

## **Cotswolds Conservation Board**

### **Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Publication Scheme**

#### **The Cotswolds Conservation Board**

The Cotswolds Conservation Board (the Board) is a public body established under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and has the following statutory purposes:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB); and
- To increase the understanding and enjoyment by the public of the special qualities of the AONB,

While having regard for these purposes, the Board is required to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the AONB.

#### **Publication Scheme**

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires all public authorities, including the Board, to adopt and maintain a scheme relating to the publication of information. The purpose of the Act is to promote greater openness by public authorities (government and other public sector bodies, including conservation boards) and gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by those authorities.

The Board is committed to conducting its affairs openly and, in general, information held by the Board is available for public inspection. This publication scheme is a guide to the information routinely published by the Board. It is not a list of actual publications, since these will change over time, but is a description of classes or types of information available. The classes of information are described in the Appendix to this document.

#### **Exemptions**

The Board has a presumption in favour of openness in its business. Access by the public and press to meetings and connected papers is only limited in those instances where confidential or exempt information is likely to be discussed. In formulating this scheme, the Board seeks to continue this policy of openness and, with regard to the public interest, will try to provide any information requested that has been produced by the Board and that has not been classified as exempt. For exemptions which are not absolute but where a public interest test can be applied, requests for information will be considered on a case-by-case basis and the balance will be in favour of disclosure. Reasons for withholding information will be clearly stated, where applicable.

Excluded information includes all that is defined as exempt under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000; Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; the Environmental Information Regulations 1992; the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1983 (updated 1996 and 2003) and information which is personal and private to individuals which is dealt with by the Data Protection Act 1998. While the public does not have access to this personal and private

information, under the Data Protection Act the individual concerned does have access to that information.

### **Access to Information**

The information contained in each class may be available in a variety of formats:

- as hard copy on request from the Board's offices;
- by inspection at the Board offices by prior appointment; and/or
- through the Cotswolds Conservation Board web-site.

It is the aim of the Board to make as much information as possible available on-line. Where practicable, all major publications are published on-line at the same time as hard copies are available.

Large-print and audio tape versions of information can be made available by arrangement and will incur no additional charge.

### **Fees**

No charge will be made for accessing information available on the web.

No charge will normally be made when information is viewed at Board offices although, generally, we will seek to recover the cost of photocopied material and printed publications, as well as their postage costs.

In all other instances, the Board will operate the charging policy for the provision of information set out in The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

### **Copyright**

All Board copyrights are reserved but material appropriately attributed may be reproduced for purposes of private study or research with permission. Any other re-use of Board information shall only be permitted where the prior approval of the Board has been obtained.

### **Publication and Operation of the Scheme and Feedback**

This Scheme is available at the Board's offices and on the Board's web site. It will be reviewed by the Board after a period of twelve months of operation and thereafter on a regular basis.

The Board has appointed its Information and Interpretation Officer as the officer responsible for this scheme on behalf of the Board and also as responsible for maintaining the scheme on a day-to-day basis. The Information and Interpretation Officer is based at the Board's offices at The Old Police Station, Cotswolds Heritage Centre, Northleach, Glos. GL54 3JH (telephone: 01451 862000; email: [info@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](mailto:info@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)). Feedback on the Scheme would be most welcome. Any questions, comments or complaints should also be sent to the Board's Information and Interpretation Officer.

**Further Information about Freedom of Information**

Responsibility for overseeing the operation of the Act has been given to the Information Commissioner. The post is independent and reports directly to Parliament. The address of the Information Commissioner is: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF; 'e'-mail address is: [ma@data.gov.uk](mailto:ma@data.gov.uk); the website is [www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk); telephone 01625 545745; and fax 01625 524510.

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## **Classes of Information**

### **1) The Board and its Constitution**

Information about the way in which the Board conducts its business, and general information about its Members.

**Examples:** Committee Structure and Terms of Reference, Procedural Rules, Scheme of Delegation, Codes of Conduct for Members and Officers, Declaration of Interests, Board membership.

**2) The Board's Decisions** Information about the decisions made by the Board.

**Examples:** Board and Committee agendas, reports and minutes.

**Exemptions:** Items falling within Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and information that is exempt (whether absolute or qualified) by virtue of the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

### **3) Board Policies and Strategies**

Information about the process of policy development that guides the work of the Board.

**Examples:** AONB Management Plan, Board Policies and Strategies, Business Plan,

### **4) Board Finance and Performance**

Financial and performance information about the Board.

**Examples:** Financial and Contract Rules, Business Plan and budgets, Annual Statement of Accounts, external audit report, risk assessments, members' allowances, Annual Review.

**Exemptions:** Any commercially sensitive information, e.g. quotations, tenders and insurance policies, including information relating to quotations and tenders leading up to the time of the award of a contract, to ensure that the tender process is fair, which is exempt by virtue of the Freedom of Information Act.

**5) Development Planning** Information relating to the Board's role in local planning matters.

**Examples:** Responses to major planning applications; responses to consultations on local and regional planning policy.

### **6) AONB Enhancement and Practical Conservation**

Information relating to enhancement of the AONB.

**Examples:** Access improvements; promotion of good building design; specialist land management, built environment, landscape design and ecology advice.

## **7) Visitor Information, Educational and Promotional Material**

Material and publications produced by the Board for visitor and educational use, planning guidance and promotion.

**Examples:** The Annual Review, the Cotswolds Lion newspaper and news releases produced by the Board; advice on interpretation in the AONB.

**Exemptions:** Certain publications, such as videos and information packs, may only be available as hard copy. Items that are already charged for will be available at the published price.

## **8) Internal Administration and Employment**

Information relating to the day-to-day running of the Board and to employment practice and procedure.

**Examples:** Organisational structure, policies and procedures concerning the recruitment and selection of staff, recruitment advertisements, job descriptions and person specifications, current pay scales by reference to job grades and clusters.

**Exemptions:** Information about particular members of staff or other individuals and information which would prejudice the health, safety or security of staff or premises.

### **Availability**

All of the above information is available through:

Cotswolds Conservation Board Offices,  
The Old Police Station,  
Cotswolds Heritage Centre,  
Northleach,  
Gloucestershire GL54 3JH.

Telephone: 01451 862000,

Email: [info@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](mailto:info@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)

Website: [www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)

