

The Sampfords Parish Council

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Clerk & RFO

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Village Hall, Great Sampford,
Saffron Walden, CB10 2RL

Clerk's Report Parish Council Meeting 19th November 2024

1. Grit Bins

Have been purchased and are in position at Howe Lane and Sparepenny Lane.

2. The Hundreds Parish Society

Mike Young of the Hundreds Parish Society will be attending the January meeting to provide a 10-minute overview of the organisation.

3. 2024/25 Half Yearly budget review and Forecast to Year-end

Under review Cllrs. Welch & Swain

4. Policies & Procedures¹

The following policies & procedures have been issued for review and require feedback / sign off

- ²Financial Regulations
- Code of Conduct Policy
- ³Risk Management Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Grant Issuance Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Asset Register template update
- Standing Orders

The Clerk as incurred 62.00 hours of the 200 hours allocated to complete policies and procedures.

¹ All Policies & Procedures must be signed off by each councillor.

² Currently under review by Cllrs. Welch & Swain

³ The Risk Assessment Register must be completed before year end.

5. Financial Software

The Clerk / RFO would like to propose an evaluation of a financial software package to replace the current spreadsheets. The existing spreadsheets are subject to errors due to the repetitive manual input required, which requires unnecessary excessive time to perform multiple checks and validation.

The majority (85%) of parish councils in Essex use an NACL / SLCC approved vendor to provide an automated solution for chart of accounts, account grouping, automated bank reconciliation, automated report generation and automated audit / AGAR reporting. These packages can be access by multiple users if required to either act as creators of data, authorisers, recipients of data, or enquire only.

The most common product used is Scribe, which is priced according to the size of council data. An indicated quote has been provided as follows:

- Licence £249.00
- Annual Subscription £372.00
(this includes support, maintenance and software upgrades)
- Optional set up assistance £149.00

As an alternative, there is a cheaper, but less functional system, called Easy PC, which is £90.00 p.a. This package is less automated and required greater effort to produce bank reconciliation, reporting and annual reports, and has limited multiple access rights.

There is also a further product that is primarily designed for larger parish and town councils, which as expected is significantly more expensive, with a minimum entry level fee of £3000.00 pm.

Should it be agreed in principle to automate the Sampfords council's finances based on the above indicative costs, the plan would be as follows:

- Perform detailed evaluation of both products.
- Submit a product and commercial proposal together with a project plan to the council at the December meeting.
- Assuming approval, perform installation and set up during December / January.
- Parallel financial operations (spreadsheets and automated product) during January / February (if required).
- Live operation in March.