

15 December 2025

FOI Ref 22191

Request - You asked us the following:

I would like to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 concerning the unidentified male whose skeletal remains were discovered in Burton upon Trent in March 1971, and the subsequent inquest held at Burton Coroner's Court on 28 March 1974 before Coroner [REDACTED], which recorded an open verdict.

Please note that I am not seeking any investigative material, evidence, reports, photographs, statements, or operational details. I am requesting administrative and record-management information only, which falls outside the scope of Section 30 exemptions.

1. Confirmation of Record Holdings (Administrative Only)

Please confirm whether Staffordshire Police currently hold, or have ever held, any of the following administrative materials relating to the above case:

a) Any coroner-originated documents transferred to Staffordshire Police, including:
post-mortem reports,
bone analysis reports,
inquest papers,
coroner's correspondence,
coroner's register entries,
or any documents that formed part of Coroner [REDACTED] 1973–1974 inquest file.

b) Any police-held administrative or archival records relating to this case, including but not limited to:
case reference numbers,
index or summary cards,
retention codes,
transfer logs,
or classification categories (e.g., "open", "undetected", "unidentified").

I am not requesting the contents of the records — only whether such records exist or have existed.

2. Custody & Transfer History

If held, or previously held, please provide the administrative history only, specifically:

a) The date(s) when any coroner-originated material relating to this case was transferred to Staffordshire Police (if applicable).

b) Whether any such material was later transferred onwards (e.g., to the Coroner, another police force, Home Office, Forensic Science Service, etc.).

c) Whether any such material was recorded as lost, destroyed, or unlocatable as a result of office relocations, restructuring, or archive consolidation.

Again, I am not requesting the content of any documents — only an administrative outline of their custody.

3. Current Case Classification (Administrative, not Investigative)

Please confirm the current administrative classification of the case within Staffordshire Police systems (e.g., “open”, “unsolved”, “undetected”, “no further action”, “suspended”, etc.).

I am not asking for operational detail, investigations, assessments, or evidence — only the classification label.

4. Retention Schedules

Finally, please confirm:

a) The retention schedule applied to unidentified remains / open-verdicted cases in Staffordshire Police during the relevant era (1970s–present),
and

b) Whether this specific case is subject to extended retention under cold-case, homicide, or unidentified-person protocols.

I trust this request falls clearly within the scope of FOI legislation as it concerns administrative and archival information rather than investigative content.

Staffordshire Police (SP) received your request on 01/12/2025 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Staffordshire Police’s response to your enquiry is as follows:

SP holds/does not hold the requested information.

1. Confirmation of Record Holdings (Administrative Only)

Please confirm whether Staffordshire Police currently hold, or have ever held, any of the following administrative materials relating to the above case:

a) Any coroner-originated documents transferred to Staffordshire Police, including:

- post-mortem reports, - **Disclosed, SP hold post-mortem reports.**
- bone analysis reports, - **Disclosed, SP hold bone analysis reports.**
- inquest papers, - **Disclosed, SP hold inquest papers.**
- coroner’s correspondence, - **Disclosed, SP hold correspondence with the coroner.**
- coroner’s register entries, - **No information held.**



- or any documents that formed part of Coroner [REDACTED] 1973–1974 inquest file. – **Disclosed, SP hold documents that formed part of the Coroner’s inquest file.**
- b) Any police-held administrative or archival records relating to this case, including but not limited to:
- case reference numbers, - **Disclosed, SP hold case reference numbers.**
 - index or summary cards, - **Disclosed, SP hold index cards.**
 - retention codes, - **No information held.**
 - transfer logs, - **No information held.**
 - or classification categories (e.g., “open”, “undetected”, “unidentified”). - **No information held.**

2. Custody & Transfer History

If held, or previously held, please provide the administrative history only, specifically:

- a) The date(s) when any coroner-originated material relating to this case was transferred to Staffordshire Police (if applicable). – **No information held.**
- b) Whether any such material was later transferred onwards (e.g., to the Coroner, another police force, Home Office, Forensic Science Service, etc.). – **No information held.**
- c) Whether any such material was recorded as lost, destroyed, or unlocatable as a result of office relocations, restructuring, or archive consolidation – **No information held.**

3. Current Case Classification (Administrative, not Investigative)

- Please confirm the current administrative classification of the case within Staffordshire Police systems (e.g., “open”, “unsolved”, “undetected”, “no further action”, “suspended”, etc.). – **Disclosed, undetected.**

4. Retention Schedules

Finally, please confirm:

- a) The retention schedule applied to unidentified remains / open-verdicted cases in Staffordshire Police during the relevant era (1970s–present), - **Disclosed, the retention schedule of unidentified remains are subject to the National Retention Assessment Criteria and Management of Police Information processes.**
- b) Whether this specific case is subject to extended retention under cold-case, homicide, or unidentified-person protocols. – **No information held.**

Please be advised that all Freedom of Information request responses are published on the SP website although personal details are not included.

Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure

1. Who Can Ask for a Review

Any person who has requested information from SP, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

2. How to Request a Review

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing within two months of the date of receipt of this email, and should be addressed to:

IAT@staffordshire.police.uk

Or by Post to:

Information Access Team
Staffordshire Police HQ
PO Box 3167
Stafford
ST16 9JZ

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Information Access Team within two months of the SP response to the original FOI request.

3. Review Procedure

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing. The review will be conducted by a supervisor who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Information Access Team will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to forty working days.

The independent supervisor will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, considering the matters raised by the complaint.

4. Conclusion of the Appeal

On completion of the review the independent supervisor will reply to the appellant with the result of the review. If the appellant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following link: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/foi-and-eir-complaints/foi-and-eir-complaints/>

Freedom of Information
Information Access Team