

REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL

1st November 2022

AGENDA ITEM 7.4 REPLACEMENT OF COUNCIL LAPTOP AND PURCHASE OF COUNCIL MOBILE PHONE

1. LAPTOP

- 1.1 Members will recall that the Clerk's laptop was purchased with the use of a Government grant which was available when Transparency rules were introduced requiring small councils to publish their key documents etc online. Such a grant is no longer available.
- 1.2 Your Clerk has previously reported that the laptop, purchased in 2016, was starting to perform slowly and poorly, hindering its use. More recently the screen has begun to malfunction. It therefore seems to be reaching the point where a replacement machine will be required. Should the problems not be resolved, authority is requested to replace the machine. The capacity required is not enormous as the laptop is obviously used primarily for dealing with documents. Accordingly it is thought that a purchase budget of £500-£600 (excl. VAT) would be sufficient to secure a suitable machine.

2 MOBILE PHONE

- 2.1 Members have previously expressed the view that the Clerk should be supplied with a mobile phone, which would have two key benefits – it would provide the Council with a single contact number that is not related to an individual's personal identifiers, and second it would mean that from time to time, if the Clerk is on holiday, the phone can be held by say a councillor so that responses to calls etc can still be made.
- 2.2 Research has focussed on two options –
 1. Buying/renting a very low-cost phone;
 2. Buying a reasonable, but not high priced, smartphone and renting a data sim.
- 2.3 The second of these options is preferred since:
 - Over 2 years, and even more over 3 or more years, this solution would prove more economic than option 1;
 - Option 2 provides the Clerk with a phone with the ability to take photographs etc and use the internet (both of which are occasionally required in the course of the Clerk's duties), without having to have recourse to their personal phone because the Council phone is inadequate.
- 2.4 On this basis, your Clerk recommends the purchase of a Nokia G11 phone, currently priced at about £120, together with the rental of a sim with a monthly data allowance of say 8Gb (currently priced at £7 monthly). The purchase of suitable screen / phone protection would also be recommended at minimal cost.
- 2.5 Should the Nokia not be available a phone of similar cost/specification would be purchased.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That authority be given for the replacement of the Council laptop within a budget of £500 excl VAT, with carry case.

- 3.2 That consideration be given to the purchase of a smartphone as described, together with the rental of a data sim of the type and cost described.

Jack Steel

Clerk to the Parish Council