



Our Ref: FOI: 22101
Your Ref: FOI: 22027
Date: 12 November 2025

Internal Review

Re: Request for internal review of response to application for information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, original request first notified to Staffordshire Police on 29th October 2025 (ref 22027).

We refer to the above request which was expressed in the following terms:

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 (Winhill / Burton-upon-Trent) on 26th March 1971.

The investigation was originally led by DCI [REDACTED] (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.*

Further to the above, we also note the following comments made within your request for Internal Review which was received on 12th November 2025 (ref 22101):

I am requesting an Internal Review of FOI 22027.

I accept that Section 30(1)(a)(b) applies to the operational investigative materials I originally requested. However, the refusal did not address whether Staffordshire Police holds or can disclose materials that do not form part of the active investigative record, specifically:

- The original public press statements or press releases issued by Staffordshire Police in 1971 and any later appeals.*
- The publicly circulated physical description and identifying features of the victim as recorded in formal public communications.*

- Any missing persons bulletins, comparison lists, or circulated notices that were already released into the public domain at the time.
- The date on which the case was last subject to formal review (not the review contents, only the date).

These items fall outside Section 30(1)(a)(b) as they were created for public dissemination and do not contain sensitive investigative methodology. They also do not engage Section 40(2) as they do not identify living individuals.

Please confirm whether these items can be disclosed, or if withheld, please state the exemption relied upon for each item individually, as required under FOIA.

Our Response

Upon review of your request for information under the Freedom of Information provision referenced above, Staffordshire Police are of the opinion that the application of the exemptions outlined within the response were fully justified and that the explanation and rationale for their application was conveyed clearly and unequivocally.

The purpose of an Internal Review (IR) is to examine how the initial questions posed in the original FOI request were dealt with but within your request for an IR, you have asked for specific documents and have also requested the date that the criminal case was last formally reviewed. These additional questions cannot be addressed by this IR so we have logged a new FOI request in relation to them under reference FOI 22105:

- The original public press statements or press releases issued by Staffordshire Police in 1971 and any later appeals.
- The publicly circulated physical description and identifying features of the victim as recorded in formal public communications.
- Any missing persons bulletins, comparison lists, or circulated notices that were already released into the public domain at the time.
- The date on which the case was last subject to formal review (not the review contents, only the date).

The Freedom of Information team will respond to you in due course with regard to these specific questions.

Please be advised that all FOI requests and response letters are published on the Staffordshire Police website although personal details are not included.

If you are not content with the outcome of the review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner to investigate. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/foi-and-eir-complaints/foi-and-eir-complaints/>

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