

Keswick and Intwood Parish Council Publication Scheme

Background

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 sets out a new audit framework for local public authorities which are currently covered by the Audit Commission regime. Under the new framework Keswick and Intwood Parish Council will be exempt from routine external audit because the Council's turnover does not exceed £25,000. Instead, the Council will be subject to the new transparency requirements set out in the *Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities* published by the Department for Communities and Local Government. This will enable local electors and ratepayers to access relevant information about the Council's accounts and governance.

Furthermore, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. The Council also has a requirement to prepare and maintain a publication scheme. The Act includes all local authorities in the definition of "Public Authority" and it therefore applies to Keswick and Intwood Parish Council.

Purpose and Aim of the Publication Scheme

As well as meeting the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, individual members of the public already have a right of access to information about themselves held by the Council under the Data Protection Act 1998. In addition, information is publicly available in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 which includes agendas, minutes and the vast majority of reports that are dealt with at meetings of the Council. There is also a general right of access to various environmental information held under the Environmental Information Regulations 2005 although at present none is held by the Council.

The Freedom of Information Act extends these rights to allow public access to all types of information held by the Council. Any person who makes a request to the Council for information must be told whether the Council holds that information and, subject to exemptions must be offered access to it and supplied with a copy.

Under the Act, the Council is required to adopt and maintain a publication scheme which sets out the classes of information it holds, the manner in which it intends to publish it and whether a charge will be made for the copies. The purpose of the publication scheme is to encourage organisations to publish more information proactively and to develop a greater culture of openness. The scheme will thereby ensure that significant information is publicly available, without the need for a member of the public having to make a specific request for it.

Content of the Publication Scheme

Overall responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the publication scheme rests with the Parish Clerk. Any questions with regard to the scheme or its content should be addressed to Phillip Brooks, Parish Clerk Keswick and Intwood Parish Council by e-mail to Keswick.intwood@btinternet.com or by telephone to 01603 250639.

Many of the documents and information referred to in the publication scheme can be viewed on the website and copied free of charge. Where this is the case, the documents are referred to specifically in the scheme. Other requests for information should be made to the Parish Clerk.

Where information is held electronically, it will be supplied on request in the relevant format. However all information is available on paper and copies of documents can also be supplied in this way. In general, copies will be supplied free of charge but where a charge is made it is to cover only the Council's copying and postage costs, usually in the case of bulky or complex documents.

Keswick and Intwood Parish Council Publication Scheme.

The Classes of information.

Local councils vary in the functions that they perform. The model scheme recognises this. It therefore identifies six core classes of information which it is anticipated will cover the core functions that are carried out by all local councils. The core classes covering these functions contain a list of document types that all local councils adopting the scheme will be obliged to publish. However even within these core functions different local councils may have developed different levels of responsibility. In order to reflect this some of the core classes contain optional material. This provides the local council with the opportunity to expand the range of information made available under the core classes by selecting the appropriate optional material.

As well as the core classes there are a further seven optional classes.

Model Publication Scheme for Local Councils (Core Classes Only).

Keswick and Intwood Parish Council will publish information in accordance with the Model Publication Scheme. As new information is produced which falls within a class, it will be prepared for publication and made available.

Excluded throughout the model scheme is general correspondence sent or received by councils and all information relating to private individuals by virtue of it being personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998.

In certain classes a limitation on the age of some documents has also been stipulated. For the avoidance of doubt this does not mean information beyond that date cannot be obtained, it simply indicates that it is not available as a matter of course within the model publication scheme.

Format in which information is provided.

A hard copy is available on request from the clerk to the council, or the information will be made available for inspection as described in section 3 of the model scheme. Where available the Council will publish the information on their website. However, even where this option is available, hard copies will be made available if requested.

Fees.

If a fee is charged the following will apply:

Paper copies - Minimum charge £5.00 for up to 5 pages plus 20p per sheet over 5 pages

Core Classes of Information.

1) Council Internal Practice and Procedure.

- Minutes of Council (and any sub-committees which may be constituted)
Procedural Standing Orders
Chair's Annual Report to Parish Meeting
- List of Councillors and Councillor responsibilities
- Optional documents: -
Agendas and supporting papers for council meetings but limited in each case to the forthcoming or immediate meeting.

2) Code of Conduct.

- Members Declaration of Acceptance of Office
Members Register of Interests can be viewed via a Parish Council website link to the South Norfolk District Council website.

3) Periodic Electoral Review.

- This is information concerning changes to the electoral arrangements for parish, town and community councils. It includes recommendations for the creation of new wards, the amendment of existing wards, proposals for the names of new wards and alterations to the number of councillors to be elected to the council. Currently no such information is held by the Council.

4) Employment Practice and Procedure.

- Terms & conditions of employment
Job descriptions.

Exclusions - 'personal records' i.e. appraisals, employee specific salary details, disciplinary records, sickness records and the like by virtue of being personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998.

(The Council employs only one person - the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.)

5) Planning Documents.

- Responses to planning applications
- Optional documents: -
Parish Plan
Exclusions - Copies of planning consultations, the Development Plan, Structure Plan, Local Plan and Rights of Way/Footpath maps all of which are available from the local planning and/or highway authority respectively. Currently no such information is held by the Council.

6) Audit and Accounts.

- Annual return form - limited to the last financial year
Annual Statutory report by auditor (internal and external)
Receipt/Payment books, Receipt books of all kinds, Bank Statements from all accounts
Precept request - limited to the last financial year
VAT records
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations
Assets register - this will include details of commons/village greens owned by the council including management schemes for commons as well as village halls, community centres and recreation grounds.
Risk Assessments
- Optional documents: -
Loan sanction approvals
Fees and charges applied by the council
Exclusions - all commercially sensitive information e.g. quotations and tenders, loan documentation and insurance policies. With regard to quotations and tenders, this information is treated as confidential to ensure that the whole tender process is fair i.e. if tender information is released to a third party prior to the end of the tender period those who initially submitted tenders could be undercut and/or unfairly disadvantaged.

Optional Classes of Information.

The following information is not included in the scheme but will be made available where it exists and upon request.

7) Development and Implementation of Policy.

- Any Policy Statements issued by the Council
- Responses made by the Council to consultation papers
- Analysis of responses received to public consultations by the Council
- Village Appraisal
- Complaints handling procedure.

8) Byelaws.

- Currently none is produced by the Council.

9) Council Circulars and Newsletters.

- Currently none is produced by the Council (apart from contributing to the Parish *Newsletter*).

10) Arts, Entertainment and Tourist Information.

- Currently none is produced by the Council.

11) Allotments.

- Currently the Council has no allotments.

12) Burial Grounds.

- Currently the Parish Council has no responsibility for burial grounds.

13) Best Value.

- This is information which encompasses the duty owed by a Council to the local people to provide good quality services at an acceptable cost, to continually improve the delivery of public services and to marshal such services across its entire area.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - PUBLICATION SCHEMES

Declaration Form

Name of Public Authority:

Keswick and Intwood Parish Council, 7 Lindford Drive, Eaton, Norwich NR4 6LT has adopted the model scheme titled Model Publication Scheme for Local Councils (Core Classes Only) produced in accordance with section 20 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and will publish information in accordance with that scheme.

Phillip Brooks

Clerk Keswick and Intwood Parish Council

June 2015.

Contact details:

The contact details for the person/official who will be responsible for maintaining the publication scheme and who should be contacted if any issues arise concerning the organisation's compliance with the Freedom of Information Act are:

- Phillip Brooks
- Clerk to Keswick and Intwood Parish Council 7 Lindford Drive, Eaton, Norwich NR4 6LT
- Phone: 01603 250639
E-Mail: keswick.intwood@btinternet.com