**Bishop’s Waltham Parish Council**

**Parish Council Office**

**The Jubilee Hall, Little Shore Lane**

**Bishop’s Waltham**

**Hampshire, SO32 1ED**

**01489 892323**

**Freedom of Information Policy**

Bishop’s Waltham Parish Council has a commitment to openness and transparency. The Council has always been prepared to make relevant information available, where possible, to individuals who may request it. This is subject to the safeguarding of 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 1st January 2005, (updated March 2022) gives everyone a statutory right of access to information held by public bodies such as the Parish Council.

**Model Publication Scheme**

In April 2015, the Parish Council adopted the revised model publication scheme issued by the Information Commissioner’s office. A copy of the scheme is available on the Council’s website or from the Council office.

**Information about the Parish Council**

A significant amount of information about the Parish Council is available from the Council’s website. If information is required in an alternative format please contact the Executive Officer.

**Making a request for information**

Individuals or organisations may make a written request for other information which they believe the Parish Council holds. To request information under the provisions of the Act, and to help the Council identify the precise information required, email the Executive Officer.

parishclerk@bishopswaltham-pc.gov.uk or write to

Mrs Emma McKenzie

Executive Officer

Parish Council Office

The Jubilee Hall

Little Shore Lane

Bishop’s Waltham

Hampshire

SO32 1ED

The request should include name and full postal address, as required under the Act, and a clear description of the information required. When making a request a preference can be stated of how the information is provided i.e. hard copy, electronic copy, an opportunity to inspect a record or providing a summary of the information.

The Council will endeavour to meet any preference as far as it is reasonably practical or will notify the correspondent if it cannot do so.

**Responding to a request**

The Executive Officer, or other officer, will inform in writing whether or not the Council holds the information requested. If the Council holds the information it will be provided not later than 20 working days following the request.

The Freedom of Information Act identifies a number of categories of information which the Parish Council is not required to disclose under the Act. If this is the case, the Executive Officer,

(or other officer) will write to the correspondent stating the exemption which provides the basis for refusal within the Act and why it applies to the information requested. This will be communicated within the 20 working daytime period.

Any refusal of information under the Act will be reported to the Council.

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

There is no ‘flat rate fee’ for the receipt of information and in many cases the information can be provided free of charge. If the information is not readily available in the form requested the Council may charge a fee based on the costs associated with providing the information i.e. officer time spent locating or compiling the information, printing, photocopying or postage.

The Freedom of Information Act permits the Council to refuse a request if it is estimated that the cost to the Council would be in excess of the appropriate cost limit (currently £450).

**Freedom of Information Fees Notice**

If a fee is required or if the costs are estimated to exceed the appropriate limit the Executive Officer (or other officer) will write to the requestor to advise of the fee required within 20 working day of receipt of the request. This is known as the ‘Fees Notice’. When a Fees Notice has been issued the 20 working day time limit for responding stops and will start again once payment has been received. If the fee is not received within 3 months the Council is not obliged to comply with the request.

**Complaints**

If an individual is dissatisfied with the way the Parish Council has responded to a request for information they should write to: The Executive Officer, Bishop’s Waltham Parish Council, Parish Council Office, The Jubilee Hall, Little Shore Lane, Bishop’s Waltham, Hampshire, SO32 1ED.

If the individual is still dissatisfied they can contact the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner’s Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire SK9 5AF

Tel No: 0303 123 1113

<https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

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