

Calne Without Parish Council
Proposal to move CWPC's accounts onto a commercial accounting platform

1. Background

Calne Without Parish Council currently maintains its accounts on an Excel spreadsheet. Multiple tabs on the Spreadsheet cover Expenditure, Income, Budget, Bank Reconciliation, Petty Cash, Credit Card, VAT Claim, Sun Edison, CIL, Reserves, S137 and Summary.

This arrangement results in the need for multiple interventions for a single transaction, taking time and increasing the opportunity for human error. For example, a single transaction might require data entries on the Expenditure, Budget, VAT Claim, CIL, Reserves and S137 tabs.

2. Proposal

It is proposed that the Council takes out an annual subscription to the Scribe Accounts system.

Scribe is a cloud-based accounting package specifically designed for small to medium-sized parish councils and with over 800 customers. Its functionality includes:

- Income
- Expenditure
- Bank reconciliations
- Budgeting and forecasting
- VAT returns
- Invoicing
- Annual AGAR returns
- Reserves
- Asset Register
- Reporting
- Multi-user cloud accounts
- Daily backups with full audit trail.

The package is compliant with accounting standards and is HMRC compliant. It comes with support and access to an online knowledge base including free webinars, community support, toolkits and guides. Additional linked packages are available to manage Bookings, Cemeteries and Allotments, which are not part of this proposal.

Subscribing to Scribe will save the Parish Clerk time in the ongoing maintenance of the Council's accounts and in the preparation of the monthly Balance and Expenditure Reports, VAT returns and end-of-year accounts. The time will be saved through removing the need for multiple data entries for transactions and the time in cross-checking and reconciling to ensure accuracy.

3. Cost

The cost of the subscription will be an Accounts subscription fee of annual subscription fee of £288.00 (+VAT), plus a one-off set up fee of £197.00 (+VAT).

The cost for the first year will therefore be £485.00 + VAT (£582.00 incl. VAT), reducing to £288.00 + VAT in future years (£345.60 incl. VAT).

4. Additional Information

Users

It is proposed that the Parish Clerk and the Finance Committee Chair would be trained in the system as a minimum. Read-only access could be provided to additional users if desired.

Exporting data

Data can be exported to Excel, or as a CSV file. This would enable the Council to transition back to Excel, or to an alternative system, at a future date if it desired. It would also enable data to be exported for analysis or presentation.

Security and resilience

Scribe runs on the cloud, requiring no local storage. All data is held on web servers. The system is backed up daily, with backups available for a maximum of one month.

The system will not hold details of our bank accounts. We will run regular data exports to ensure that we are able to recover in the event of a catastrophic systems failure or security breach.

Transition

It is proposed to retrospectively populate the system for the first part of 2022/23 to enable the benefit of the system to be realised in this financial year.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Council subscribes to the Scribe Accounts system for its accounts, at an annual subscription fee of £288.00 (+VAT), plus a one-off set up fee of £197.00 (+VAT).

Cllr John Barnes
Chair of the Finance Committee