PORLOCK PARISH COUNCIL
POLICY: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

1. Purpose
This policy sets out how Porlock Parish Council complies with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and our commitment to openness, transparency, and accountability.

2. Scope
This policy applies to:

- All recorded information held by Porlock Parish Council
- All FOI requests received from members of the public
- All staff, councillors, contractors, and volunteers handling information on our behalf

3. Legal Framework
This policy is governed by:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs), where applicable
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR (for personal data)

4. Publication Scheme
We maintain a **Publication Scheme** that proactively makes key information available, including:

- Governance and decision-making information
- Policies and procedures
- Financial information
- Meeting agendas and minutes

Information in the Publication Scheme is available on our website or on request.

5. Making a Freedom of Information Request
Requests must:

- Be made in writing (email or letter)
- Include the requester's name and contact address
- Clearly describe the information requested

Requests should be sent to:

- Parish Clerk – clerk@porlockparishcouncil.gov.uk

6. Responding to Requests

- Requests will be acknowledged and responded to within **20 working days**
- Advice and assistance will be provided where reasonable
- Extensions may apply where exemptions are being considered
- Requests may be refused where lawful exemptions apply

7. Exemptions
Some information may be withheld under FOIA exemptions, including:

- Personal data
- Commercially sensitive information
- Information intended for future publication
- Information where disclosure would prejudice effective conduct of public affairs

Where a qualified exemption applies, a public interest test will be carried out.

8. Environmental Information
Requests relating to environmental matters will be handled under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, which may have different timescales and rules.

9. Charges
- Most requests are free of charge
- Fees may apply for copying, printing, or postage
- Requests exceeding the statutory cost limit may be refused or require refinement

10. Complaints and Appeals
If a requester is dissatisfied, they may:
1. Request an internal review within 40 working days
2. Escalate the complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

ICO contact details:
www.ico.org.uk | 0303 123 1113

11. Responsibilities
- The Clerk is responsible for FOI compliance
- All staff and councillors must support lawful and timely disclosure

12. Policy Review
This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.

Dated: 13th May 2026

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Duncan McCanlis	Johnathan Jones
Chair	Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer