

WETHERAL PARISH COUNCIL

1.Freedom of information policy and the model publication scheme

Wetheral Parish Council has a commitment to openness and transparency and has always been conscious of making relevant information available wherever possible to individuals who request it, subject to safeguarding the privacy of individuals and to legitimate considerations of national security, law enforcement and commercial interests where relevant.

2.The Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act, which came into force on 1 January 2005, gives everyone a statutory right of access to information held by bodies such as Parish Councils

3.The Revised Model Publication Scheme

Wetheral Parish Council adopted the revised model publication scheme issued by the Information Commissioners Office.

4.Website

A significant amount of the information for Wetheral Parish Council including financial payments can be accessed on the website

– www.wetheralparishcouncil.org.uk

5.Requesting Information

Individuals or organisations may make a written request for information which they believe Wetheral Parish Council holds. To request information under the provisions of the Act, and to help Wetheral Parish Council in identifying the precise information you require please email clerk@wetheralparishcouncil.org.uk or write to the Parish Clerk at Wetheral Parish Council, Wetheral Village Community Hall, Wetheral, Carlisle, CA4 8HE

As required by the Act, the following will need to be included with the request:

- Name of person requesting the information
- Postal Address or email of the person requesting the information
- A clear description of the information being requested
- A preference of how the information is to be communicated e.g. hard copy, electronic or the opportunity to inspect a record containing the information.
Wetheral Parish Council will try to provide the information in the preferred media as far as is reasonably practical, or will notify the person requesting the information if Wetheral Parish Council cannot do so.

6.Responding to Requests

Wetheral Parish Council will inform the person requesting the information in writing if Wetheral Parish Council hold the information requested and if so, will provide the information no later than 20 working days after receipt of the request.

7.Information Exempt from the Act

The Freedom of Information Act does identify a number of categories of information which Wetheral Parish Council is not required to disclose under the Act. In this case,

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Wetheral Parish Council will write to the person requesting the information, stating the exemption which provides the basis for refusal within Act. Wetheral Parish Council will communicate this within 20 working days.

8.Charges

There is no 'flat rate' fee to receive information under the Freedom of Information Act and in many cases Wetheral Parish Council will provide the information free of charge. However, if the information requested is not readily available in the media in which it is requested, Wetheral Parish Council may charge a fee based on the costs associated with providing the information e.g. photocopying and postage.

9.Refusal of Requests

The Freedom of Information Act does permit Wetheral Parish Council to refuse a request if Wetheral Parish Council estimate that it will cost Wetheral Parish Council in excess of the appropriate limit of 15hrs work.

10.Freedom of Information Fees Notice

If a fee is required for disbursements or because the appropriate cost limit, Wetheral Parish Council will write advising of the fee required within 20 working days of receipt of the request. This is known as a 'Fees Notice'. When a Fees Notice has been issued, the 20 working day limit for responding stops and will start again when Wetheral Parish Council receive payment. If Wetheral Parish Council do not receive the fee within three months Wetheral Parish Council are not obliged to comply with the request.

11.Complaints

If persons requesting information are dissatisfied with the way Wetheral Parish Council has responded to a request for information, please write to the Parish Clerk, Wetheral Parish Council, Wetheral Village Community Hall, Wetheral, Carlisle, CA4 8HE

The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) is responsible for enforcing the operation of the Act, and you may raise issues with this office at any time. More information can be found on the ICO website or by writing to the Information Commissioners Officer, Whycliffe House, Water Lane, Wimslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

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