

CREDITON HAMLETS PARISH COUNCIL (the Council)

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 (the Act) was enacted to increase public access to information held by public authorities. The Act places two main responsibilities on the Council:

- To publish information through a Publication Scheme
- To respond to written requests for information received from members of the public

Publication Scheme

The Council has created a Publication Scheme in accordance with the Model Scheme issued by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). It sets out what information is available and how it can be accessed. The Scheme can be accessed through the Council's website (www.creditonhamlets.org.uk).

Requests under the Act

Requests made under the Act must normally be made in writing and provide an address for correspondence. Requests can be made in person or by telephone in exceptional circumstances but in all cases a correspondence address is required. For the purpose of the Act an email or postal address will be sufficient. If you wish to make a request please contact the Clerk:

Mrs Charlotte Long, Oakwood, The Meadows, Yeoford. Crediton EX17 5PN or clerk@creditonhamlets-pc.gov.uk or 01363 84558.

The Council is not required to generate new information in response to requests received but must consider for release information that is held at the time the request is received and must provide it within 20 working days.

When the Clerk receives a request she will discuss it and how it will be processed with the Chairman, the Vice Chairman and Cllr Ruth Vigers. This panel will support the Clerk in ensuring the request is processed in the most effective and practical way.

Exemptions

The Act does not provide for unlimited access to all information held by the Council. There are limits to and restrictions on information that can be disclosed in response to a request. These restrictions are contained within sections of the Act and are referred to as exemptions. If the Council decides not to release information in response to a request it will clearly state the appropriate exemption that is being relied upon.

Complaints and Reviews

If you are unhappy with the response that you have received to a request for information you are entitled to complain to the Council and request that an internal review of the decision be conducted. The review panel will consist of three councillors who were not involved in the original decision. Requests for internal review should be submitted to the Clerk.

If you remain dissatisfied after the completion of an internal review, you are entitled to complain directly to the ICO who will consider the way in which your request has been handled. The ICO is the Regulator for the Act and offers impartial advice about any aspect of the regime. The ICO publishes extensive guidance for members of the public through its website www.ico.org.