

Briefing Note

Council's telephone number

2 min read

1.0 Background

1.1 The recent stormy weather has highlighted the need for active messaging from the parish council and its helpers. In recent months, the parish has seen fallen trees that have blocked a key road into the parish and severe flooding that has needed the intervention of Fire & Rescue Services. In the first case, our Emergency Planning Team was able to attend and update residents on progress to clear the road. In the second case, the Team was not aware of the flooding, although it is likely that residents in that area were,

1.2 At the moment, the published telephone number that is used as the council's main contact is the Clerk's home landline. Where he needs to post notices away from home (as in the case of the trees), he uses his personal mobile phone that also makes that private number public. It would be helpful to move away from posting personal and private numbers into the public domain, and instead move towards a single number that can be the principal contact point for the council, and one that can be passed onto subsequent clerks without having to reprint publicity materials and stationery.

2.0 Options

2.1 At one time, this might have meant installing a separate landline for the Clerk, with the main disadvantage being its lack of portability. There are now alternatives that make this easier – here's a quick summary of the options.

Option	Cost	Comments
Exclusive landline for Clerk's Office	£140 installation £20 per month (with other options)	Not mobile and cannot be used for social media postings.
Purchase new mobile phone	Samsung 4G £100 (Argos) Monthly fee £20 (approx.)	Possible but expensive. Not personal to the Clerk so can be passed on as needed.
e-SIM card	From £4 per month (depending on data usage)	Can be used in current mobile phone and transferred when needed. No need to carry a second handset.

2.2 What is an eSIM? An eSim is a virtual version of the Sim cards we usually have in our phones and means an 'embedded' Sim. It controls our calls, texts and data, but an 'eSIM' is digital. Instead of a physical card, there's a tiny chip built into the phone that support eSims. The facility is bought online and activated by scanning a QR code. It starts working right away.

3.0 Conclusions

3.1 Changing the council's contact phone details is neither urgent or essential at the moment. Our social media posts for emergencies (and other council matters) can be done,

as at the present time, using a desktop PC supplemented by the Clerk's mobile phone. However, councillors may wish to consider that it is timely and appropriate to move away from the use of the Clerk's personal facilities to a more corporate arrangement that does not rely on goodwill.

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