FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 17 FEBRUARY 2025

BUSINESS PROPOSAL FROM SCRIBE: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CIVIC.LY PLATFORM

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council:

1.1. Accepts the proposal from Scribe CEO, John Fagan, at **Appendix 1** to become a design partner and agree next steps;

1.2. Approves the implementation of the Scribe platform at zero cost for the first year;

1.3. Phases out the current use of Parish Online for asset management as Civic.ly is implemented;

1.4. Commits staff resources to ensure successful adoption and feedback for system improvement; and

1.5. Agree in principle for the addition of this platform to the 26/27 budget pending successful implementation.

2. BACKGROUND:

2.1. Recent updates to asset management compliance for parish councils in England emphasise transparency, accountability, and efficient oversight. Key requirements include:

- **Fixed Asset Register:** Maintain a detailed register for assets over £150 with descriptions, acquisition dates, locations, market values, replacement values for insurance, and disposal details.
- **Asset Valuation:** Record assets at acquisition cost without subsequent depreciation, impairment, or re-evaluation.
- **Maintenance & Inspections:** Conduct annual inspections to ensure assets remain serviceable and repair costs are minimised.
- **Financing:** Explore varied funding sources (precept, earmarked reserves, grants, sponsorships, donations, loans) with community consultation for loans.
- **Sustainability:** Aim to reduce service costs, boost asset-derived income, and enable shared community use.
- **Financial Governance:** Adhere to the Model Financial Regulations for effective and transparent financial control.

2.2. Due to these updates, officers conducted an investigation into the use of Civic.ly as a standalone product to assist the Council in better managing its assets. Subsequently, Scribe approached the Council with a proposal to become a Design Partner, as outlined in **Appendix 1.**

2.3. The proposed partnership would enable the implementation of the Civic.ly Asset Management platform at no cost for the first year, providing a cost-free evaluation period. As a Design Partner, the Council would gain early adopter benefits, including free access to the platform and the opportunity to influence its development, while Civic.ly would benefit from the Council's feedback and insights.

3. TECHINCAL OVERVIEW

3.1. Currently, the Council manages asset data through multiple systems - Parish Online for mapping; spreadsheets for financial/insurance details, and paper-based processes for inspections and task allocation.

3.2. Civic.ly will consolidate these functions into one streamlined digital platform, aligning with the Council's strategic goals for digital governance, compliance, and sustainability.

3.3. While Parish Online excels in mapping it lacks operational features critical for day-to-day asset management. Civic.ly offers a comprehensive solution that integrates mapping, maintenance scheduling, compliance tracking, and mobile functionality.

3.4. Civic.ly, will enable grounds staff to update assets on the go by simply uploading a photo via an App (the App will be available on IOS and Google Play Store)*[1] which automatically records the location. Administrators can then add any additional necessary data, allowing administrative and operational processes to work seamlessly together.

3.5. The introduction of Civic.ly will see Parish Online phased out for asset management over the next year, but retained for spatial mapping uses.

4. SYSTEM COMPARISON: PARISH ONLINE VS. CIVIC.LY

Feature	Parish Online	Civic.ly
Mapping	Extensive GIS mapping	Integrated mapping linked with full asset management
Asset Management	Basic asset recording	End-to-end lifecycle management with maintenance tracking
Task Management	Limited functionality	Digital checklists, defect tracking, and automated reminders
Mobile Access	Desktop only	Mobile app enabling real-time updates and inspections
Compliance Tools	Not available	Built-in inspection regimes, document uploads, audit trails
Reporting	CSV data export only	Interactive dashboards with real-time tracking and advanced reporting

[1] Staff currently use work and/or personal phones for work purposes. For security and GDPR all phones must have a password/other ID to access them. Users of the Civic.ly App on their personal device will need to delete this if leaving the Council and their user licence will be removed by Civic.ly Admin.

5. IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE & TRAINING

5.1. If the proposal is approved, the following timeline will be observed:

- **3 March 2025:** Initiate staff training and onboarding.
- **17 March 2025:** Begin migration of asset data from Parish Online to Civic.ly.
- **1 April 2025:** Launch the mobile app for maintenance staff.
- **15 April 2025:** Activate automated compliance tracking and reporting.
- **1 May 2025:** Conduct a performance review and collect initial staff feedback.
- **1 September 2025:** Hold a mid-year review to assess system effectiveness and operational improvements.
- **31 March 2026:** Complete an end-of-year evaluation and decide on future engagement.

5.2. Training Sessions: Four 45-minute online sessions (each including Q&A) will be offered:

- **Getting Started:** For all users, including Officers (Deputy Clerk and Finance Officer) and the Grounds Team.
- **Asset Data Capture:** Tailored for Operations Management, the Grounds Team, and Officers.
- **Task Management:** For Operations Management, the Grounds Team, and Officers.
- **Reporting:** For Operations Management, Finance, and the Deputy Clerk.

5.3. To minimise duplication of effort, existing asset data from Parish Online will be transferred to Civic.ly, with the Grounds Team assisting by capturing photos as needed.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- **Year 1 (2024-25):** Zero setup or onboarding fees; full access provided at no cost.
- **Year 2 (2025-26) Onwards:** Subscription fee of £258 per month (£3,096 annually).

6.1. **Value-Added Benefits:**

- Enhanced compliance tracking and reporting.
- Improved scheduling and maintenance efficiency.
- Reduction in manual work and meeting times through real-time, two-way communication between office and field staff.
- Generation of critical reports (for AGAR, insurance, asset replacement forecasting, budgeting) that facilitate smarter resource planning.

6.2. While Civic.ly currently does not match all mapping features of Parish Online, future updates may render it a complete replacement, potentially saving around £500 annually.

7. NEXT STEPS & TERMS OF UPTAKE

7.1. **Immediate Next Steps:**

- Confirm participation in the design partner program.
- Schedule the initial staff training and system setup.
- Begin asset data migration and validation.
- Develop a detailed implementation timeline with key milestones.
- Evaluate the system's effectiveness at the end of Year 1.

7.2. **Terms and Conditions:**

- The Council will dedicate necessary staff resources for training and adoption.
- Regular feedback on system performance and additional feature requirements is expected.
- Active use of the system for asset management, maintenance scheduling, and compliance tracking is mandatory.
- Participation in case studies and testimonials will be requested if the system proves beneficial.

8. DIVERSITY & CLIMATE IMPACT

8.1. Adopting Civic.ly supports the Council's broader sustainability and inclusion objectives:

- **Environmental Impact:** Reduces reliance on paper, extends asset longevity through proactive maintenance, and ensures better compliance with sustainability regulations.
- **Inclusivity:** Mobile accessibility empowers all staff—including field workers—to participate in real-time, enhancing overall operational efficiency.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1. The opportunity to become a design partner with Scribe and implement the Civic.ly platform at zero cost during the first year represents a significant step towards digital transformation. By streamlining operations, enhancing compliance, and reducing manual workload, Civic.ly offers a clear advantage over existing processes and systems. It is therefore recommended that the Council approve this proposal and move forward with implementation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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