

GNOSALL PARISH COUNCIL
(Including the Wards of Moreton and Knightley)

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INTERNAL REVIEW POLICY

Internal review procedure for Freedom of Information (FIO) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests

Written:	September 2026
Formally adopted by Council:	October 2026
Reviewed:	n/a
Next Review:	October 2029 (or as necessary)

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004 provide you with the right of access to information held by public authorities, including Gnosall Parish Council. It does this in two ways:

- Public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities via their Publication Scheme.
- Members of the public are entitled to request recorded information held by public authorities.

The council makes every effort to ensure that information requests are answered promptly and professionally, and that the Publication Scheme is kept up to date. However, if you are not satisfied, you have the right to request a review into the response that you have received, or, to complain about our handling of your request or our Publication Scheme.

There is a legal requirement under the EIR for public authorities to have an internal review procedure in place. The Freedom of Information Code of Practice recommends that public authorities also have a procedure in place for dealing with disputes about FOI requests and consequently Gnosall Council has adopted the same procedure for dealing with reviews or complaints about requests dealt with under both the EIR and FOI Act. This procedure also applies to complaints concerning the Publication Scheme.

In this procedure, 'complaint' refers to an expression of dissatisfaction with Gnosall Parish Council's compliance with the above legislation, or a request for an internal review which seeks to challenge the request handling process or the outcome of a request to access recorded information held by the council.

What can I request a review about?	
Complain about the way we have handled your request: -	Our failure to reply within the permitted time limit (20 working days).
	Our failure to provide information in the requested format.
	Our failure to state whether or not we hold the information requested.
	We did not properly explain reasons for refusing the request.
	We did not correctly apply an exemption under the Act or Regulations – that is, we refused to disclose information for the wrong reason.
Request an internal review about a decision to:	Refuse access to information, withholding some, or all, of the information requested.
	Charge a fee for providing information.
The Council's compliance with its Publication Scheme	Our failure to include information or the inclusion of out-of-date information.

What you cannot request a review about.
Not liking the answer that you have received.

How can I request a review?
Put the request in writing.
Email the request to chiefofficer@gnosallparishcouncil.gov.uk
Your request should be made within 40 working days after receipt of our initial response. Requests made more than 40 working days after the response will not be considered.
Please explain clearly the reasons why you disagree with our response, or are dissatisfied with the handling of a request, or with our Publication Scheme.
You may provide supporting evidence if applicable.

What happens next?
Your request for a review of our response will be considered free of charge.
It will be acknowledged promptly, usually within 5 working days of receipt.
Requests for a review of responses to, or the handling of EIR and FOI requests, and complaints about the Publication Scheme, will be dealt with as soon as possible.
In the event that clarification of an internal review or complaint is required we will seek this from you e.g. it is not clear what you are dissatisfied with in particular.

Reviews will be dealt with in a fair, thorough and impartial manner. As such the review will be undertaken by a panel which did not deal with your original request. The review panel will aim to take a fresh look at the request, based on all available evidence at the date of your request.
They will re-evaluate the handling of the original request reviewing whether the council made the correct decision originally, and particular attention will be paid to any concerns raised by you.
As part of this process, the panel may need to consult with the original responding officer(s) and/or member(s) that provided the original response. However, the panel is not bound by any views on the internal review expressed by those who dealt with the original request, their views will simply be treated as background information, rather than a suggestion of how to handle the review.
The review panel will make a decision about the validity of any exemptions/exceptions applied. This includes decisions taken about where the public interest lies if a qualified exemption/exception was used or whether the council has complied with its statutory duties. The panel may also apply different or additional exemptions/exceptions.
The Chair of the Internal Review Panel will let you know the outcome of the review, in writing, giving an explanation of the decision reached.

Possible Decision Reached by Review Panel	Action that will be taken
The original decision to withhold information is upheld.	No information will be released.
The original decision is partially upheld.	The original decision stands but some specified information is to be provided.
The original decision is overturned.	All the requested information is to be released.
In all cases, the Chair of the Internal Review Panel will communicate the decision to the requester. Those councillors not on the Internal Review Panel will be informed either by email or at the next Full Council meeting, whichever is the sooner.	
Abuse of the review procedure, such as repeated requests for review following every request made, may be treated as vexatious under the Council's Persistent or Vexatious Requests Policy.	

What can I do if I am not satisfied with the response?
You have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) and ask them to review our responses.
The ICO are the UK's independent body that oversees information rights including those set out in the FOI Act and EIR.
The ICO can be contacted at: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, Telephone: 0303 123 1113