

Broadband and Telephone System Report

Background

The Town Council currently has one broadband line and two telephone lines at the Old Court House offices, currently with Utility Warehouse. The Broadband line provides internet to the staff and guest wifi within the meeting room upstairs for use by hirers. The guest wifi is reduced in band width for basic use only by guests, there is limited wifi signal within the Council Chamber.

Issues

The phone lines within the office work on two different systems. The Clerk and Deputy phone will only ring in cases of the others being engaged and phone calls cannot be transferred between phone systems. New cabling has been installed and network sockets for each device to help speed up the connections to the server. The existing phone line now needs to be moved which will allow the router to be placed within the new data cabinet and will remove it being placed under a desk where the office staff and work.

When issues have arisen the customer services at the Town Council's current supplier has not always been helpful and they have no suggestions to solve the issues with the phone lines.

Next steps

Moving to online VOIP telephone system was suggested as a solution to the phone issues and would assist when working from home. A quote has been obtained to supply a broadband line (installed in the new location) and two analogue lines to move us to a cloud- based telephone system.

Costs

Utility Warehouse (current supplier) - average price for the phone and broadband including calls is £85 per month (changes as call charges vary each month). Bingham Town Council are no longer in contract and can move. The office mobile costs around £9.17 a month, more if used for calls.

Quote for Phone/Broadband Line with Wildix system is £106.80 per month (all phone calls to landline and mobiles included). There is an initial set up cost of £250 for the set up and training plus the cost of the phone hand sets and headsets required. Additional costs at set up are for the purchase of desk phones and head sets.

If the Council wishes to add call recording to all telephone calls, this can be added by upgrading all licences to premium rather than essential. This would be £12 extra a month as one line is already quoted at premium to allow the Wildix Huddle recording system to be added. If the Wildix Huddle is not required the monthly fee will reduce to £102.80.

Further information

Being cloud based, the telephone system will not only allow phones calls to be easily transferred in the Old Court House, but calls can be transferred directly to staff working from home or to their mobiles if out on site. This would mean staff using mobiles would be able to use the app to call from the Town Council

rather than their personal number. Office staff can easily see when the Clerk or Deputy is in a meeting or on a call so can easily advise a caller of their availability. Calls can also be transferred to the staff members voicemail, so leaving a message for any member of staff will be easy. Being able to access the telephone system in any location will be useful and the office mobile will no longer be required is staff members download the app for work calls.

The Wildix system can also run a Wildix Huddle device. This can be used to record meetings, stream live to you tube and also to accept conference if needed. The additional cost for this device is £345.00 and is small and portable and connects to a laptop. This would meet with the decision of Council to record meetings and gives the option of live streaming if the Council wished. It would also be a useful device for conference calls if someone is unable to make a face to face group meeting but wished to participate. It is run from a premium licence which is included in the monthly costs above.

The Wildex system supports desk-based telephones or headsets for taking calls. The headsets can also be used for Teams meetings. The quote includes costs for three desk phones, two for the administration staff and one for the Clerk and Deputy's office. It also includes 2 head sets for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to use whilst working at home or can be taken for use in the Council Chamber or other meeting rooms as required.

Recommendation

To change to a cloud-based phone system at a monthly cost of £106.80 plus VAT and cancel the phone and broadband contract with Utility Warehouse.

To accept the set up costs of £886.00 to include the costs of three desk phones and two head sets.

To purchase a Wildix Huddle for live meeting recording at a cost of £345.00 and consideration can be given at a later date about live streaming or record and upload.