



FRATING PARISH COUNCIL

Memorial Hall, Main Road, Frating, CO7 7DJ.

Clerk to the Council: Kay English

Email: clerk@fratingparishcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.fratingparishcouncil.gov.uk

Recording and Behaviour Standards Policy

Date Approved: 7th September 2026

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out the standards, rules, and protocols governing the recording of conversations and meetings and the expected behaviour of all individuals engaging with Frating Parish Council. Its purpose is to promote transparency, safeguard personal data, ensure safe working practices and uphold appropriate standards of conduct.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All councillors
- The Clerk
- Members of the public interacting with the Council
- Contractors or third parties engaged by the Council

It covers recordings made:

- During Council meetings
- During informal discussions relating to Council business
- During telephone calls, online meetings, or in-person conversations
- Through any device, including mobile phones, audio recorders or software applications

Behaviour standards apply to all interactions with the Council, whether in meetings, correspondence, or informal engagement.

3. General Principles

- The Council supports openness but must balance transparency with privacy, data protection, and personal safety.
- No individual has an automatic right to record conversations involving Council business unless permitted under this policy.
- All recordings must comply with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and relevant local government legislation.
- All individuals engaging with the Council are expected to behave respectfully, courteously, and without aggression, harassment, or intimidation.

4. Recording of Council Meetings

4.1 Public Right to Record

Members of the public may record public Council meetings, including audio, video, or written reporting, provided that:

- Recording does not disrupt the meeting

- Equipment is used quietly and unobtrusively
- The Chairperson is informed before the meeting begins

4.2 Clerk's Recording for Minute-Taking

The Clerk may make an audio recording solely to support the accurate preparation of minutes. Such recordings:

- Must be discreet and non-disruptive
- Do not form part of the official record
- Are temporary working notes
- Are held securely and deleted once the minutes are approved
- Must not be shared, copied, or used for any other purpose. Access is restricted to the Clerk and where necessary, the Chair for verification.

4.3 Restrictions

Recording is not permitted during:

- Closed sessions
- Discussions involving confidential or exempt information
- Any part of a meeting where the Chairperson determines recording would be inappropriate

5. Recording of Conversations Outside Meetings

5.1 Councillors and Staff

Councillors and staff must not record conversations relating to Council business without:

- Prior consent from all participants
- A clear and legitimate Council purpose (e.g., safeguarding, protection of property)
- Notification to the Clerk, who will maintain a record of authorised recordings

5.2 Members of the Public

Members of the public must not record conversations with councillors or staff unless:

- Explicit consent is given
- The purpose of the recording is stated
- The recording does not breach confidentiality or data protection requirements

6. Protocol for Seeking Consent

When requesting permission to record:

- The request must be made before recording begins
- The reason for recording must be stated
- Participants must be informed how the recording will be stored, used and retained
- Consent must be explicit; silence or implied agreement is insufficient

Where consent is refused, recording must not take place.

7. Recording in Circumstances of Abusive or Threatening Behaviour

Frating Parish Council recognises that councillors and staff may encounter behaviour that is abusive, threatening or causes concern for personal safety.

Where a councillor or staff member reasonably believes they are at risk of harm, harassment, intimidation, or abusive behaviour, they may make an audio recording **without prior consent**, solely for evidential or safeguarding purposes.

Any such recording must:

- Capture only what is necessary to evidence the behaviour
- Be provided to the Clerk as soon as practicable
- Be stored securely as a Council record
- Not be retained on personal devices once transferred
- Not be shared publicly or used for any purpose other than safeguarding, complaint handling, or legal processes

Recordings may be shared only with those who have a legitimate need, including the Clerk, Monitoring Officer, Essex Police or other relevant authorities.

The Council will treat any incident requiring such recording as a potential safeguarding or conduct matter and will follow appropriate reporting and escalation procedures.

8. Behaviour Standards

All individuals engaging with the Council are expected to:

- Treat councillors, staff and others with courtesy and respect
- Refrain from aggressive, abusive, discriminatory or intimidating behaviour
- Allow meetings and discussions to proceed without disruption
- Follow the reasonable directions of the Chairperson or Clerk

Behaviour that breaches these standards may result in:

- Suspension of participation in a meeting
- Referral to the Monitoring Officer
- Formal complaint procedures
- Reporting to relevant authorities where necessary

9. Storage, Access and Retention of Recordings

- Any authorised recording becomes a Council record and must be stored securely by the Clerk.
- Recordings must not be kept on personal devices once transferred.
- Access is restricted to those with a legitimate need.
- Retention periods will follow the Council's **Document Retention Policy**.

10. Use of Recordings

Recordings may only be used for:

- Preparing accurate minutes
- Investigating complaints or conduct matters
- Training or governance purposes (with consent)
- Legal or regulatory requirements

Recordings must not be used for:

- Personal use
- Publication on social media without permission
- Any purpose that could bring the Council into disrepute

11. Breaches of Policy

Unauthorised recording, misuse of recordings, or breaches of behaviour standards may result in:

- Referral to the Monitoring Officer
- Formal complaint procedures
- Disciplinary action (for staff)
- Reporting to relevant authorities where data protection or safeguarding concerns arise