



## Hinderclay Village Hall Freedom of Information Requests

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) empowers individuals and organisations to access information held by public authorities. The FOIA aims to increase transparency and accountability in public services by making public authorities proactively publish key information about their activities and introduces a mechanism for individuals and organisations to submit requests for information. The majority of Charities do not fall directly under the umbrella of FOIA requests but they can still be impacted indirectly.

**Requests for information** – individuals can approach charities seeking information under the FOIA.

**Disclosure through public authorities** – information provided by charities to public authorities may become subject to disclosure under FOIA.

**Compliance in certain situations** – charities may need to release information in response to FOIA requests directed at their public authority partners.

Whilst Hinderclay Village Hall (HVH) generally is not subject to the FOIA, we may receive FOI requests for information. Such requests must be managed effectively to ensure confidentiality and compliance with data protection laws and protect sensitive information. In order to do this, we must recognise different types of information requests. **Trustees approached for information should not disclose information directly. All such requests must be made in writing and forwarded to the Secretary.**

**Freedom of information (FOI) requests** – These requests can appear formal and may mistakenly be treated as obligatory, risking unauthorised data sharing.

**Subject access requests (SAR)** – Individuals may seek access to personal data held about them, which we must handle in accordance with data protection regulations.

**General enquiries** – These can include requests for information that we routinely provide to beneficiaries or publish on a website.

**Responding to Requests** - If a FOI request is received from a member of the public the Secretary should inform the requester that the Village Hall Committee (VHC) is not obliged to respond under the FOIA. If the information is available elsewhere it might be appropriate to direct the requester to the relevant source. A response will be provided within 5 working days. If a request is made by a public authority, an acknowledgement will be provided within 5 working days. The request will be considered by the Trustees at the next available meeting and a response made accordingly within 28 days of receiving the request.

**SAR and GDPR Compliance** – If a request is made for the VHC to disclose personal information held by them about that individual, the Secretary will provide an acknowledgement to the requester within 5 working days. The request will be considered by the Trustees at the next available meeting. An appropriate and secure response will be provided within 28 days in accordance with Hinderclay Village Hall's Policy on General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

**Grant Agreements** – When we enter into a Grant Agreement with a public authority it may include a requirement to submit a performance report that could fall within the scope of the FOIA. Contracts should be scrutinised and fully understood with regards to data sharing.

**Communicating with the Charity Commission** – Submissions to the Charity Commission can be subject to requests under FOIA. When reporting a serious incident to the Charity Commission, only the essential information should be provided, excluding personal data wherever possible.