



Civility and respect should be at the heart of public life, and good governance is fundamental to ensuring an effective and well-functioning democracy at all levels.

Throughout the local government sector, there have been growing concerns about the impact bullying, harassment, and intimidation have on local (parish and town) councils, councillors, clerks and council staff and the resulting effectiveness of local councils. Whilst this is not an issue at Cressing Parish Council, signing up to the Civility & Respect Pledge shows residents that the Parish Council finds this type of behaviour to be unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It also shows support to other parish councils in their struggles against these issues.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), One Voice Wales, the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and county associations (e.g. EALC) responded to these concerns by setting up a Civility and Respect Working Group to oversee the Civility and Respect Project.

The intimidation, abuse, bullying and harassment of councillors, clerks and council staff, in person or online, is unacceptable, whether by councillors, clerks, council staff, or members of the public.

This can prevent councils from functioning effectively; councillors from representing local people; discouraging people from getting involved (including standing for election) and undermining public confidence and trust in local democracy.

NALC, county associations and OVW, as the membership organisations representing the first tier of local government in England and Wales, and the SLCC, as the professional body for clerks, have worked together to promote civility and respect in public life, good governance, positive debate and supporting the well-being of councillors, professional officers and staff.

848 councils have signed the pledge throughout the UK, some in close proximity to Cressing, including (but are not limited to) Finchingfield, Witham, Saffron Walden, Thaxted, Shalford, Great Notley, Little Waltham, Great Totham, Maldon, Tollesbury and Wickham Bishops.

By signing up to the Civility and Respect Pledge, Cressing Parish Council demonstrates that it is committed to treating Councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles and that it:

- Will put in place a training programme for councillors and staff
- Has signed up to and regularly reviews the Code of Conduct for councillors
- Has good governance arrangements in place including staff contracts and a dignity at work policy
- Will seek professional help at the early stages should civility and respect issues arise

- Will commit to calling out bullying and harassment if and when it happens
- Will continue to learn from best practices in the sector and aspire to be a role model/champion council
- Supports the continued lobbying for change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge including sanctions for elected members where appropriate

In order to sign up, the Council must register and agree to the following statements:

- i. CPC has agreed that it will treat all councillors, clerk and all employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.
- ii. CPC has committed to training councillors and staff.
- iii. CPC has a current Code of Conduct adopted for councillors
- iv. CPC has good governance arrangements in place including staff contracts, and a dignity at work policy.
- v. CPC will commit to seeking professional help in the early stages should civility and respect issues arise.
- vi. CPC will commit to calling out bullying and harassment if and when it happens.
- vii. CPC will continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to being a role model/champion council
- viii. CPC supports the continued lobbying for a change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge, including sanctions for elected members where appropriate

RESOLUTION:

1. To review the Council's existing Code of Conduct.

Voting:	For:
	Against:
	Abstentions:
	No Vote Registered:

2. To sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge, including agreeing and committing to the eight statements included in the agenda.