



BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

Freedom of Information Policy

Adopted by full council: 23rd April 2018

Updated:

Twinned with Preetz, Germany



Town Clerk's Office
Church Lane, Blandford Forum
Dorset DT11 7AD



Twinned with Mortain, France



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www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk

The Council is committed to complying with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and associated legislation. This provides a general entitlement to information that the Council holds to any person subject to exemptions and conditions laid down by law.

Scope

This policy applies to all recorded information the Council holds regardless of how it was created or received. It applies regardless of the media the information is stored in whether the information may be on paper, held electronically or as an audio recording. The Act is fully retrospective. Dealing with requests the Town Council offers advice and assistance to anybody who wishes to make a Freedom of Information (FOI) request. The Council is committed to dealing with requests within the statutory timescales of no more than 20 working days. This can be extended in specific circumstances on legal advice. However, the Council is committed to providing a prompt service.

The Council will claim exemptions as appropriate whilst maintaining a commitment to openness, scrutiny and the public interest and will inform the FOI applicant when exemptions have been applied. Where appropriate, requests in writing will be treated as Freedom of Information requests. There is no need for requests to indicate they are made under the Act. The Council reserves the right to refuse requests where the cost of supply of the information would exceed the statutory maximum (see section 12 of the Act.).

Adopting and Maintaining Publication Schemes

The Council has adopted an Information Publication Scheme (attached at Appendix A) and is committed to updating and maintaining it to keep it current and relevant. The Publication Scheme contains many of the documents, policies, plans and guidance which are usually asked for and much more. Material contained within the publication scheme, and a copy of the scheme itself, is readily available. Where charges are applied these are stated in the Scheme. The scheme can also be accessed via the website. The Town Clerk will give advice and assistance on how to use the scheme as appropriate. This scheme is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Responsibilities

The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that any request for information is dealt with under the Act and in compliance with this policy. The Town Clerk is also responsible for good information handling practice and implementing records management policies and procedures as appropriate. The Council will carefully consider its responsibilities under GDPR before releasing any personal data about living individuals, including current and former officers, current and former Council Members, and users of the Council's services.

Contact Details

For advice and assistance please contact the Town Council:

Blandford Forum Town Council
Town Clerk's Office
Church Lane
Blandford Forum
Dorset DT11 7AD
Tel: 01258 454500
Email: admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk
Website: www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk

Further advice and information, including a full list of exemptions and advice on the public interest test, is available from the Information Commissioner's Office www.ICO.org.uk.

Information available from Blandford Forum Town Council

Information to be published	Location	Comments	
Class 1 – Who we are and what we do			
Location of main Council office and accessibility details	9 & 10		
Contact details for Parish Clerk	1, 9 & 10		
List of Councillors representing each ward (incl. address and telephone no.)	1, 8 & 9		
Membership of Committees and Working Groups	1 & 9		
Blandford Forum Town Council's Code of Conduct Order	1 & 9		
Agendas (last 2 years)	4	Agendas, reports and minutes are also published online and available to view for one year before they are removed.	
Reports to Committees or Council (last 2 years)	4		
Minutes of Council and Committees (last 2 years)	4		
Standing Orders	1 & 9		
Council's Annual Report	2 & 9		
Terms of Reference for Committees	1 & 9		
Council's Strategic Plan 2017-2021	6 & 9		
Guidelines for Town Councillors appointed as representatives to community and local organisations	1		
Emergency Telephone Numbers	1		
Staffing Structure	1, 6 & 9		
<p>Exclusions – Confidential Agendas, Minutes and Reports (pre-2007 or staff related). This is where the documents contain exempt information. Typically information may be withheld if it is personal data and its disclosure would contravene the General Data Protection Regulations or if the information relates to legal proceedings or advice, or if disclosure would prejudice the commercial interests of another person. Since 2007 confidential Minutes other than those relating to staff are released into the public domain with the public minutes.</p>			
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it			
Current and previous financial year as a minimum	Current year – 2 & 9		Previous years – 4
Annual return form and report by auditor – internal and external (limited to the last financial year)	4 & 9		

Capital and Revenue budgets	2	
Precept request (limited to the last financial year)	3	
VAT records (limited to the last financial year)	Current year – 11	Previous 6 years – 4
Loan Sanction Approvals (nothing at present – February 2015)	-	
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations (including those dealing with the award of contracts)	1 & 9	
Grants Criteria	1, 3 & 9	
- Grants given and received are minuted in the Finance & Staffing Committee Minutes	3	
Service Level Agreements and Contracts	3	(under subject title)
Members' allowances and expenses	9 (Allowances) & 11	
Fees and charges applied by the Council	Current year – 9	Previous years – 4
Receipt/Payment records, receipt books of all kinds, bank statements from all accounts (limited to the last financial year)	Current year – 2 & 11	Previous 6 years – 4
Purchase of goods/services £500 and over	Monthly – 9	
Exclusions – All commercially sensitive information e.g. quotations and tenders, loan documentation and insurance policies. With regard to quotations and tenders, this information is treated as confidential to ensure that the whole tender process is fair i.e. if tender information is released to a third party prior to the end of the tender period those who initially submitted tenders could be undercut and or unfairly disadvantaged.		
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing		
Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews		
Strategic Plan 2017 - 2021	6 & 9	
Risk Assessments	5	
Parish Plan (current and previous year as a minimum) – Strategic Action Plan 2017 - 2021	6	
Neighbourhood Plan Project	6	
Annual Report to Parish or Community Meeting (current and previous year as a minimum)	3	
Quality Status	6	
Best Value Performance Plan	N/A to BFTC	
Best Value Inspection Reports	N/A to BFTC	

Class 4 – How we make decisions

Decision making processes and records of decisions, current and previous council year as a minimum

Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee/sub-committee meetings and parish meetings)	1, 8, 9 & 10	
Agendas of meetings (as above)	3, 4 & 9	
Minutes of meetings (as above) – nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	3, 4 & 9	
Reports presented to council meetings - nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	3 & 9	
Responses to consultation papers	3 & 4	
Analysis of responses received to public consultations by the Council	4	
Public consultations with local community	4	
Bye-laws	6	
Responses to planning applications	3 & 4	

Exclusions – Copies of planning consultations, the Development Plan, Structure Plan, Local Plan and Rights of Way/Footpath maps all of which are available from the local planning and/or highway authority respectively.

Class 5 – Our policies and procedures

Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities

Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business:

Policy statements issued by the Council	1 & 3	
Procedural standing orders	1, 3, 6 & 9	
Committee and sub-committee terms of reference	1, 3, 6 & 9	
Delegated authority in respect of officers	1 & 6	
Code of Conduct	1 & 6	
Safety Inspection Records	5 & 4	
Health & Safety Policy	5	
Legionella Bacteria Control Policy	5	

<u>Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff:</u>		
Internal policies relating to the delivery of services	1 & 7	
Equality and diversity policy	7	
Health and safety policy	5	
Recruitment policies (including current vacancies)	2 & 9	
Job Descriptions	2	
Terms and Conditions of Employment	2	
Policies and procedures for handling requests for information (this document will be held in reception)	8	
Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)	1 & 9	
Staffing Structure	1 & 9	
Information security policy	1 & 7	
Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)	3	
Data protection policies	7	
Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	1 & 9	
Exclusions - all personal records i.e. appraisals, employee specific salary details, disciplinary records, sickness records and the like by virtue of being personal data under the Data Protection Act 1988.		
Class 6 – Lists and Registers		
Currently maintained lists and registers only		
Any publicly available register or list (if any are held this should be publicised; in most circumstances existing access provisions will suffice)	2	
Information relating to the last periodic electoral review of the council area	1 & 4 / NDDC	
Information relating to the latest boundary review of the council area	4 / NDDC	
Assets Register	2	
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)	N/A to BFTC	

Register of gifts and hospitality	6	
Members' Declaration of Acceptance of Office	4 & 6	
Register of Members' Attendance and Pecuniary and Personal Interests	6	
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 (hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection)		
Allotments	3	
- Standard Tenancy Agreements	3	
Exclusion – Individual tenancy agreements and rent payment records under both privacy and data protection laws.		
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	4	
- Plans of Blandford Cemetery	4	
- Pricing Policies / General Policies	3 (side of cupboard) & 9	
Exclusion – All documentation relating to individual applications and registrations under both privacy and data protection laws.		
Community centres and village halls	3	
CCTV & ANPR Privacy Impact Assessments	5	
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	3	
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	3	
Bus shelters	3	
Public conveniences	3	
Agency agreements	3	
A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)	3 & 9	
Additional Information		
This will provide Councils with the opportunity to publish information that is not itemised in the lists above		
Events Guide	8, 9 & 10	
Venues for Hire Guide	8 & 9	

Tourist Information	8 & 9	
Town, parish, community guide	6	
Town Council Newsletters	3 & 9	
Blandford Forum – A Millennium Portrait	6	
History Books on Blandford	12	

CONTACT DETAILS:

Town Clerk, Blandford Forum Town Council, Town Clerk's Office, Church Lane, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 7AD

KEY TO LOCATIONS IN THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

- (1) Councillors' Information Folder
- (2) Filing Cabinet (main office)
- (3) Filing Cabinet (next to the boiler room)
- (4) Store Room (underneath Town Clerk's Office)
- (5) Filing Cabinets in Town Clerk's office
- (6) Bookshelf in the Town Clerk's office
- (7) Employee Manual
- (8) Reception
- (9) Town Council's Website
- (10) Facebook
- (11) RFO Cabinet
- (12) RFO Bookshelf

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying @ 8p per sheet (black & white)	0.86p (actual cost incurred by BFTC) + VAT
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class

Any charges made by Blandford Forum Town Council for routinely published material must 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 actual disbursements incurred such as photocopying and also a postage charge if you are unable to call into the office to collect them. The cost will be 8p per page plus actual postal charges. If a charge is to be made, the individual will be informed of the charge and why it is to be incurred prior to the information being provided. Payment may be requested prior to release of the information. Charges may also be made for information provided under the scheme where it is legally authorised. Any subject access requests to information will be complied within one month. Your request will be refused or charged for if it is manifestly unfounded or excessive.