

The Orchards' and Margaret Marsh Parish Council (Group)

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY 2026

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. Telephone: 0303 123 1113
- Address: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

10. Adoption

This policy was first adopted by The Orchards and Margaret Marsh Parish Council at the meeting held on September 2008. 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.

11. Review

Date of last review 18th May 2026. Date of next review May 2027.

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
6	Annual review	OMMPC	Not change	18/5/2026
			Next Review	5/2027

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

Date: 18th May 2026

12. Sources and References

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR)

Data Protection Act 2018

Local Government Act 1972

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
Class 1 - Who we are and what we do Current organisational information, structures, locations and contacts.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of Council members and their responsibilities 	Parish Council Noticeboards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members 	Parish Council website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing structure 	Email request for hard copy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location of main Council office and accessibility details 	Not applicable
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it Financial information: Budget, Actual receipts and payments, audit, contracts, procurement, etc. Current and previous financial year.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of accounts 	Parish Council website Email request for hard copy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal audit report, as per the Annual Return form 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalised budget 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual accounts 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precept 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All items of expenditure above £100 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Auditors report 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual governance statement as per Annual Return form 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Standing Orders and Regulations 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants given and received 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of current contracts awarded and value of contract 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members' allowances and expenses 	
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing Strategies, plans, audits, inspections and reviews.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Report to Parish Meeting 	Parish Council website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Protection impact assessment summary 	Email request for hard copy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish Plan 	Not applicable
Class 4 – How we make decisions. Decision making processes and records of decisions. Current and previous year unless as a minimum	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agendas of meetings 	Parish Council Noticeboards Parish Council website Email request for hard copy

Information to be published	How information can be obtained
Class 4 – How we make decisions - continued.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetable of meetings (Council, committees and parish meetings) 	Parish Council website Email request for hard copy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of meetings – exclude material considered exempt from disclosure 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports presented to council meetings – exclude material considered exempt from disclosure 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to consultation papers 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to planning applications 	
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures	
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"> • Procedural standing orders • Committee and sub-committee terms of reference • Delegated authority in respect of officers • Code of Conduct • Standing Orders and Financial Regulations • Privacy Policy • Policy statements • Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme) • Co-option of Councillors Policy • Risk Assessment 	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"> • Equality and diversity policy • Health and safety policy • Recruitment policies and details of current vacancies • Policies and procedures for handling requests for information 	Parish Council website Email request for hard copy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	Parish Council website Email request for hard copy
Class 6 – Lists and Registers	
Currently maintained lists and registers only.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assets register, incl. details of public land and assets 	Parish Council website Email request for hard copy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register of members’ interests 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register of gifts and hospitality 	
Class 7 – The services we offer	
Information about our services, incl. leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses. Current information only	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of Parish Council owned outside benches 	Parish Council website Email request for hard copy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of Parish Council owned noticeboards 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burial grounds and closed churchyards 	Not applicable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities 	Not applicable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus shelters 	Not applicable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotments 	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
Disbursement cost	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
Statutory Fee		In accordance with the relevant legislation (quote the actual statute)
Other		n/a

Parish Clerk: Beverly Barker

Email: Clerk@orchardsandmargaretmarsh-pc.gov.uk