

MARKYATE PARISH COUNCIL



Parish Office, Y2K Hall, Cavendish Road, Markyate, Herts. AL3 8PS

T: 01582 842785/840110

clerk@markyateparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.markyateparishcouncil.com

Clerk to the Council: Mrs V Tilley

Telephone Policy

This document outlines the Markyate Parish Council Policy on recording telephone calls at the Parish Office, Cavendish Road, Markyate, AL3 8PS.

Communicating the Call Recording System

1. The Call Recording system operated by Markyate Parish Council is BT Cloud Voice.
2. The telephone call recording system in operation will automatically record all incoming and outgoing telephone calls and recordings may be used for training purposes, to improve customer care, to support the investigation of complaints particularly those concerning allegations of aggression at work, for disciplinary purposes, and to provide evidence for any regulatory investigation.
3. Recording stops when calls are terminated.
4. Every call record includes the information provided or other words spoken by the caller, date, time and duration of the call and the receiving workstation, the telephone number that the customer is using (unless withheld), the words spoken by users of the phone, his or her identity.
5. The Parish Council is required to make reasonable efforts to communicate that calls will be monitored and recorded. This is done by:
 - A recorded message before connecting to a member of staff relays that the call will be recorded.
 - Putting a notice on the Council's website.
 - Including a note in documents which promote services and provide contact telephone numbers.
 - Adding a notification to standard letter templates.

Procedures for managing and releasing call recordings

1. The recordings shall be stored securely, with access to the recordings controlled and managed by the Clerk/Halls Administrator
2. Access to the recordings is only allowed to satisfy a clearly defined business need and reasons for requesting access must be formally authorised by the Chairman of the Parish Council. All requests for call recordings should include the following:
 - The reason for the request
 - Date and time of the call
 - Telephone extension used to make/receive the call
 - External number involved if known.
 - Where possible, the names of all parties to the telephone call.
 - Any other information on the nature of the call
3. Browsing of recordings for no specific purpose is not acceptable.
4. The Data Protection Act allows persons access to information that we hold about them. This includes recorded telephone calls. Therefore, the recordings will be stored in such a way as to enable the Clerk to retrieve information relating to one or more individuals as easily as possible.
5. Requests for copies of telephone conversations made as Subject Access Requests under the Data Protection Act must be notified to the Clerk immediately and, subject to assessment, they will request the call recording and arrange for the individual concerned to visit to the Council offices to hear the recording.

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6. In the case of a request from an external body in connection with the detection/prevention of crime, e.g., the police, the request should be forwarded to the Clerk who will complete the request for a call recording.
7. Requests for copies of telephone conversations as part of staff disciplinary processes will only be released with the written agreement of the Chairman of the Parish Council who will consult with the Clerk before approval is granted.
8. Recordings of calls will be disposed of after six months. However, if there is a justified need to retain a specific recording for a longer period, this may be reviewed, and the retention period amended. Information will not be retained for a longer period than necessary.
9. Calls used for training purposes must not include any personal details that identify the caller.
- 10 Every worker must record a greeting in their voicemail in line with customer care standards, which clearly states their full name, and when they expect to be able to return the call. Bank Holidays and non-working days excluded.
- 11 When answering telephone calls, every member of staff should follow the customer care guidelines and identify themselves clearly by greeting callers with a 'good morning or good afternoon' and their full name.
12. If for any reason a worker has not responded to a call within the 3-day customer care standard and a repeat call is made by the customer, it is their responsibility to respond immediately they do not have a further 3 days in that instance.
It is the responsibility of every worker to check their voicemail before the end of every working day and respond appropriately.
13. Staff should not publish their personal mobile telephone number.
14. When going on leave the greeting should state when the mailbox will next be checked, for security this should not state the user is on leave or out of the country.

Staff Protection

There is a risk that Parish Council staff may receive calls from persistent complainants or receive calls which contain unacceptable behaviour. A recording may be used as evidence in this situation, or if legal action is appropriate, as per the Parish Council's procedure for dealing with unacceptable behaviour towards staff and unreasonably persistent complainants.

The decision as to whether a recording will be used as evidence in the situations outlined above will be made by the Chairman of the Parish Council.