



MUCH HOOLE PARISH COUNCIL

Freedom of Information Policy

Approved at the Council's Annual Meeting on 12TH
May 2025 for use during year 2025-2026

1. Introduction

Much Hoole Parish Council welcomes the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and its purpose to promote greater openness by public authorities. However, Much Hoole Parish Council recognises that the Freedom of Information Act 2000 only gives limited availability to documents. Consequently, we will try wherever possible to provide access to information unless it is:

- a) covered by the Data Protection Act;
- b) concerns individual staff (e.g. salaries)
- c) would adversely affect the interest of Much Hoole tax payer, such as prejudicing the Parish Council's position in litigation.

2. Freedom of Information Publication Scheme of Much Hoole Parish Council

Under the Freedom of Information Act, it is the duty of every public authority to adopt and maintain a publication scheme.

Much Hoole Parish Council hereby adopts the Model Publication Scheme for Local Councils (Appendix 1). This policy sets out:

- a) the information held by the Parish Council
- b) the methods and formats by which information published under the scheme will be made available.
- c) whether a charge will be made for the provision of information
- d) the contact to whom the requests should be made.

Information held by a public authority under this scheme can be requested in writing (or verbally requested under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004) when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions Freedom of Information Act.

Members of the public wishing to inspect information are requested to telephone the Parish Council Office to ensure that the information they require is available. The Parish Council can be contacted on 07349 273881 or at clerk@muchhoole-pc.gov.uk.

In December 2011, the information Commissioner's Officer issued guidance which confirmed that information concerning the official business of Parish Council's (and other public authorities) held in private email accounts is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Parish Council would also release information publicly, if requested as set out in the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency.

3. Exempt

Data protection legislation prohibits the publication of certain categories of information:

- Personal information relating to Councillors (other than required to be declared in Register of interests)
- Personal information relating to employees.
- Tenders and bids from contractors and suppliers.

4. Timeframe

The Council will acknowledge and respond to all valid Freedom of Information requests promptly and within 20 working days from the date of receipt, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If additional time is required to consider the public interest test (under Section 10(3)), an extension of up to an additional 20 working days may be applied. The requester will be informed of the delay and the reason for the extension as soon as possible.

*** Working days exclude weekends and public holidays. ***

5. Schedule of Charges

Information can be inspected, by appointment with the Clerk, free of charge.

A detailed search of records is subject to a charge of £10 per search plus disbursements as follows:

Type of Charge	Description	Basis of Charge
Disbursement cost	Photocopying at 20p/page (black and white)	Actual cost including Clerks time and printing cost
	Photocopying at 30p/page	Actual cost including Clerks time and printing cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail charge
	Statutory Fee	In accordance with relevant legislation

Freedom of Information Model Publication Scheme

In May 2025 Much Hoole Parish Council adopted the model publication scheme for local Councils.

Information to be published	How information can be obtained	Cost
Class 1 - Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts) This will be current information only	Hard Copy Email Website Parish Noticeboards	20p/page Free Free Free
Who's who on the Council and its Committees	Hard Copy Website Parish Noticeboards	
Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members	Hard Copy Website Parish Noticeboards	20p/page Free Free
Staffing Structure	Hard Copy	20p/page
Class 2 - What we spend and how we spend it (Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit) Current and previous year only		
Annual Return form & Auditors Report	Hard Copy Website	20p/page Free
Finalised Budget	Hard Copy Website	20p/page Free

Information to be published	How information can be obtained	Cost
Precept	Hard Copy Website	20p/page Free
Borrowing Approval Letter	N/A	
Financial Regulations	Hard Copy Website	20p/page Free
Grants given & received	Hard Copy Website	20p/page Free
List of current contracts and value of contract	Hard Copy	20p/page
Members' allowances & expenses	Hard Copy	20p/page
VAT Return	Hard Copy	20p/page
Class 3 - What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies & plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)		
Annual Report to Parish or Community Meeting (current & previous year as a minimum)	Hard Copy Website	20p/page Free
Class 4 - How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions) Current & previous Council year only		
Timetable of meetings (Council and Parish meetings)	Website Parish Noticeboards	Free Free
Agendas of Meetings	Website Hard Copy (if not on website)	Free 20p/page

Information to be published	How information can be obtained	Cost
Minutes of meetings (this will exclude information that is properly recorded as private to the meeting)	Website Hard Copy (if not on website)	Free 20p/page
Reports presented to Council (this will exclude information that is properly recorded as private to the meeting)	Hard Copy	20p/page
Responses to consultation paper	Hard Copy	20p/page
Responses to planning applications	All responses are made on the South Ribble Borough Council Planning website	Free
Bye-Laws	Hard Copy	20p/page
Class 5 - Our Policies & Procedures (Current written protocols, policies & procedures for delivering services and responsibilities) Current information only		
Policies and procedures for the conduct of Council business: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedural Standing Orders • Financial Regulations • Code of Conduct 	Hard copy Website	20p/page Free

Information to be published	How information can be obtained	Cost
<p>Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies & procedures for handling requests for information • Complaints Procedures • Data Protection Policy • IT Policy • Communications and Email Use Policy • Transparency Code • Website Accessibility 	<p>Hard copy Website</p>	<p>20p/page Free</p>
<p>Class 6 - Lists & Registers (Currently maintained lists and registers only)</p>		
Any publicly available list or register	Hard Copy	20p/page
Asset Register	Hard Copy Website	20p/page
Register of Members' Interests	Hard Copy Website	Free
<p>Class 7 - The services we offer (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses) Current information only</p>		
Newsletters and leaflets	Hard Copy Website	
Recreational facilities being the cycle pump track	Hard Copy Website	

Information to be published	How information can be obtained	Cost
Street Furniture being litter bins, dog waste bins and bus shelters	Hard Copy Website	