

Gov.org.uk Domain

Background

The Clerk recently attended a free online course hosted by the Government Digital Cabinet Office and concerning Gov.uk domains.

The Gov.uk domain is an official government domain available to all public bodies and can be used in their website and e mail addresses.

The advantage of having a gov.uk domain is that it lets users of the websites and recipients of emails know that the site is genuine and not a scam organization and gives that organization extra protection from hacking etc.

Unlike other domain names like .co.uk or .org, the .gov.uk domain is only available to UK public sector organisations and is strictly controlled. Any visitor to a website or recipient of an email will know they are engaging with an official part of the government. Communications are immediately recognised as legitimate and recipients will always understand the capacity in which they are being contacted.

The Digital Cabinet Office says:

“There are 2 important ways that .gov.uk domains are more secure than .org.uk or other domains.

1. All companies that set up .gov.uk domains must meet strict security criteria. This includes measures like Cyber Essentials which ensure they are well protected. If they are secure, your information is secure too.
2. There are also security criteria for the services they set up for you. For example, validation systems will protect your council's email domain from being used for spoofing and phishing scams. These systems also ensure that your emails cannot be altered while being sent or received.

The second way your .gov.uk domain is protected is through central government: There are teams whose job it is to scan .gov.uk domains for threats and vulnerabilities. This includes our team in central government, who look for security weaknesses, and the National Cyber Security Centre, which monitors your websites and email services for suspicious activity.

These protections are crucial for your council and your community. While we can't always prevent human error, these measures will make you less vulnerable to data breaches, phishing attacks, and loss of trust and reputation.”

It is not a legal requirement for public bodies to have such a domain but it is recommended good practice.

Quatt Malvern Parish Council does not have this domain at the present time.

Decision Required

The Parish Council needs to decide if it wishes the Clerk to seek further information on the costs of obtaining a gov.org.uk domain and report back to a future meeting.

The Digital Cabinet Office provides a list of approved suppliers and recommends that a council seeks at least 3 quotations.

Government grants of £100.00 are available for this financial year towards the cost, although the Parish Council is likely to incur some extra costs depending on the level of support it is seeking.

Does the Council wish to investigate further?