

# RINGMER PARISH COUNCIL

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – PUBLICATION SCHEME

1. This is a model publication scheme for parish, town and community councils (known collectively as ‘local councils’) in England and Wales. Local Councils are the first tier of local government. There are over 10,000 such councils in England & Wales and they have a wide range of powers at their disposal.
2. The purpose of the scheme is to be a means by which the council can make a significant amount of information available routinely, without waiting for someone to specifically request it. The scheme is intended to encourage the council to publish more information proactively and to develop a greater culture of openness and transparency.
3. In accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the scheme specifies the classes of information which the council will publish or intends to publish. Bearing in mind local councils are so diverse in size and functions it was decided the most practical approach was that the model scheme should firstly be comprised of a number of core classes of information which are mandatory. In addition there are optional documents within the core classes as well as a group of extra optional classes to allow councils to respond to particular local circumstances where necessary. The full details of the scheme are available from the Parish Clerk.
4. The Parish Council will make available specified information under the following headings:
  - i) **Council Internal Practice & Procedure:** including minutes of council and all committees for the last two years; Standing Orders; and the Annual Report.
  - ii) **Code of Conduct:** including members declaration of office; members register of interests; and register of members interests book.
  - iii) **Periodic Electoral Review:** including information on changes to the electoral arrangements for the council; information relating to the last Periodic Electoral Review; and information relating to the latest boundary review.
  - iv) **Employment Practice and Procedure:** including terms & conditions of employment and job descriptions but excluding personal records.
  - v) **Planning Documents:** including responses to planning applications.
  - vi) **Audit and Accounts:** including Annual Return Form; Annual Statutory Report by internal and external auditors; Receipt/payment books and bank statements; Precept requests; and VAT records. All the foregoing being limited to the last financial year. In addition the Council’s Assets Register and Risk Assessments will also be available for inspection. All commercially sensitive information e.g. quotations, tenders, loan documentation and insurance policies are excluded.
5. The information will be available in hard copy on request from the Clerk of the Council or by inspection at the council office by prior arrangement. The Council will charge for copies of documents at its prevailing charge for photocopying plus any postage incurred. The Clerk may be contacted at the Parish Council Office, Village Hall, Ringmer BN8 5QH, telephone 01273 813242 (24 hour answerphone).