

VIGO PARISH COUNCIL

Freedom of Information Policy and Guide

This Freedom of Information Policy and Guide has been adopted by Vigo Parish Council to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Act provides public access to information held by public authorities, subject to specific exemptions. It establishes the right to access recorded information, outlines exemptions, and sets arrangements for enforcement and appeal.

Publication Scheme

The model publication scheme lists what information the Council is required to publish and details how it can be accessed.

The Council will publish much of the information on its website www.vigo-pc.gov.uk, but information will also be available in other formats such as printed copies.

Information may be obtained by the following methods:

- Writing to the Council: Vigo Parish Council, Vigo Village Hall, Vigo, Gravesend, Kent. DA13 0TD
- Office opening hours: Monday & Tuesday 10am til 2pm.
- By e-mail request to: clerk@vigo-pc.gov.uk
- By website contact form: www.vigo-pc.gov.uk
- By telephone: 01732 823337

Freedom of Information Requests

Requests for information should be made in writing, by letter or email. The request must include:

- The applicant's contact details for the reply
- A detailed description of the information requested
- The preferred format in which the information should be provided

The Council has a duty to provide assistance to applicants under Section 16 of the Act, as far as is reasonable. The Council must confirm whether it holds the information and, unless an exemption applies, must supply it within 20 working days.

Exemptions

The Act allows the Council to withhold information in certain circumstances. Exemptions apply where disclosure would prejudice the health, safety, or security of the Council, its staff, systems, services, or property, or would breach an individual's Data Protection rights. If an exemption applies, the Clerk will notify the applicant in writing, stating the reason for refusal and the relevant exemption.

Vexatious or Repeated Requests

The Council may refuse requests that are vexatious or repeated. Requests are considered vexatious if they cause a disproportionate or unjustifiable level of distress, disruption, or irritation. A request will be deemed repeated if it is identical or substantially similar to a previous request made by the same individual, unless a reasonable interval (normally 40 working days) has elapsed.

Charges

The Council reserves the right to make a reasonable charge for disbursements, such as photocopying, printing, and postage. If a fee is required, the applicant will be informed in advance. The information will not be released until payment has been received.

Personal Data and Subject Access Requests

The Freedom of Information Act does not provide access to personal data about the applicant. Individuals wishing to access information held about themselves must make a Subject Access Request under the Data Protection Act 2018. Requests must be made in writing and accompanied by proof of identity and current address.

Complaints and Appeals

If an applicant believes their request has not been dealt with fairly, they should first raise the matter informally with the Clerk. If the issue remains unresolved, a formal complaint may be made under the Council's complaints procedure (available from the Clerk). If the applicant remains dissatisfied after the Council's review, they may appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF
Tel: 0303 123 1113
Website: <https://ico.org.uk>

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically (every two years) to ensure it remains compliant with legislation and best practice.

POLICY AGREED: Full Council 24th November 2025 (minute 766)

Next Review: May 2027

This model publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It may be adopted without modification by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice.

This publication scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the authority. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

The scheme commits an authority:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.
- To publish any dataset held by the authority that has been requested, and any updated versions it holds, unless the authority is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so; to publish the dataset, where reasonably practicable, in an electronic form that is capable of re-use; and, if any information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and the public authority is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use under the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, if they apply, and otherwise under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act section 19.

The term 'dataset' is defined in section 11(5) of the Freedom of Information Act. The term 'relevant copyright work' is defined in section 19(8) of that Act.

Classes of information

Who we are and what we do: Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

What we spend and how we spend it: Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

What our priorities are and how we are doing: Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

How we make decisions: Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

Our policies and procedures: Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

Lists and registers: Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

The services we offer: Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available

The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained. Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

Charges which may be made for information published under this scheme

The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum. Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge. Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- photocopying
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

Charges may also be made for making datasets (or parts of datasets) that are relevant copyright works available for re-use. These charges will be in accordance with the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, where they apply, or with regulations made under section 11B of the Freedom of Information Act, or with other statutory powers of the public authority.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

Written requests

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

**Information available from Vigo Parish Council
under the Freedom of Information Act model publication scheme**



Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost (not including postage)
Class 1 - Who we are and what we do		
organisational information, structures, locations and contacts		
List of Council members	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free
List of Committees / Working Parties	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free
Details of any representation on local public bodies	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free
Postal and email address	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free
Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free
Location of main Council office & accessibility details	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free
Staffing structure	NOT HELD	
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it		
Financial information about projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit (current and previous year)		
Statement of accounts and internal audit report in the format included in the Annual Return form	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Finalised budget	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Precept	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Borrowing Approval letter	NOT HELD	
All items of expenditure above £100	Noted in Minutes	
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Grants given and received	Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
List of current contracts awarded & value of contract	Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Members' allowances and expenses	Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing		
Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews (current and previous year)		
Annual governance statement (in format included in the Annual Return form)	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Parish Plan	NOT HELD	
Annual Report to Parish or Community Meeting	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Quality status	NOT HELD	
Local charters drawn up in accordance with DLUHC's guidelines	NOT HELD	
Data Protection impact assessments (in full or summary format) or any other impact assessment (eg Health & Safety Impact Assessment, Equality Impact Assessments etc), as appropriate and relevant	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Class 4 – How we make decisions		
Decision making process and records of decisions (current and previous year)		
Timetable of meetings (Council & any committee/sub-committee meetings & parish meetings)	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet

Minutes of meetings (as above) – material may be excluded if it is properly considered to be exempt from disclosure	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Reports presented to council meetings – material may be excluded if it is properly considered to be exempt from disclosure	Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Responses to consultation papers	Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Responses to planning applications	Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Bye-laws	NOT HELD	

Class 5 – Our policies and procedures

Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities
(current information only)

Standing Orders	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Committee / Sub Committee Terms of Reference	NOT APPLICABLE	
Delegated Authority in respect of officers	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Code of Conduct	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Policy Statements	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Internal instructions to staff and policies relating to the delivery of services	Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Equality and diversity policy	Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Health & safety policy	NOT HELD (being drafted)	
Recruitment policies and details of current vacancies	Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Policies & procedures for handling requests for information	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Records management, personal data and access to information policies: Includes information security policies, records retention, destruction and archive policies, and data protection (including data sharing and CCTV usage) policies	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet

Class 6 – Lists and Registers

(currently maintained lists and registers only)

Assets register, including details of public land and building assets	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Disclosure log indicating the information provided in response to FOIA and EIR requests.	NOT HELD	
Register of members' interests	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Register of gifts and hospitality	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet

Class 7 – The services we offer

Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses (current information only)

Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet
Bus shelters	Website / Email / Hard Copy	Free / 25p per sheet

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 25p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost
	Photocopying 40p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class