

## Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides public access to information held by public authorities. It does this in two ways:

- public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities; and
- members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities.

The Act covers any recorded information that is held by a public authority in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and by UK-wide public authorities based in Scotland. Information held by Scottish public authorities is covered by Scotland's own Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Public authorities include government departments, local authorities, the NHS, state schools and police forces. However, the Act does not necessarily cover every organisation that receives public money. For example, it does not cover some charities that receive grants and certain private sector organisations that perform public functions. Recorded information includes printed documents, computer files, letters, emails, photographs, and sound or video recordings.

The Act does not give people access to their own personal data (information about themselves) such as their health records or credit reference file. If a member of the public wants to see information that a public authority holds about them, they should make a data protection subject access request. Shaldon Parish Council takes its responsibility under the act very seriously, and in order to provide the best access to its information, we publish all meeting minutes, agendas, documentation, terms of reference and policies we produce on this website.

### Who can make a freedom of information request?

Anyone can make a freedom of information request – they do not have to be UK citizens, or resident in the UK. Freedom of information requests can also be made by organisations, for example a newspaper, a campaign group, or a company. Employees of a public authority can make requests to their own employer, although good internal communications and staff relations will normally avoid the need for this.

Requesters should direct their requests for information to the public authority they think will hold the information. The public authority that receives the request is responsible for responding. Requests should not be sent to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), except where the requester wants information the ICO holds.

## How to make an FOI request

You might not need to make a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to get the information you need. Our website may already hold the information you require, or we

may be able to give you the information straight away, including over the phone. When making contact you should give your name and contact address. A detailed description of the information you want - for example, you might want all information held on a subject, or just a summary; and confirm the format you would like the response in.

You should get the information within 20 working days. We will let you know if it will take more time or if there is a cost implication with your request. Most requests are free but you might be asked to pay a small amount for photocopies or postage.