From Paper to Peace of Mind

Smart Asset Management for Hunston Parish Council

A Business Case for Civic.ly

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Confidential

Executive Summary

Hunston Parish Council is a well-run small council with a dedicated team that takes its responsibilities seriously. Carol and her assistant Kena already manage a varied portfolio of assets, from the recreation ground and children's playground to 22 street lighting columns, four bus shelters, a village hall and its annex. That level of care is commendable, particularly with just two part-time staff.

The Challenge:

- Playground inspections are completed on paper, making it difficult to build a reliable, auditable history with photographic evidence
- A previous attempt to adopt digital inspection tools (PSS Live) proved too complex and time-consuming to learn
- Councillors lack easy access to visual, up-to-date reports on asset condition
- Invoices and supporting documents are not linked to the assets they relate to

The Solution: Civic.ly is a purpose-built asset management platform for parish and town councils. It combines an AI-powered asset register, interactive mapping, mobile inspections with pre-built checklists, and a full audit trail, all designed to be simple enough to use on a phone in the field.

Investment: £47 per month (cancel anytime). As an early adopter, Hunston receives a **waived setup fee** (saving £340) and a **3-year price freeze**.

ROI Summary: Estimated annual benefit of **£1,100 to £1,700** against an annual cost of **£564**, delivering a payback period of under 6 months and a projected 3-year net benefit of **£2,500 to £4,500**.

Next Step: Approve at your next council meeting to begin before 31 March and secure early adopter benefits.

Current Situation

Assets Under Management

Hunston Parish Council is responsible for a diverse range of community assets with a total insured estate value of approximately **£925,610** and an AGAR Box 9 value of **£226,000**:

- **Buildings:** Village hall (charity-owned but maintained by the council), annex/office (installed 2015), car park
- **Play and recreation:** Recreation ground with children's playground and multi-use games area (MUGA)
- **Open spaces:** Small parcel of land between the main road and car park
- **Street furniture:** 4 bus shelters, benches, 22 street lighting columns
- **Equipment and safety:** Mulcher, defibrillator, 7 Azus sendpads, signage

Tools and Processes

The council uses Scribe Accounts for financial management (having migrated from Rialtas) and is familiar with the platform. The asset register within Scribe is used for AGAR purposes, but detailed operational asset information, including inspections, maintenance records and condition data, sits outside this system. Playground inspections are carried out weekly by Carol herself and recorded on paper. The village hall's emergency lighting checks are completed by a cleaner using a paper logbook. There was a previous attempt to adopt PSS Live for digital inspections, but the platform proved too complex to learn given the time pressures of a small, part-time team.

Key Challenges

- **Paper-based inspections lack evidence and traceability:** Weekly playground inspections are recorded on paper with no photographic evidence or digital audit trail, making it difficult to demonstrate compliance to insurers or auditors
- **Previous digital tools proved too complex:** PSS Live was trialled but abandoned because the system was difficult to learn and the mobile interface was hard to use in the field
- **No visibility for councillors:** Carol would like to provide councillors with visual asset condition reports (including photographs) a couple of times a year, but has no efficient way to generate these
- **Document and invoice management:** Supporting documents such as invoices cannot currently be linked to specific assets, creating extra administrative effort and reducing traceability
- **Contractor oversight is limited:** At the related Chidham and Hambrook council, the ROSPA-registered

contractor carries out fortnightly inspections but results are only visible on request.

The Civic.ly Solution

Overview

Civic.ly is the all-in-one asset management platform built specifically for UK parish, town and community councils. It combines a comprehensive asset register, interactive mapping, mobile inspections and task management in a single, easy-to-use system. Importantly, it is designed to be simple, with large buttons, intuitive workflows and AI assistance, directly addressing the usability concerns that made previous tools impractical.

Key Features and Benefits

Feature	How It Helps Hunston
AI-powered asset creation	Upload smartphone photos to instantly build your asset register. AI auto-detects type, condition, location and description, saving hours of manual data entry
Pre-built inspection checklists	28+ checklists for play equipment, bins, outdoor assets and more. Replaces paper forms with compliant digital records including photographs
Mobile field app	Complete inspections and raise defects on-site with large, easy-to-use buttons, designed for usability where PSS Live fell short
Smart scheduling	Schedule inspections from daily to every 10 years, with seasonal options. Weekly playground inspections and annual checks never slip

Feature	How It Helps Hunston
Audit trail and reporting	Generate visual asset condition reports with photos for councillors. Full evidence trail for insurers and auditors, linking inspections, defects and jobs
Interactive mapping	All assets automatically mapped with street, satellite and Ordnance Survey layers. Visual overview of your entire estate including the recreation ground, street lights and open spaces
Contractor and team access	Add cleaners, contractors and councillors as users at no extra cost. Your cleaner could log emergency lighting checks digitally; your contractor could submit inspection results directly
Document upload with AI analysis (coming 2026)	Upload ROSPA reports, PAT testing results or fire risk assessments. AI extracts tasks and renewal dates automatically, keeping everything linked and in one place

Investment

Item	Detail
Monthly subscription	**£47/month** (cancel anytime)
Setup fee	**£0** (waived - normally £340, early adopter benefit)
Annual cost	**£564/year**
Price guarantee	**3-year price freeze** for early adopters
Includes	Unlimited users and assets, web + mobile app, all checklists, updates and support. Typical setup: 1-2 weeks

How Civic.ly Compares to PSS Live

Carol previously trialled PSS Live for digital inspections but found the system too complex and difficult to use on a mobile device in the field. Civic.ly has been designed from the ground up for simplicity, with large buttons, intuitive workflows and an AI-powered setup process that means you can build your asset register simply by taking photographs. Unlike PSS Live, Civic.ly also provides full asset lifecycle management, interactive mapping and councillor reporting in a single platform.

Benefits Analysis

Operational Improvements

- **30-40% reduction in admin time** spent on asset-related tasks (SOCITM benchmark), freeing Carol and Kena for higher-value work
- Elimination of paper inspection forms and manual logbooks, replaced by a single digital system with automatic scheduling
- Councillors receive visual condition reports with photos at the click of a button, rather than requiring manual compilation
- Cleaners and contractors can log checks directly in the system, removing the need for separate communication and chasing

Financial Benefits

- Planned maintenance and early defect identification help extend asset lifespan by **10-15%** (Institute of Asset Management), reducing the frequency and cost of replacements across a £925K estate
- Better oversight of contractor work can deliver **10-20% savings** on external maintenance spend (CIPFA) through improved coordination and reduced duplication
- Fewer emergency repairs through proactive condition monitoring and scheduled inspections

Compliance and Risk Mitigation

- Complete digital audit trail linking inspections, defects and remedial actions, meeting insurer documentation requirements
- Pre-built checklists aligned to relevant standards (e.g. BS EN 1176 for play equipment) ensure nothing is missed
- Photographic evidence at every inspection provides defensibility in the event of claims, with up to **25% lower claims exposure** (Zurich Municipal)
- Supports compliance with NALC Section 16 requirements for comprehensive asset registers and regular verification

Organisational Resilience

- All asset knowledge is retained in the system rather than in individuals' memory or paper files, critical for a two-person team
- Easier onboarding and handovers if staff or contractors change

- Reduced stress and mental burden of tracking deadlines, renewals and inspection schedules manually

ROI Analysis

Inputs and Assumptions

Input	Value / Source
Operational model	Hybrid (part-time staff + contractors for grounds/cleaning)
Admin/office staff	2 part-time (Clerk + Assistant Clerk, est. 1.0 FTE combined)
Grounds/maintenance staff	External contractors (grass cutting, grounds maintenance, cleaners)
Precept	£81,000 (from April 2025/26)
Insured estate value	£925,610
AGAR Box 9	£226,000
Key assets	Village hall, annex, playground, MUGA, 22 street lights, 4 bus shelters, recreation ground, car park, defibrillator

Estimated Annual ROI

Category	Annual Benefit	Confidence
Admin efficiency (reduced paperwork, reporting, chasing)	**£400 - £600**	High
Contractor coordination savings	**£200 - £400**	Medium
Asset longevity (planned maintenance on £925K estate)	**£300 - £450**	Medium
Risk and claims reduction	**£200 - £300**	Medium-Low
Total estimated annual benefit	**£1,100 - £1,750**	

Summary	Value
Annual subscription cost	**£564**
Net annual benefit (conservative)	**£536 - £1,186**

Summary	Value
Payback period	**4-6 months**
3-year net benefit	**£1,608 - £3,558** (with price freeze)

ROI Justification

These estimates are deliberately conservative, reflecting the small scale of Hunston's operation. Admin efficiency savings are based on approximately 2-3 hours per month of reduced paperwork, report preparation and contractor chasing at a modest hourly rate, well within the 30-40% benchmark from SOCITM for digital transformation. Contractor coordination savings reflect the reduced communication overhead and better visibility of work completed, aligned with CIPFA's 10-20% benchmark applied very conservatively to a small contractor spend.

Asset longevity savings assume that planned, evidence-based maintenance across a nearly £1 million estate extends the useful life of key assets by even a fraction of the IAM's 10-15% benchmark. Risk reduction reflects the improved defensibility of a digital audit trail with photographic evidence, particularly important given the playground and MUGA where the council's public liability exposure is highest.

Conclusion

Civic.ly gives Hunston Parish Council a simple, affordable way to move from paper-based inspections to a fully digital system, without the complexity that made previous tools impractical. For **£47 per month**, the council gains a complete asset register with photos and mapping, compliant inspection checklists, a clear audit trail for insurers and auditors, and visual reports for councillors.

With no setup fee, a 3-year price freeze and the freedom to cancel anytime, the risk is minimal while the benefits, both financial and in terms of peace of mind, begin from day one. I would recommend taking this to your next council meeting for approval, allowing Hunston to secure early adopter benefits and begin using the platform ahead of the new financial year.