



10 November 2025

FOI Ref 22027

**Request - You asked us the following:**

I am writing on behalf of a volunteer research team investigating a Staffordshire cold case still open after more than 50 years.

As a member of this research team, I hereby formally submit an FOI request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for all recorded information held by Staffordshire Police relating to the case commonly referred to as "Fred the Head", that of a man whose skeletal remains were discovered in a shallow grave on the site of an old flint mill off Newton Road near the River Trent (Winshill / Burton-upon-Trent) on 26th March 1971.

The investigation was originally led by DCI Peter Hough (under Detective Chief Superintendent [REDACTED]) and afterwards by DCI Dan Ison. In March 2021, DCI Ison was interviewed in the latest of three BBC Crimewatch episodes about this specific case and he assured viewers that "unsolved murders are never closed." Our team of volunteers - relying on material in the public domain - has managed to accrue a good deal of new information, some of which casts doubt upon accounts given by key witnesses at the time, and it is our fervent hope that you can help us progress further towards a solution.

This request specifically includes:

- Incident or occurrence logs,
- Investigation reports,
- Witness statements (especially - but not limited to - those given by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]),
- Forensic reports and photographs,
- Any subsequent review or cold-case re-examination documents
- The name of whoever currently has investigatory primacy for this case (SIO or team) since DCI Ison moved on from the Staffordshire police.

We received your request on 29/10/2025 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

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

**Staffordshire Police holds the requested information.**

- I am writing on behalf of a volunteer research team investigating a Staffordshire cold case still open after more than 50 years.  
As a member of this research team, I hereby formally submit an FOI request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for all recorded information held by Staffordshire Police relating to the case commonly referred to as "Fred the Head", that of a man whose skeletal remains were discovered in a shallow grave on the site of an old flint mill off Newton Road near the River Trent (Winshill / Burton-upon-Trent) on 26th March 1971.  
The investigation was originally led by DCI Peter Hough (under Detective Chief Superintendent [REDACTED]) and afterwards by DCI Dan Ison. In March 2021, DCI Ison was interviewed in the latest of three BBC Crimewatch episodes about this specific case and he assured viewers that "unsolved murders are never closed." Our team of volunteers - relying on material in the public



domain - has managed to accrue a good deal of new information, some of which casts doubt upon accounts given by key witnesses at the time, and it is our fervent hope that you can help us progress further towards a solution.

This request specifically includes:

Incident or occurrence logs,

Investigation reports,

Witness statements (especially - but not limited to - those given by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]),

Forensic reports and photographs,

Any subsequent review or cold-case re-examination documents – **Withheld, Section 30(1)(a)(b).**

- The name of whoever currently has investigatory primacy for this case (SIO or team) since DCI Ison moved on from the Staffordshire police. – **Withheld, Section 40(2).**

### **The following exemption has been applied:**

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for this particular request.

- Section 30(1)(a)(b) – Criminal Investigations

Section 30 is qualified and class based and, as such, we are required to apply the public interest test.

- Section 40(2) Personal Information

Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption which means that there is no need to quantify the harm that may arise from the disclosure; neither is it subject to a public interest test.

To release personal or third-party information held by Staffordshire Police, would breach the data protection principles; namely –

- Data is lawfully and fairly processed.
- Processed in line with an individual's rights.
- Data is secure.

Personal and third-party information cannot be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

### **Public Interest Test**

#### **Factors favouring disclosure under Section 30(1)(a)(b)**

Disclosure of the information would improve the public's knowledge and understanding of the investigatory process and, as all police investigations are publicly funded, would show how public funds are being spent.

#### **Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 30(1)(a)(b)**

Disclosure of the requested information would prejudice how investigations are carried out in the future. Staffordshire Police is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. Any release of information relating to ongoing investigations could prejudice and



undermine those investigations. The prevention and detection of such matters could therefore be hindered and therefore risk interference with evidence, which could have detrimental impact on future investigations. In addition, the right to a fair trial could be undermined.

### **Balance test**

Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is a release of information to the world in general and not an individual applicant. Having considered the public interest factors we are required to determine whether on balance the factors favouring disclosure outweigh those which are against disclosure. It is our view that the factors favouring disclosure do not outweigh those which favour non-disclosure.

Please be advised that all Freedom of Information request responses are published on the Staffordshire Police 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 Staffordshire Police, 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](mailto: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 Force's 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 20 working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.



STAFFORDSHIRE  
**POLICE**

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, taking into account 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