

Comberbach Parish Council

Proposal to update arrangements for Office software and Cloud Storage January 2022

Cloud Storage

CPC staff use shared cloud storage, which has been working well for the last two years, using Dropbox free. This has been configured for the Clerk and RFO to share many directories as well as retaining private ones for both to store all other PC work, which has removed the need to back up to physical drives yet makes sure both have access to the same key documents.

Our Clerk has now started receiving warnings from Dropbox that she is nearing her storage limit, as storage in the free version is relatively limited. It is appropriate now to move to a proper business footing on a cloud storage solution and, ideally, move from personal to business licenses.

The easiest solution would be to stay with Dropbox using Dropbox Family (not intended for business use) at £13.99/month (£168/yr), or Dropbox Business at £10/month/user subject to a minimum £30/ month (£360/yr).

As an alternative Dropbox, Microsoft 365 Business incorporating Microsoft OneDrive is available at £18.80/ month for the two users (£226/yr) and Google Workspace Starter or Standard at £99 and £198 respectively.

Microsoft Office

The Clerk and RFO currently share a Microsoft 365 Family license to give access to Office applications but this isn't designed to support cloud storage sharing as required, and is technically outside the use terms of the Microsoft Family license. Use of the Microsoft Office applications should, in the CPC environment, be licensed using Microsoft Business licenses which are paid per user per year. The cost of these licenses is £113/yr/user. Currently the cost of Microsoft 365 Family is £80/yr.

Google Workspace subscription would include access to its web-based Google Office apps, though these lack functionality compared to Microsoft Office and are not recommended here.

Both the Microsoft Business and Google Workspace options include video meeting functionality meaning CPC would not need to resubscribe to Zoom if virtual meetings are reinstated.

Cost Comparison

The table below summarises CPCs annual Office and Security software and storage options, based on 2 users and migrating to Business version of Microsoft 365:

	Current (Dropbox Basic)	Dropbox Family	Dropbox Standard	Microsoft 365 Business Standard	Google Workspace Starter	Google Workspace Standard
Cloud storage	Free	£168	£360	£226	£99	£198
Capacity	2GB	2TB	5TB	1TB	30GB	2TB
Microsoft Office	£80	£190	£190	Included	£190	£190
Bullguard security	£70	£70	£70	£70	£70	£70
Total	£150	£428	£620	£296	£359	£458

Proposal

It is proposed the Clerk does not renew the subscription to Microsoft 365 Family in March 2022 and that CPC subscribe to 30 day trial of Microsoft 365 Business Standard from March 2022, to be billed annually from April 2022, and the Clerk continue to subscribe to Bullguard Premium security. Following activation of the Microsoft subscription, the RFO to configure Microsoft OneDrive for both users, migrate all files from Dropbox and configure Office applications to save to OneDrive.

S Penwill, RFO
January 2022