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Hoar Cross Parish Council

Publication Scheme

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 received Royal Assent in November 2000 and came fully into force in January 2005. The Freedom of Information Act gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information other than personal information (which continues to be processed under the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998) held by local authorities, including Hoar Cross Parish Council.
- 1.2 All local authorities must adopt and maintain a scheme which relates to the publication of information by the authority and is approved by the Information Commissioner by February 2003. The publication scheme sets out the classes of information the Council publishes or intends to publish as a matter of courses, specifies how and when this information is or is intended to be published, and specifies whether the information is available free of charge or on payment.
- 1.3 The purpose of the scheme is to be a means by which local Councils can make a significant and growing amount of information is easily available without waiting for individuals to make a specific request for it. The scheme is intended to encourage a culture of openness within local government.

2. Information about Hoar Cross Parish Council

- 2.1 Hoar Cross is a rural parish within the East Staffordshire Borough area of Staffordshire. The Parish Council forms part of the first tier of local government.
- 2.2 The Parish Council has five members and normally holds four meetings each year plus the Annual Meeting. The Parish Council employs one part time Clerk.

3. The Structure of the Scheme

- 3.1 The scheme refers to classes of information that Hoar Cross Parish Council publishes for use within the parish and externally. Each class has a description, details of how information is held, whether there is a charge for a copy of the information, whether any specific information is exempt and who to contact to access the information.

4. Requesting Information

- 4.1 All information is available upon request from the Clerk to the Parish Council. The request can be in writing, verbal or by mail. Generally the information will be available immediately, but in some cases, it may be necessary to make an appointment with the clerk to inspect certain items eg Account books.

5. Charges

- 5.1 Copies of all information included in the scheme will be charged at 20p per sheet, plus postage, which must be paid to the Parish Council via the Clerk, in advance. The Agenda of any particular meeting and the minutes of the previous Meeting referred to in that Agenda are available to members of the public attending that particular Parish Council meeting, free of charge.

6. Exemptions

- 6.1 Information falling in the following categories will not be included in the scheme if it is covered by exemptions in part 2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 including the following: :-

Personal information relating to individuals

Information which the council cannot lawfully disclose

Where legal professional privilege applies

Information relating to investigations and criminal proceedings

Information where disclosure would be likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime, apprehension or prosecution of offenders, the assessment or collection of any taxes

Information provided in confidence

Where disclosure would be likely to prejudice the commercial interest of any person, including the council, other organisations and businesses.

7. Responsibility for the Scheme

- 7.1 Responsibility for maintaining the scheme resides with the Clerk to the Parish Council.

8 Revising the Scheme

- 8.1 The scheme will be continually reviewed in accordance with the Act.

9 Feedback

- 9.1 The Council welcomes comments and suggestions on how the scheme can be improved as it is important that the scheme meets your needs.
- 9.2 Please send any comments/questions to the Clerk to the Parish Council.

10 Complaints

- 10.1 We would normally expect the Clerk to be able to provide any information requested. However, if you believe that your request has not been dealt with fairly, please contact the Chairman of the Parish Council.
- 10.1.1 You may also contact the Information Commissioner if the complaint relates to the Council's responsibilities under the Act. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF, telephone 01625545745, fax 01625524510 or e-mail data@protection.gov.uk.

11 Publication Scheme

1) **Council Internal Practice and Procedure**

Minutes of Council, committee and sub-committee meetings limited to last 2 yrs
Procedural Standing Orders
Council's Annual Report to Parish Meeting
Agendas and supporting papers for Council and committee meetings - limited in each case to the forthcoming/immediate meeting - excluding "personal records" ie employee specific salary details, disciplinary records, sickness records and the like.
Hard copy, 20p a sheet plus postage unless it is Agenda and previous Minutes collected at the Meeting to which the Agenda relates.

2) **Code of Conduct**

Members Declarations of Acceptance of Office
Members Register of Interest
Register of Members Interest Book
Hard copy - normal charges
Inspection of records upon arrangement of an appointment with the clerk

3) **Periodic Electoral Rev**

Not applicable

4) Employment Practice and Procedure

Terms and conditions of employment

Job Descriptions

Excluding "personal records" ie employee specific salary details, disciplinary records, sickness records and the like

Hard copy - normal charges

5) Planning Documents

Responses to planning applications

Hard copy - normal charges

6) Audit and Accounts

Annual return form - limited to the last financial year

Annual Statutory report by auditor (internal and external) - limited to the last financial year

Receipts/Payments books, receipts books of all kinds, bank statements from all accounts - limited to the last financial year

Precept request - limited to the last financial year

VAT records - limited to the last financial year

Financial Standing Orders and Regulations

Assets register - this will include details of commons/village greens owned by the council

Risks Assessments

Hard copy, where applicable - normal charges apply

Books of account can be inspected upon arranging an appointment

Elizabeth Goodwin

Clerk to the Parish Council

8th December 2025