RYHALL PARISH COUNCIL
Freedom of Information (FOI) Handling Flow Chart
Operational procedure

1. Request Received

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Check format

- **Written?** (email, letter, webform) → FOI
- **Not written?** → Ask requester to submit in writing

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Check what is being requested

- **Personal data?** → Redirect to **Subject Access Request**
- **Simple routine info?** → Provide as **normal business** (do not log FOI)
- **Recorded information?** → Proceed as FOI

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2. Log the FOI Request

Record:

- Date received
- Requester details
- Summary of request
- Deadline (20 working days)
- Service area responsible

Assign to relevant officer.

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3. Acknowledge the Request

Send acknowledgement within **2 working days**, confirming:

- FOI received
- 20-day deadline
- Any clarification needed

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4. Clarify (if needed)

Is the request unclear or too broad?

- **Yes** → Seek clarification
    - Pause the clock until clarification received
- **No** → Continue

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5. Search for Information

Responsible officer must:

- Identify all locations where information may be held
- Conduct thorough search
- Confirm whether information is:
    - **Held**
    - **Partially held**
    - **Not held**

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6. Consider Exemptions

Is any information exempt under FOI?

- **No** → Prepare full disclosure
- **Yes** →
    - Identify relevant exemption
    - Apply **public interest test** (if required)
    - Prepare partial disclosure or refusal notice

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7. Fees?

Are any charges applicable (copying, postage, viewing archived material)?

- **Yes** →
    - Notify requester
    - Pause response until payment received
- **No** → Continue

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8. Draft Response

Response must include:

- Whether information is held
- The information itself (unless exempt)
- Explanation of any exemptions applied
- Public interest reasoning (if applicable)
- Internal review rights

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9. Issue Response

Send final response **within 20 working days**.

If delay unavoidable:

- Notify requester before deadline
- Explain reason

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10. Internal Review (if requested)

- Assign to independent reviewing officer
- Complete review within **20 working days**
- Issue review outcome
- Provide ICO escalation details

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11. Close Case

Record:

- Outcome
- Exemptions used
- Date closed
- Any learning points for publication scheme