



# Stapleford Abbots Parish Council

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

**Version: 1.3**

**June 2023**

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### **A Scope**

This policy applies to the Stapleford Abbots Parish Council. Where the term ‘staff’ is used, this includes any staff (paid and voluntary) working for the Council. This policy is aimed at all Councillors and staff working for Stapleford Abbots Parish Council.

### **B Confidential Notice & Intellectual Property**

This document and the information contained therein is the property of Stapleford Abbots Parish Council. It must not be used by, or its contents reproduced or otherwise copied or disclosed without the prior consent, in writing, by the Council.

### **C Document Details**

<b>Policy</b>	<i>Freedom of Information Policy</i>
<b>Policy Statement</b>	<i>This document sets out a Freedom of Information Policy to use by Stapleford Abbots PC</i>
<b>Version Number</b>	<i>1.3</i>
<b>Version Date</b>	<i>01/06/2023</i>
<b>Review Date</b>	<i>01/04/2024</i>
<b>Author</b>	<i>SAPC</i>
<b>Responsible Owner</b>	<i>Stapleford Abbots Parish Council</i>
<b>Approving Body</b>	<i>Stapleford Abbots Parish Council</i>

## **D Revision History**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Revision Date</b>	<b>Details of Changes</b>	<b>Author</b>
1.0	05/11/2019	First version	SAPC
1.1	01/06/2021	Second version	SAPC
1.2	01/06/2022	Third version	SAPC
1.2	01/06/2023	Current version	SAPC

## **E Freedom of Information**

If requested, this document may be made available to the public and persons outside the Council as part of Stapleford Abbotts Parish Council's commitment to transparency and compliance with the Freedom of Information Act.

## **F Accessibility**

This document can be made available in other styles, formats, sizes, languages and media in order to enable anyone who is interested in its content to have the opportunity to read and understand it. Any such requests should be made to the Clerk.

## **G Dissemination**

This policy will be disseminated to all staff and Councillors, who will have to read this policy at publication and every time there is an update or change to the policy. The Stapleford Abbotts Parish Councillors will have the overall responsibility for implementing the policy.

## **H Review**

This policy will be reviewed every year or when new evidence, policy or guidelines come to light necessitating an update / change. The policy review and update will be the responsibility of the Stapleford Abbotts Parish Council.

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## **1. Introduction**

Stapleford Abbotts Parish Council (“the Council”) is committed to being open and transparent about the work that it does and services that it provides for the local community. The Council will make as much information available as possible, to promote a greater awareness and understanding of the Council’s policies, decisions and actions.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, The Council has two main responsibilities – to produce a Publication Scheme and to deal with individual requests for information.

## **2. Scope**

General requests for information will be considered as part of the Council’s normal day to day business. However, there are also statutory information access regimes that can be used to access specific information. This Policy concerns itself with that information which can be accessed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please refer to the Council’s data protection policy for details of how information is initially stored, processed and safeguarded.

## **3. The Publication Scheme**

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Council has a Publication Scheme. The Publication Scheme commits the Council to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities.

Wherever possible the Council will provide information through its website. Where information is available in a non-electronic form or when an individual does not wish to access information electronically, an individual can contact the Parish Clerk and ask for the information to be made available to them.

Some information may only be available to view in person at the Council’s office. In these circumstances an appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

The Council will ensure that members of the public are aware of the information that is made readily available to them and provide details of how this information can be accessed and any charges which may be applicable. This information is available through the Council’s Publication Scheme which is available on the Council’s website.

## **4. Requesting Information not found in the Publication Scheme**

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the public the right to access information held by councils and other public bodies. The Act also explains what is expected of councils and the types of information that needs to be made available.

Anyone can make a request for information – there are no restrictions on age, nationality or place of residence (no need to be a resident within the Parish).

## **5. Making a Freedom of Information Request**

Freedom of Information Requests need to be made in writing to the Clerk who is responsible for responding to requests – either by letter or e-mail.

When making a Freedom of Information request, the following information must be included:

- Name
- Contact details
- A detailed description of the recorded information required

When requesting information, the enquirer does not have to mention the Freedom of Information Act, or the reasons why the information is sought.

Most Freedom of Information requests will be free of charge. However there may be a small charge for photocopies or postage. The Council will notify the enquirer in advance if there are any charges associated with the request.

The Council will respond to all Freedom of Information Requests within 20 working days (this is the timescale required by the Act)

## **6. Exemptions**

Anyone making a request to any public authority for information must be informed whether the public authority holds that information and be supplied with it. Some information does not have to be revealed, such as personal information or commercially sensitive data. You can view a full list of these exemptions on the Information Commissioner's website – [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

The Council can turn down a Freedom of Information Request if it will cost more than £450 to respond to.

The Council may ask for the request to be more specific in order for the information to be provided.

If the Council refuses to provide the information requested, the enquirer can ask them to review their decision. If the enquirer is still not satisfied with the response received, they are advised to contact the Information Commissioner's Office - [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

## **7. Policy Review**

The Council will review this Policy as is necessary and appropriate, and at a minimum on an annual basis (usually the May annual assembly)