

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

Under this Act, all Parish Councils are required to make a significant amount of information available routinely, without waiting for someone to specifically request it. It is intended that this will develop a greater culture of openness and transparency.

In 2008 the Information Commissioner's Office changed the emphasis in the approval and operation of publication schemes to a model which was adopted by the Parish Council in December 2008. The new model commits the Parish Council to produce and publish the method by which the specific information will be available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.

To comply with the new publication scheme, see the separate document 'Information available under the model publication scheme' which should be read along with the Model Publication scheme document.

The Core Classes of information contained in the original publication scheme (2002) are as follows –

### Core Classes of information

1. Minutes of the Council – on web site or available from the Parish Office or Post Office
2. Standing Orders – on web site or available from the Parish Office
3. Code of Conduct – on web site or available from the Parish Office  
(Members' Register of Interests; Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Members Interests Book are available to view in the Parish Office)
4. Periodic Electoral Review – information relating to the last Review is available from the Parish Office
5. Terms and conditions of employment and job descriptions (personal records are excluded) – available from the Parish Office
6. Responses to planning applications – on web site (contained in the minutes) or available from the Parish Office
7. Audit and accounts – Annual return form for last financial year; annual statutory report by auditor (internal and external) – for the last financial year; receipts and payments books; bank statements; VAT records, assets register; risk assessments

### Additional options

8. Byelaws – for the recreation grounds. Available from the Parish Office.
9. Newsletters – available on the web site or from the Parish Office.
10. Agendas and non-confidential supporting papers for the council – available on the web site or from the Parish Office
11. Responses made by the Council to consultation papers on development – available from the Parish Office and on the web site (in the minutes)

## **Swallowfield Parish Council Model Publication Scheme**

This model publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It may be adopted without modification by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice.

This publication scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the authority. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

The scheme commits an authority:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.

## **Classes of Information**

### **Who we are and what we do.**

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

### **What we spend and how we spend it.**

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

### **What our priorities are and how we are doing.**

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

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### **How we make decisions.**

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

### **Our policies and procedures.**

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

### **Lists and Registers.**

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

### **The Services we Offer.**

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

### **The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available**

The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.

Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

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### **Charges which may be made for information published under this scheme**

The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- photocopying
  
- postage and packaging
  
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

### **Written Requests**

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

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## Information available from Swallowfield Parish Council under the model publication scheme

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
<p><b>Class1 - Who we are and what we do</b> (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts)</p> <p>This will be current information only</p> <p>N.B. Councils should already be publishing as much information as possible about how they can be contacted.</p>	(hard copy and/or website)	
Who's who on the Council and its Committees	Through the Clerk or on the website	Nil**
Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address (if used))	Ditto	Nil*
Location of main Council office and accessibility details	Ditto	Nil*
Staffing structure	Through the Clerk	Nil*
<p><b>Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it</b> (Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit)</p> <p>Current and previous financial year as a minimum</p>	(hard copy and/or website)  Through the Clerk, RFO or on website	Nil*
Annual return form and report by auditor	Through the Clerk or RFO	Nil*
Finalised budget	The Clerk or RFO	Nil*
Precept	The Clerk or RFO	Nil*
Borrowing Approval letter	N/A	

Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	The Clerk	Nil*
Grants given and received	The Clerk or RFO	Nil*
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	The Clerk or RFO	Nil*
Members' allowances and expenses	The Clerk or RFO	Nil*
<b>Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing</b> (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)	(hard copy or website)	
Parish Plan (current and previous year as a minimum)	The Clerk and website	Nil*
Annual Report to Parish or Community Meeting (current and previous year as a minimum)	The Clerk and website	Nil*
Quality status	The Clerk	Nil*
Local charters drawn up in accordance with DCLG guidelines	N/A	
<b>Class 4 – How we make decisions</b> (Decision making processes and records of decisions)	(hard copy or website)	
Current and previous council year as a minimum		
Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee/sub-committee meetings and parish meetings)	The Clerk, website and noticeboards	Nil*
Agendas of meetings (as above)	As above	Nil*
Minutes of meetings (as above) – nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	As above	Nil*
Reports presented to council meetings - nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	As above	Nil*
Responses to consultation papers	As above	Nil*
Responses to planning applications	As above	Nil*
Bye-laws	The Clerk	Nil*

<p><b>Class 5 – Our policies and procedures</b>  (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)</p> <p>Current information only</p>	(hard copy or website)	
<p>Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business:</p> <p>Procedural standing orders  Committee and sub-committee terms of reference  Delegated authority in respect of officers  Code of Conduct  Policy statements</p>	<p>The Clerk and website  The Clerk  The Clerk  The Clerk  The Clerk</p>	Nil*
<p>Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff:</p> <p>Internal policies relating to the delivery of services  Equality and diversity policy  Health and safety policy  Recruitment policies (including current vacancies)  Policies and procedures for handling requests for information  Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)</p>	<p>The Clerk  The Clerk  The Clerk  The Clerk  The Clerk  The Clerk</p>	Nil*
<p>Information security policy</p>	<p>The Clerk</p>	
<p>Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)</p>	<p>The Clerk</p>	
<p>Data protection policies</p>	<p>The Clerk</p>	
<p>Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)</p>	<p>The Clerk</p>	
<p><b>Class 6 – Lists and Registers</b></p> <p>Currently maintained lists and registers only</p>	<p>(hard copy or website; some information may only be available by</p>	Nil*

	inspection)	
Any publicly available register or list (if any are held this should be publicised; in most circumstances existing access provisions will suffice)	The Clerk	
Assets Register	The Clerk or RFO	
Disclosure log (indicating the information that has been provided in response to requests; recommended as good practice, but may not be held by parish councils)	The Clerk	
Register of members' interests	The Clerk	
Register of gifts and hospitality	The Clerk	
<b>Class 7 – The services we offer</b> (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses)  Current information only	(hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection)	
Allotments	N/A	
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	N/A	
Community centres and village halls	The Clerk or website	Nil*
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	As above	
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	As above	
Bus shelters	N/A	
Markets	N/A	
Public conveniences	N/A	
Agency agreements	N/A	
A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)	The Clerk or RFO	
<b>Additional Information</b> <i>Items not included above</i>		
Parish Council Newsletter	The Clerk or website	Nil*

\*In providing information the first 10 minutes is free but further work is charged at £40 per hour (agreed 8 Sept 09)

**Contact details:**

**The Clerk (Mrs. C. Adams)  
Parish Office  
Swallowfield Street  
Swallowfield  
Berks RG7 1QX**