



From Paper and Post-its to One Digital Log: A Business Case for Trawden Forest Parish Council

*Bringing playground, park, benches and bus shelters into a single,
inspection-ready system*

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1. Executive Summary

Adele, thank you for the thoughtful preparation you brought to our session. It was clear you had already done the groundwork, from speaking with your landsman about swapping paper checklists for an app, to commissioning a full refresh of the asset register, to thinking through a staged, block-by-block rollout aligned to your existing inspection calendar. That is exactly the mindset that makes a project like this succeed.

The Challenge

- Inspections of the playground, Bull Grove park, benches and bus shelters currently rely on paper forms, calendar reminders and staff memory.
- Monthly park inspections are running unpredictably, sometimes with **7 to 8 weeks** between checks rather than a fixed schedule.
- Defects arrive by email and are then manually broken down into separate lists for the landsman, handyman and contractors, with no linkage back to the asset.
- The asset register lives on Scribe alongside financials, but there is no digital system for the work, the schedule or the audit trail.

The Solution. Civic.ly is a purpose-built asset management platform for parish and town councils. It combines an AI-assisted asset register, mobile inspections, defect workflows and mapping into one place, so the playground, Bull Grove and every bench and bus shelter sit in a single digital log rather than a stack of pieces of paper.

Investment. A one-off setup of **£499** and a subscription of **£79 per month**, with unlimited users, unlimited assets and cancel-anytime terms.

Estimated Return. A conservative annual benefit of approximately **£6,800** against an annual cost of **£948**, a payback of well under three months and a three-year net benefit of around **£17,600**.

Next Step. Present this case at the 7 September meeting with a view to a start at the top of the new financial year, and I am happy to run a follow-up team session with councillors or Susie whenever suits.

2. Current Situation

Council Profile

- **Council:** Trawden Forest Parish Council
- **Precept:** £140,342
- **Team:** Clerk (Adele), a newly appointed permanent assistant (Susie), one caretaker (Andre), plus a handyman (Leo)
- **Contractors:** Pendleboro Council for grounds maintenance and playground inspections at Bull Grove, plus a landsman qualified to inspect play equipment
- **Operational model:** Hybrid, with a small in-house team supported by trusted external contractors

Asset Estate at a Glance

Category	Approximate Quantity	Inspection Frequency
Playground equipment (main site)	8 pieces	Weekly + annual RoSPA
Bull Grove Park (play equipment, benches, bins)	Multiple items	Monthly (councillor)
Public benches	~30	Annual
Bus shelters	8	Annual

Category	Approximate Quantity	Inspection Frequency
Bins and street furniture	Several	Ad-hoc
Council building (part-tenanted café, part derelict undergoing conversion)	1	Project-based
Office furniture and equipment	Full inventory on Scribe	Annual audit

Tools and Processes Today

The financial and asset register is held on Scribe, which is working well for accounting purposes and AGAR. Inspections are recorded on paper tick-sheets, distributed to Andre or the landsman with the field visit, and returned to the office for filing. Public and staff-reported defects arrive by email and are compiled into separate action lists for Leo (handyman), the landsman and external contractors, then presented at the council meeting for ratification.

Key Challenges

- **Paper-based inspection cycle.** Weekly play inspections, monthly park checks and annual bench and bus shelter reviews all run on paper, with no digital record of what was seen on site.
- **Inconsistent monthly park inspections.** The Bull Grove monthly inspection is currently

reliant on a councillor and, as you described, can drift to 7 to 8 weeks between visits, which is a compliance and safety concern for a public open space.

- **Defects disconnected from assets.** Reported issues live in email threads and action lists, with no history of how many defects a specific bench, shelter or piece of play equipment has generated over time.
- **Coordination overhead.** The clerk manually triages every issue into separate lists per person, then re-shares outcomes after the council meeting.
- **Key-person risk.** Institutional knowledge sits in Adele's head and Andre's calendar, rather than in a system that new colleagues, such as Susie, can pick up quickly.

3. The Civic.ly Solution

Civic.ly is an asset management platform built specifically for UK parish, town and community councils. It brings the asset register, inspections, defects, maintenance jobs and mapping into a single web dashboard and mobile app, with unlimited users so Andre, Leo, Susie, councillors and even Pendleboro Council can all be given the appropriate level of access.

The photos you have already taken on your phone can be uploaded directly, and Civic.ly's AI will map each asset, categorise it, draft a description and suggest an initial condition, so much of the work your recent register refresh has done is preserved.

Key Features and Benefits

Feature	How It Helps Trawden Forest Parish Council
AI-powered asset mapping	Use the photos already on your phone to build a full digital asset register for the playground, Bull Grove, benches and bus

Feature	How It Helps Trawden Forest Parish Council
	shelters, in blocks that fit your calendar.
28+ pre-built inspection checklists	Ready-made routines for play equipment, benches, bins and outdoor assets, replacing the paper tick-sheets you send out with Andre and the landsman.
Mobile field app (iOS and Android)	Inspect on the spot: "yeah, yeah, yeah, oh, problem with that", with each result logged instantly, geo-tagged and photographed.
Recurring scheduling and rounds	Set weekly play, monthly Bull Grove, annual bench and bus shelter inspections once, and the system prompts the right person at the right time.
Defect workflow linked to assets	Failed checklist items or email reports become defects on the asset record, giving you the "how many issues has this bench had?" view you don't have today.
Audit trail and PDF reporting	Every inspection, defect and job is stamped with who, when and where, ready for

Feature	How It Helps Trawden Forest Parish Council
	insurers, RoSPA follow-ups and NALC Section 16 requirements.
Unlimited users with fine-grained permissions	Andre, Leo, Susie, councillors and Pendleboro Council staff can each see only what is assigned to them, without extra licence fees.
Interactive mapping (street, satellite, OS)	See every bench, shelter and play item on a map, filterable by condition, useful for councillor briefings and public queries.

Investment

Item	Amount
One-off setup and onboarding	£499
Monthly subscription (cancel anytime, 30 days' notice)	£79 per month

Item	Amount
Indicative annual cost (for ROI only)	£948
Included	Unlimited users, unlimited assets, web and mobile app, all checklists, ongoing updates and email support

Price rises are capped at the greater of 10% or your precept increase, with six months' notice, so there are no surprises for the councillor focused on cost control.

How Civic.ly Complements Scribe

Scribe will remain your finance and formal asset register system. Civic.ly sits alongside it as the operational layer for inspections, defects, scheduled maintenance and photographic records. Purchase values recorded in Scribe can be mirrored into Civic.ly at your own pace, which is a good task for Susie in her first weeks.

4. Benefits Analysis

Operational Improvements

- Up to **30-40% reduction** in admin time linked to inspections and defect triage (SOCITM benchmark).
- One digital log replaces paper forms, email lists and separate action sheets for Leo, the landsman and contractors.
- Consistent scheduling stops the Bull Grove monthly inspection drifting to 7 or 8 weeks between visits.

Financial Benefits

- Earlier detection of minor defects reduces emergency repair costs on benches, shelters and play equipment.
- Planned maintenance extends asset lifespan by **10-15%** (IAM), meaningful across ~30 benches and 8 shelters.
- Clearer scoping of work sent to Pendleboro Council and the landsman supports **10-20%** savings on contracted work (CIPFA).

Compliance and Risk Mitigation

- Time-stamped, photo-backed inspection records evidence the weekly playground checks insurers expect.
- Full audit trail supports NALC Section 16 (2024) and strengthens claims defensibility.
- Up to **25%** lower claims exposure through better documentation (Zurich Municipal).

Organisational Resilience

- Knowledge lives in the system, not in Adele's head, easing the handover to Susie.
- Councillors gain live visibility of Bull Grove condition without waiting for the next meeting.
- Simple onboarding for future staff and contractors, reducing dependency on any one individual.

5. ROI Analysis

Inputs and Assumptions

Input	Value / Source
Precept	£140,342
Operational model	Hybrid (in-house caretaker and handyman + Pendleboro Council and landsman)
Grounds/maintenance staff (FTE)	1 caretaker + 1 handyman (part-time) + contracted landsman
Admin staff (FTE)	1 Clerk + 1 permanent assistant (Susie)
Key assets	8 play items, Bull Grove Park, ~30 benches, 8 bus shelters, 1 building, office equipment
Insured estate value	To be confirmed from Scribe Box 9 (recommend refresh alongside onboarding)
Estimated annual grounds/contractor spend	~£20,000 (assumed for modelling)

Estimated Annual ROI

Category	Annual Benefit	Confidence
Admin efficiency (clerk + assistant time on inspections, defect triage, meeting prep)	£2,800	High
Contractor optimisation (clearer scoping to Pendleboro and landsman)	£2,000	Medium
Asset longevity (early defect detection on play, benches, shelters)	£1,200	Medium
Risk and claims reduction (documented playground inspections)	£800	Medium-Low
Total estimated annual benefit	£6,800	-

Metric	Value
Annual subscription cost	£948
One-off setup (Year 1 only)	£499
Net annual benefit (Year 1)	~£5,350
Payback period	Under 3 months
3-year net benefit	~£17,600

ROI Justification

The admin figure assumes a conservative saving of around two hours per week across the clerk and assistant on inspection admin, defect triage and meeting preparation, well within the 30-40% SOCITM benchmark for digitising these workflows. The contractor optimisation figure assumes a 10% improvement on approximately £20,000 of contracted grounds and inspection work with Pendleboro Council and the landsman, in line with CIPFA. Asset longevity uses IAM's lower-bound 10% figure applied to the benches, shelters and play items where early defect detection matters most. The risk figure is deliberately conservative and reflects a modest share of Zurich Municipal's 25% claims exposure reduction, recognising that Trawden Forest has playground assets where documented weekly inspections carry the highest value.

6. Conclusion

Trawden Forest is at a natural inflection point. You have a refreshed asset register, a permanent assistant to bring on, a landsman ready to swap paper for an app, and a clear ambition to bring the Bull Grove monthly inspection back onto a reliable schedule. Civic.ly is designed to meet each of those points directly, replacing pieces of paper with one digital log, and doing so for less than the cost of a single defensible playground claim.

With cancel-anytime terms, unlimited users and a payback period under three months, the risk to the council is minimal and the upside, in transparency, compliance and peace of mind, is significant. We would be delighted to support you into the new financial year, and I am happy to run a team session with councillors and Susie whenever helps.