

# The Orchards' and Margaret Marsh Parish Council (Group)

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## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY 2025

### Introduction

The Orchards & Margaret Marsh Parish Council (Group) is committed to openness, transparency, and accountability. This policy outlines how the Council complies with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR), ensuring the public's right to access information.

### 1. Purpose

This policy aims to explain the Council's obligations under the FOIA and EIR. It provides a clear procedure for handling information requests and promotes information availability to the public.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all recorded information held by The Orchards & Margaret Marsh Parish Council (Group) regardless of format (e.g., paper, electronic, audio). It includes:

- Council minutes, reports, and decisions.
- Financial records and budgets.
- Policies, procedures, and governance documents.
- Information about Council services and activities.

### 3. Publication Scheme

The Orchards & Margaret Marsh Parish Council (Group) has adopted the model Publication Scheme approved by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) as detailed in the Appendix to this policy. The scheme outlines:

- Classes of information available and methods of publication.
- Charges for providing information (if applicable).

### 4. Making a Request for Information

Under the FOIA, any person can request recorded information.

- Requests must be in writing (email or letter)
- Requests must include the requester's name, contact details, and a clear description of the information required.

### 5. Handling Requests

Upon receiving a request, the Council will:

- Acknowledge receipt within 5 working days.
- Provide the requested information within 20 working days, unless clarification is needed or exemptions apply.
- Inform the requester if additional time is required (e.g., for complex requests).
- Inform the requester if the request is refused, stating the reasons and any exemption(s).

### 6. Exemptions

Certain information may be exempt from disclosure under the FOIA. If an exemption applies, the Council will clarify why the information cannot be disclosed and provide details regarding the requester's right to appeal. Exemptions would include:

- Personal data (protected under the UK GDPR).
- Information provided in confidence.
- Commercially sensitive information.
- Information that would prejudice legal proceedings or law enforcement.

## 7. Charges and Fees

Information detailed in the Model Publication Scheme is typically provided free of charge. Where fees apply, they will be communicated to the requester before processing the request. This may include:

- Printing, photocopying, and postage costs.
- Staff time exceeding the FOIA cost threshold (£450 or 18 hours).

## 8. Environmental Information Regulations (EIR)

Requests for environmental information are handled under the EIR. The Council will respond to EIR requests within 20 working days, extending to 40 working days for complex cases. These requests:

- Can be made verbally or in writing.
- May include information about land, air, water, energy, waste, and policies affecting the environment.

## 9. Complaints and Appeals

If a requester is dissatisfied with the Council's response, they may:

- Request an internal review by writing to the Parish Clerk.

If unresolved, contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):

- Website: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk). Telephone: 0303 123 1113
- Address: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

## 10. Administration of Policy

The Orchards and Margaret Marsh Parish Council reviewed and adopted this updated policy at the meeting held on 20th March 2025. The policy will be reviewed annually or as required by changes in legislation. Any updates will be approved by the Council and published on the Council's website.

Signed: Cllr G Stokes, Chair  
Chair, The Orchards' and Margaret Marsh Parish Council

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025

## 11. Sources and References

*Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)*

*Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR)*

*Data Protection Act 2018*

*Local Government Act 1972*

## 12. Revision History

No	Change Type	Updated By	Change Summary	Approval Date
1	Original	OMMPC	Created in current format	9/2008
2	Review	OMMPC	Reviewed	8/2017
4	Review	OMMPC	Reviewed	1/2022
5	Updated	OMMPC	Reviewed & policy aims clarified	3/2025

# The Orchards' and Margaret Marsh Parish Council (Group)

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME 2025

Information available from The Orchards' and Margaret Marsh Parish Council (Group) under the Freedom of Information model publication scheme adopted at the meeting of the Parish Council 20th March 2025. The model publications scheme only covers information we currently hold. Where the Council does not hold information listed by the ICO, it is marked it as 'not applicable' in the table below. Hard copy requests should be made to the Clerk: Clerk@TheOrchardsandMargaretMarsh-PC.org.uk

Information to be published	How information can be obtained
<b>Class 1 - Who we are and what we do</b> Current organisational information, structures, locations and contacts.	
• List of Council members and their responsibilities	Parish Council Noticeboards Parish Council website Email request for hard copy
• Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members	
• Staffing structure	
• Location of main Council office and accessibility details	Not applicable
<b>Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it</b> Financial information: Budget, Actual receipts and payments, audit, contracts, procurement, etc. Current and previous financial year.	
• Statement of accounts	Parish Council website Email request for hard copy
• Internal audit report, as per the Annual Return form	
• Finalised budget	
• Annual accounts	
• Precept	
• All items of expenditure above £100	
• Internal Auditors report	
• Annual governance statement as per Annual Return form	
• Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	
• Grants given and received	
• List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	
• Members' allowances and expenses	
<b>Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing</b> Strategies, plans, audits, inspections and reviews.	
• Annual Report to Parish Meeting	Parish Council website Email request for hard copy
• Data Protection impact assessment summary	
• Parish Plan	Not applicable
<b>Class 4 – How we make decisions.</b> Decision making processes and records of decisions. Current and previous year unless as a minimum	
• Agendas of meetings	Parish Council Noticeboards Parish Council website Email request for hard copy

Information to be published	How information can be obtained
<b>Class 4 – How we make decisions - continued.</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timetable of meetings (Council, committees and parish meetings)</li> <li>• Minutes of meetings – exclude material considered exempt from disclosure</li> <li>• Reports presented to council meetings – exclude material considered exempt from disclosure</li> <li>• Responses to consultation papers</li> <li>• Responses to planning applications</li> </ul>	Parish Council website Email request for hard copy
<b>Class 5 – Our policies and procedures</b>	
Current written policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities. Current information only	
Policies and procedures for the conduct of Council business: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedural standing orders</li> <li>• Committee and sub-committee terms of reference</li> <li>• Delegated authority in respect of officers</li> <li>• Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Standing Orders and Financial Regulations</li> <li>• Privacy Policy</li> <li>• Policy statements</li> <li>• Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)</li> <li>• Co-option of Councillors Policy</li> <li>• Risk Assessment</li> </ul>	Parish Council website Email request for hard copy
Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality and diversity policy</li> <li>• Health and safety policy</li> <li>• Recruitment policies and details of current vacancies</li> <li>• Policies and procedures for handling requests for information</li> </ul>	Parish Council website Email request for hard copy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Records management, personal data and access to information policies, include information security policies, records retention, destruction and archive policies, and data protection (incl. data sharing and CCTV usage) policies</li> </ul>	Parish Council website Email request for hard copy
<b>Class 6 – Lists and Registers</b>	
Currently maintained lists and registers only.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assets register, incl. details of public land and assets</li> <li>• Register of members' interests</li> <li>• Register of gifts and hospitality</li> </ul>	Parish Council website Email request for hard copy
<b>Class 7 – The services we offer</b>	
Information about our services, incl. leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses. Current information only	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance of Parish Council owned outside benches</li> <li>• Maintenance of Parish Council owned noticeboards</li> <li>• Burial grounds and closed churchyards</li> <li>• Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities</li> <li>• Bus shelters</li> <li>• Allotments</li> </ul>	Parish Council website Email request for hard copy Not applicable Not applicable Not applicable Not applicable

### Schedule of charges

This describes how the charges have been arrived at and should be published as part of the guide.

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
<b>Disbursement cost</b>	Photocopying @ 5p per sheet (black & white)	The actual cost incurred by the public authority
	Photocopying @ 10p per sheet (colour)	The actual cost incurred by the public authority
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2nd class
<b>Statutory Fee</b>		In accordance with the relevant legislation (quote the actual statute)
<b>Other</b>		n/a

Parish Clerk: Beverly Barker

Email: [Clerk@orchardsandmargaretmarsh-pc.gov.uk](mailto:Clerk@orchardsandmargaretmarsh-pc.gov.uk)