

## Short Summary of Accounting Software for Melbourn Parish Council

### Software

The Parish Council currently uses AdvantEdge software for all the accounting and finance functions, with additional module for Allotments and Cemeteries. These additional modules and budgetary and asset module which have been purchased remain unused and not understood.

AdvantEdge has been the Councils preferred choice of software for 7+ years. Other options for accountancy packages appear to have not previously been explored.

The Council have 1 remaining year left of a 5 year contract, due for renewal on February 2017. This final contracted year must be paid, regardless of whether the Council choose to continue using this software or not.

### Usage

AdvantEdge is not well understood by the Parish staff as they have never received adequate training and training that has been provided by AdvantEdge has been insufficient, inconsistent and expensive. To date the Parish Council has been charged in excess of £3000.00+ for additional training which has proved ineffective. The Clerk has expressed concern regarding the lack of understanding and current controls over the accounting processes.

It has been difficult for the Bookkeeper to pick up where she left off because a lot of errors have come to light since AdvantEdge have been assisting. Over the past year, time has been wasted as it is difficult to get hold of Edge and they are not reliable in keeping with pre-arranged appointments. Carrying on with this arrangement is throwing good money after bad. It is also hindering progress when attempting to put financial controls in place and is producing inaccurate financial data

This must be rectified urgently to avoid any undue financial losses and unnecessary additional work.

### Cost

The current contract costs approximately £1165pa, with additional charges levied if income exceeds £250,000.00 in the fiscal year.

Additional support and training incurs charges of up to £75.00 per hour plus travel time, should the training be onsite. Considerable additional support will be required should the Council wish to continue with the current supplier.

If a new system is to be up and running in time for the new financial year on 1 April 2017 a decision needs to be made urgently to allow time to set the system up and undertake some initial training for The Clerk and Assistant Clerk . If the Clerk is to fulfil the RFO role adequate training and ongoing support must be provided to meet Council accountancy standards.

Having explored other options for software, and under the advice of CAPALC, see below for a costing table for comparison.

	<b>Bank Feed</b>	<b>Contract</b>	<b>Cost p/a</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Difficulty</b>
<b>AdvantEdge</b>	No	Optional	1165 + additional costs	£75.00 ph	***
<b>QuickBooks</b>	Yes	NA	210	Free	*
<b>Omega</b>	No	Optional	1723	£399.00	**