STAINLAND & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

TRANSPARANCY POLICY

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Stainland & District Parish Council

Transparency Policy

INTRODUCTION

The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 was issued to meet the Government's desire to place more power into citizens' hands to increase democratic accountability and make it easier for local people to contribute to the local decision-making process and help shape public services.

Transparency is the foundation of local accountability and the key that gives people the tools and information they need to enable them to play a bigger role in society. The availability of data can also open new markets for local business, the voluntary and community sectors and social enterprises to run services or manage public assets.

'Data' means the objective, factual data, on which policy decisions are based and on which public services are assessed, or which is collected or generated in the course of public service delivery. This should be the basis for publication of information on the discharge of local authority functions.

The Government believes that in principle all data held and managed by local authorities should be made available to local people unless there are specific sensitivities (e.g. protecting vulnerable people or commercial and operational considerations) to doing so. It encourages local authorities to see data as a valuable resource not only to themselves, but also their partners and local people.

Three principals have guided the development of this Code:

• demand led – there are growing expectations that new technologies and publication of data should support transparency and accountability. It is vital that public bodies recognise the value to the public of the data they hold, understand what they hold, what their communities want and then release it in a way that allows the public, developers and the media to use it

• open – provision of public data should become integral to local authority engagement with local people so that it drives accountability to them. Its availability should be promoted and publicised so that residents know how to access it and how it can be used. Presentation should be helpful and accessible to local people and other interested persons, and

• timely – the timeliness of making public data available is often of vital importance. It should be made public as soon as possible following production even if it is not accompanied with detailed analysis.

This Code ensures local people can now see and access data covering:

• how money is spent – for example, all spending transactions over £500, all Government Procurement Card spending, and contracts valued over £5,000

• use of assets – ensuring that local people are able to scrutinise how well their local authority manages its assets.

• decision making – how decisions are taken and who is taking them, including how much senior staff are paid, and

• issues important to local people

The Parish Council realises the importance of adhering to the Transparency Code and the Accessibility Regulations 2018 and will endeavour to comply with legislation.

Transparency Code – Published Information

Information title	Information which should be published	Where to find on website
All items of expenditure	Details of each individual item of expenditure. This includes the date expenditure was incurred, the purpose of the expenditure, the amount, and any VAT that cannot be recovered.	All items of expenditure are listed in each set of minutes during the financial year, which can be found in on the website. A summary of the previous year's transactions is published in the AGAR which is on the website.

		Information can also be requested from the parish clerk.
Annual Governance Statement	Section 2 of the Annual Return, together with explanations of any negative responses.	The Annual Return is on the website.
End of Year Accounts	Section 1 of the Annual Return, the bank reconciliation, explanation of significant variances, and (if applicable) an explanation of any differences between "Balances carried forward" and "Total cash and short-term investments".	The Annual Return is on the website.
Internal Audit Report	Section 4 of the Annual Return, together with explanations of any negative responses.	The Annual Return is on the website.
List of councillors' responsibilities	Name of each councillor showing committee membership, specific functions, and representation on external local bodies.	On the website, councillors page.
Location of public land and building assets	Details of all public land and building assets owned or managed by the Council, including location and description.	Asset Register on SharePoint available on request.
Minutes, agendas and papers of formal meetings	Draft minutes published within one month of each formal meeting. Meeting agendas and associated papers published not later than three clear days before the meeting takes place.	Minutes and agendas are on the homepage of the website.