

Agenda Item 13 – Replacement of the Parish Council’s Laptops

Background

The Parish Council has two laptops used by the Clerk as follows:

- Asus Vivobook S14/S15 – purchased in December 2020 at a cost of £441.66 plus VAT. Used on a daily basis. Runs on Windows 11.
- Lenovo Laptop – purchased in June 2016 at a cost of £267.52 plus VAT. Used for meetings and as a backup. Runs on Windows 10 and cannot be upgraded to Windows 11.

Microsoft is ending support for Windows 10 on the 14th October 2025. Whilst Windows 10 devices can still be used, from that date no feature or security updates will be provided.

The Council’s emails, files and documents must be securely protected as set out in the Council’s Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and GDPR Policy.

Both laptops are ageing – one cannot be upgraded to Windows 11 and, during a recent power cut, the Clerk noted that the battery for the other is discharging very quickly and it can only be used when plugged in. The laptop does not have a removable battery. It is heavily used and starting to run at a high CPU (Central Processing Unit) level which increases fan noise and battery wear, particularly when multiple applications or large files are in use. The Clerk has undertaken some maintenance and cleaning up of files and processes to reduce this but it is something that recurs.

Recommendations

1. It is **recommended** that the Parish Council purchase a new laptop to be used as the main Clerk’s laptop at a cost of C. £450 plus VAT.
2. With regard to maintaining a backup laptop, the following options to be considered:
 - a) Continue to use the Windows 10 laptop as a backup at least in the short term and review again later in the year.
 - b) Use the current main laptop as a backup as it runs on Windows 11. It would have to be used plugged in or the battery replaced by an IT professional.
 - c) Buy a second cheaper backup laptop with sufficient disk size. Likely to be in the region of £300 plus VAT. This is a better long-term solution.

Cost and Budget

For the key recommendation at 1. Above, the Clerk has done some investigations and a suitable laptop, similar to the current main laptop specification, can be purchased for approximately £450 plus VAT.

In respect of the backup options in 2 above:

- 2a has no current cost.

- 2b - A replacement Asus original battery for the existing laptop can be purchased at around £70-£100 including VAT, compatible batteries can be purchased for less, plus the fitting cost for which a quote will need to be obtained.
- 2c - An additional cheaper backup laptop with sufficient disk space can be purchased at a cost of around £300 plus VAT.

There is a Capital Budget of £1,000 plus VAT for the Purchase of Office Equipment in 2025-26. All the above options would be covered within the budget. Given that the laptops are the most expensive of the Office equipment and the Clerk's phone was replaced last year, it is not envisaged that there is likely to be significant further equipment expenditure in the year that would exceed the budget. For example, if the printer required replacement this would be covered within the remaining budget. It is also noted that the Council has Operational Reserves could be used if needed.

Debbie Bird
Clerk to Willand Parish Council
April 2025