



Business Case

Drayton Parish Council (Vale of White Horse)

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1. Executive Summary

Drayton Parish Council has established sound financial management practices and is currently using Rialtas. However, challenges have emerged around reporting clarity, budget monitoring, and the visibility of reserve movements – issues that are particularly problematic when communicating financial information to councillors.

Scribe Accounts offers an intuitive cloud-based solution that simplifies reporting, enhances understanding for non-finance stakeholders, and improves operational efficiency. Scribe's automated reports, integrated reserves management, and year-end capabilities provide a clear path to reducing administrative overhead and increasing accuracy. Based on similar councils' experience, Scribe could conservatively save several hours each month on reporting and financial administration, and eliminate the need for duplicating data into spreadsheets.

2. Current Situation

The council currently uses **Rialtas** for financial management, with supplemental reliance on **spreadsheets** for clearer budget and reserves reporting. The Clerk has a professional finance background and uses trial balance and journal entries effectively, but current tools are not user-friendly for councillors.

Key operational context:

- Council operates on a **receipts and payments** basis.
- **Not VAT registered**, claiming through Form 126.
- Active interest in **clear budget monitoring** and **reserves visibility**.
- Future plans include a **new pavilion project**, which will require a booking system.
- Long-term potential interest in cemetery and allotment software integration.

Challenges with current tools:

- Budget monitoring reports from Rialtas are unclear, using confusing terminology (e.g. “actual year” vs “budget year”).
- Movements to/from reserves appear in a confusing way on reports.
- Lack of clarity in reporting forces manual workarounds in spreadsheets.
- Reporting format is not well understood by councillors.
- Purchase order functionality is missing, leading to coding confusion when invoices are received from budget holders.

3. Risks and Inefficiencies

If no change is made, the council will continue to experience the following inefficiencies and risks:

- **Manual duplication** of data from Rialtas into spreadsheets for clearer budget reports.
- **Councillor confusion** from ambiguous reports, leading to increased explanation workload.
- **Reserve tracking** requires additional explanation and is not clearly documented in system-generated reports.
- **Increased audit burden** from lack of clear audit trails within Rialtas and spreadsheets.
- **Missed automation opportunities**, such as linked invoicing, VAT calculations, and purchase order creation.
- **Opportunity cost** of time spent on workarounds rather than value-added council activities.

4. Solution: Scribe Benefits

Scribe directly addresses the pain points faced by the council, delivering both operational and strategic improvements:

- **Clear, councillor-friendly budget reports:** Summary reports display income and expenditure clearly, improving transparency.
- **Fully integrated reserves reporting:** Reserve transfers and transactions are tracked and reported in real-time, linked to cost codes.
- **Automated AGAR and variance reports:** Reduces effort and ensures compliance with external audit requirements.
- **Built-in purchase order and sales invoice system:** Helps maintain budget control and ensures correct coding from the start.
- **No external journaling required:** All corrections and adjustments are tracked with change history for audit transparency.
- **Flexible VAT reporting:** Form I26 is pre-populated and downloadable, saving significant admin time.
- **Uploadable documents (e.g. invoices, bank statements):** Supports robust audit trails and simplifies record keeping.
- **Unlimited users and auditor logins:** Reduces bottlenecks and enables collaborative working without additional cost.
- **Future integration-ready:** Bookings, Allotments, and Cemetery can be added at any time, ensuring scalability.

5. Conclusion

Scribe Accounts offers a significant opportunity for Drayton Parish Council to modernise its financial processes. By addressing key pain points around budget monitoring and reserve tracking, Scribe can simplify reporting for councillors, eliminate redundant spreadsheet work, and reduce audit risks.

With future-proofed features and integration potential for forthcoming facilities such as the new pavilion, Scribe also positions the council well for long-term operational efficiency.

Implementing Scribe would enable the Clerk to focus on strategic financial management, while providing clearer, more transparent information to councillors – a win for both governance and day-to-day operations.

Addendum: Venue Bookings Management – Supporting New Sports Facilities

As Drayton Parish Council prepares to bring its new multi-use sports facilities online – including two MUGAs, three football pitches, and a future pavilion – the need for a modern, flexible and user-friendly venue booking system becomes increasingly urgent.

Currently, no fit-for-purpose system is in place to manage these bookings, leading to potential administrative burden, lack of visibility, and risk of double-bookings. Furthermore, as noted in the meeting, there is a requirement for a system that:

- Can scale as each facility comes online sequentially
- Enables user self-service bookings, ideally integrated into the council website
- Supports different pricing models (e.g. peak/off-peak, discounts for parishioners or community groups)
- Handles invoicing and payments (including Stripe for card payments)
- Seamlessly integrates with the accounts system to streamline reconciliation

Scribe Bookings meets all of these requirements and offers the council the ability to manage bookings with minimal manual intervention. The system provides:

- A **public-facing online portal** that can be either linked or embedded within the council's website
- A **calendar-based admin view**, showing availability across venues, and allowing bulk/recurring bookings for regular hirers
- **Automated email confirmations** with optional invoice attachments
- Full **integration with Scribe Accounts**, eliminating the need to re-key booking income or reconcile spreadsheets
- Customisable features to allow the venue to run as you want it to
- Configurable booking modes (e.g. provisional, until payment received) to support the council's policies around up-front payments

The council would benefit from significant **time savings** through automation of invoicing, calendar management, and payment tracking. It also **reduces risk** by providing a centralised system for all venue hire activity.

In short, Scribe Bookings offers a practical, scalable and council-specific solution to support the growing demands of venue hire at Drayton's new facilities, fully integrated with the broader financial management processes already being considered.