

St Paul Malmesbury Without Parish Council

Report #06.3

Financial Software Upgrade

1. Purpose of the report

1. To invite the council to consider and agree an upgrade to its financial software package.

2. Background information

- 2.1 The council has been using the Alpha financial software provided by Rialtas for many years. This has been very successful in enabling the clerk and chairs of the finance committee to maintain accurate financial controls and ensure clean audit reports on our finances.

- 2.2 During a recent training session on Alpha, we were made aware that Rialtas now offer an online version of the Alpha software which is backed up on the cloud.

- 2.3 This version is accessible at any time by authorised people and would eliminate the need for data to be passed monthly by the clerk to other councillors maintaining their own Alpha back up files. Improved security, with data being backed up on line, is a welcome feature.

- 2.4 An added bonus would be that once the year end close down procedures had been completed by the clerk, the data could be accessed by other authorised councillors without the need to contact Rialtas and subsequently have their PC's updated.

- 2.5 The upgrade includes:

Access to Rialtas suite from any internet connected device via a web-browser

No need for local servers or installations

Secure cloud hosting, managed by Rialtas

Peace of mind with disaster recovery and data protection

Daily automatic backups and ability to create manual point-in-time backups

File attachments stored for the life of your contract

Automatic product updates and improvements over the initial 3-year term; annual renewal thereafter.

- 2.6 The quality of service provided by Rialtas has always been of a high standard and responses to any queries dealt with efficiently. Rialtas now serve some 1,500 councils compared with the 900 when we first established our relationship.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 At present Rialtas levy an annual fee of £306, excluding VAT, whereas the online version carries an additional fee of £212 excluding VAT. Both versions include all maintenance costs and support in case of need. The additional charge for the current year would be £176.67 excluding VAT if taken up in June.

- 3.2 While this increases the present cost, the benefits of much improved efficiency and security are thought, by the Projects Working Party, to outweigh the costs involved.

4. Options

- 4.1 Continue with the existing time-consuming software
- 4.2 Upgrade to the online version of Alpha
- 4.3 Seek an alternative solution - unlikely

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 Accept option 4.2 and ask the clerk to make the necessary arrangements.

Cllr David Briggs
Chair of Finance Committee.
16th June 2026