



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

(adopted by Beaminster Town Council at the Annual Council meeting held on Tuesday 20th May 2025)

INTRODUCTION

The Freedom of Information Act:

- Provides public access to recorded information held by public bodies including local authorities such as Beaminster Town Council
- Applies to documentary information and electronic data held by a public body
- Obliges public bodies to disclose information/data unless an exemption detailed in the legislation is applicable.

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

If you have any queries regarding the Freedom of Information Act, please contact the Town Clerk, Christine Bright at the Town Council office during normal opening hours or via email townclerk@beaminster-tc.gov.uk

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

- Requests for information must be in writing either in paper format or electronic format via email and include the enquirer's name and address
- The enquirer does not have to mention the Freedom of Information Act or the reason(s) why the information is sought and doesn't have to be a resident of Beaminster.
- The enquirer can be an individual or an organisation
- The Town Clerk, or in their absence the Assistant Town Clerk will be responsible for responding to requests.
- Beaminster Town Council has a duty to respond to all requests by informing the enquirer whether or not it holds the information requested and then supply the information, except where an exemption applies.
- Charges can be made to reflect the costs incurred in meeting a request, please refer to the appendix for charging structure.

- Requested information will be made available unless:
 1. The council does not hold the information;
 2. The information is exempt under one of the FOIA exemptions or Environmental Information Regulations exception or its release is prohibited by another statute;
 3. The information is readily and publicly available from an external website; the Council will provide a link to that information
 4. The information is archived, out of date or otherwise inaccessible; or,
 5. It would be impractical or resource-intensive to prepare the material for routine release.

- Beaminster Town Council is statutorily obliged to respond to requests within 20 working days. The day after the request is received is the first day of the 20 (working) days.
- If Beaminster Town Council don't hold all the requested information, it will supply the information it does hold and provide guidance as to whom to contact to obtain the remainder of the information.

INFORMATION PUBLISHED

Beaminster Town Council will publish the following information on www.discoverbeaminster.co.uk or a hard copy can be obtained from the Town Council Office, Fleet Street, Beaminster.

Class 1: Who we are and what we do – Organisation information, structures, locations and contacts

- Who is who on the Council and its Committees
- Contact details for Town Clerk and Council members
- Location of main Council office and accessibility details
- Staffing structure

Class 2: what we spend and how we spend it – financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit

- Current and previous financial year as a minimum
- Annual return form and report by auditor (AGAR)
- Finalised budget
- Precept
- Borrowing approval letter
- Financial Standing Orders and Regulations
- Grants given and received
- List of current contracts awarded and value of contract

- Members allowances and expenses

Class 3: what our priorities are and how we are doing – Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews

- Annual Report to Parish Meeting – current and previous year as a minimum
- Local charters drawn up in accordance with DCLG guidelines (if applicable)

Class 4: how we make decisions, decision making process and records of decisions (Current and previous Council year as a minimum)

- Timetable of meetings (Council, Committee and Sub Committee meetings and Parish meeting)
- Agendas of meetings
- Minutes of meetings – NB this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting
- Reports presented to Council – NB this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting
- Responses to consultation papers
- Responses to planning applications
- Bye-laws

Class 5: our policies and procedures, written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities

- Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business
 1. Procedural Standing Orders
 2. Committee and Sub-committee Terms of Reference
 3. Delegated authority in terms of officers
 4. Code of Conduct
 5. Policy statements
- Policies and procedures for the provision of services
 1. Equality and Diversity policy
 2. Health and safety policy
 3. Freedom of information policy
 4. Complaints procedure
- Data protection policy
- Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)

Class 6: lists and registers

- Assets Register
- Disclosure Log (indicating the information that has been provided in response to requests)
- Register of Members Interests
- Register of gifts and hospitality

Class 7: information about services offered included leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses

- Allotments
- Burial grounds and closed churchyards
- Community Centres and village halls
- Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities
- Bus shelters
- Markets
- Public conveniences
- Agency agreements
- A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees

Contact details:

**Mrs Christine Bright – Town Clerk
Beaminster Town Council
Council Office
8 Fleet Street
Beaminster
Dorset
DT8 3EF**

Tel: 01308 863634

townclerk@beaminster-tc.gov.uk

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 @ 10p per sheet (black & white)	Photocopying cost + paper cost
	Photocopying @ 15p per sheet (colour)	Photocopying cost + paper cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class
Statutory Fee		In accordance with the relevant legislation