a Freedom of Information Request

The section relates to access to information which is not available or identified within the TPC Publication Scheme.

Anyone can make a request for information; there are no restrictions on age, nationality or place of residence (they do not necessarily need to be a Thurlaston resident).

Freedom of Information Requests need to be made in writing to the Parish Clerk who is responsible for responding to requests, usually by letter or e-mail.

When making a Freedom of Information request, the following information must be included:

- Name
- Contact details
- A detailed description of the recorded information required

TPC may ask for the request to be more specific in order for the information to be properly identified and provided.

When requesting information, the enquirer does not have to mention the Freedom of Information Act, nor the reasons why the information is sought.

Recorded information may include printed documents, computer files, letters, emails, photographs, and sound or video recordings.

You can ask for information in a particular format, such as:

- paper or electronic copies of information
- audio format
- large print

The Act does not give people access to individuals' own personal data (that is information about themselves) such as their health records or credit reference data. If a member of the public wants to see information that a public authority holds about them, they should make a Data Protection Act Subject Access Request.

Most Freedom of Information requests will be free of charge. However charges may be levied as described in section 2 of this document.

TPC will use best endeavours to respond to all Freedom of Information Requests within 20 working days. TPC will advise a requester when to expect the information if more time is required.

### 4. Exemptions

Anyone making a request to a public authority for information must be informed whether the public authority holds that information and supplied with it. However certain information items do not have to be revealed, such as personal information or commercially sensitive data. A full list of these exemptions are available on the Information Commissioner's website – [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

In some cases, there may be a good reason why certain information should not be made public such as under the following circumstances:

- It would cost too much or take too much staff time to deal with the request.
- The request is vexatious.
- The request repeats a previous request from the same person.

If TPC refuses to provide the information requested, the enquirer can ask them to review their decision. If the enquirer is still not satisfied with the response received, TPC are advised to contact the Information Commissioner's Office.