

GRADE RUAN PARISH COUNCIL

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Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

Adopted 18th May 2021

Obligations of the Scheme

Grade Ruan Parish Council, as a public authority, must produce and maintain a publication scheme. The scheme acts as a guide to the information the council routinely makes available to the public. Its purpose is to help the public understand what the Council does and how it does it. This publication scheme commits Grade Ruan Parish Council to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The Council shall:

- 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.
- Specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- Proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- 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.
- Review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- Produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- Make this publication scheme available to the public.
- 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.

Using the Scheme

The publication scheme is categorised into seven sections below. Where possible, a weblink is provided to the relevant webpage in which the documents are located. Documents are available as a webpage, PDF, Word document or hard copy. If you require any documents not available online or any assistance in locating information, please contact the Council.

Most of the information is available free of charge and can be viewed on our website by clicking on the relevant document heading which will redirect you to the relevant PDF document or webpage of the council's website. Below are our charges for information, should it be applicable:

- Photocopying/printing (Black and White) – 20p per A4 sheet
- Photocopying/printing (Colour) – 40p per A4 sheet
- Postage – cost of Royal Mail standard 2nd class

1. Who We Are and What We Do

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|---|-----------------------------|
| Contact details for Clerk and Councillors | Online link |
|---|-----------------------------|

2. What We Spend and How We Spend It

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|--|---|
| Annual return and external auditor report | Online link |
| Internal auditor report | |
| Budget and Precept | |
| Financial Regulations | |
| Grant awarding policy | |
| Contracts | Contact Council |
| Payments (including grants awarded and received, and Members expenses) | Online link (within Full Council minutes) |

3. What Our Priorities Are and How We Are Doing

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|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Annual Parish Meetings | Online link |
| Risk Management | Online link |

4. How We Make Decisions

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| Standing Orders | Online link |
| Agendas and Minutes including planning consultation responses | Online link |
| Reports to Council and Committees | Contact Council |

5. Our Policies and Procedures

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|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Internal Control policy | Online link |
| Privacy Notice | |
| Co-option Procedure | |
| Other policies | Contact Council |

6. Lists and Registers

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|---|-----------------------------|
| Asset Register | Contact Council |
| Register of Members Interests | Online link |
| Register of gifts or hospitality | Contact Council |
| Any publicly available list or register | Contact Council |

7. The Services We Offer

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|--|-----------------|
| Street furniture (benches, bus shelters, telephone kiosks etc) | Contact Council |
| Agency agreements | Contact Council |
| Public toilets | Contact Council |
| Car parks | Contact Council |

Refusing a request for information

A requester may ask for any information that is held by the Council. However, the Council is not always obliged to provide the information. In some cases, there will be a good reason why the Council should not make public some or all of the information requested. Requests will be refused under the following circumstances:

- It would cost too much or take too much staff time to deal with the request.
- The request is vexatious.
- The request repeats a previous request from the same person.

In addition, the Freedom of Information Act contains a number of exemptions that allow Councils to withhold information from a requester. In some cases it will allow Councils to refuse to confirm or deny whether said information is held. Some exemptions relate to a particular type of information, for instance, information relating to government policy. Other exemptions are based on the harm that would arise or would be likely arise from disclosure, for example, if disclosure would be likely to prejudice a criminal investigation or prejudice someone's commercial interests. There is also an exemption for personal data if releasing it would be contrary to the Data Protection Act.

The Council can automatically withhold information because an exemption applies only if the exemption is 'absolute'. This may be, for example, information received from the security services, which is covered by an absolute exemption. However, most exemptions are not absolute but require the Council to apply a public interest test. This means the Council must consider the public interest arguments before deciding whether to disclose the information.