



# Rhossili Community Hwb: Connecting a Community

## IT Support Pilot

### Introduction

The concept of offering 'IT for the Terrified' support sessions, as they were originally termed, was a logical extension of the aim to create a new website that sought to connect the community and reduce isolation. In order to optimise use of the website, we wanted to support people in feeling confident to do so, whilst also helping to equip them to improve more general IT skills.

The pilot comprised 4 overlapping stages:

1. IT needs survey and analysis
2. Equipment & software procurement
3. Planning the programme & identifying volunteers to help
4. Delivering sessions
5. Evaluation

### IT needs survey and analysis

The IT survey comprised 4 questions asking about people's access to the internet and computer devices, skills and confidence in using computers, and any particular skills they would welcome help with. To be as inclusive as possible, the survey was printed and distributed by hand across the community with the Annual Magazine in December 2022, to 170 properties. Approximately one-third of the properties are second homes or holiday lets.

Forty-one responses were received. Over 87% of respondents have at least two internet-enabled devices and only one had none (Table 1). All bar three people have internet access via WiFi.

**Table 1 What computer devices do you have currently?**

No. of devices owned	No. with this many devices	
	n	%
0	1	2.4
1	4	9.8
2	11	26.8
3	15	36.6
4	10	24.4

In relation to the question about IT skills, nearly 71% of respondents identified the need for some additional help, with 29% identifying as not needing help (Table 2).

**Table 2. IT skills**

<b>How would you describe your IT skills?</b>	<b>No.</b>
I don't know anything and don't feel the need to learn	0
I consider myself skilled and don't need any help	12
I don't know anything about IT but would like to learn to use a device	3
I know a little and would like to be able to do more	12
I know quite a bit but there's something specific I'd like to learn more about	14

A range of IT topics was then listed and respondents were invited to identify any further topics.

**Table 3. What topics would you like to know more about in a workshop?**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>No.</b>
How to avoid online fraud	18
How to protect a device from viruses/ other attacks	14
How to use a QR code	8
How to create email with attachments	8
How to use Zoom or other video calling features	7
How to use 'Ask My G.P.'	6
Printing labels	5
Spreadsheets	5
How to use a calendar	4

Twelve other topics were also identified by individuals.

### **Equipment & software procurement**

An important aspect of the pilot was in procuring equipment to support delivery of the IT sessions. There were two main elements to this, provision of audio-visual aids to enable a good educational experience and purchasing a range of computing equipment (with appropriate software) for use during sessions and to be available for loan to help consolidate skills gained. Refurbished IT devices were procured and set up, using SIM cards for internet connectivity obtained via the Vodafone connected.communities charity through a grant to Pitton Methodist Chapel.

### **Planning the programme**

The programme was directly informed by the IT needs analysis and priority was given to those topics that scored most highly. The focus was on keeping the sessions relevant and interactive. The Simply Spreadsheets session for example, involved attendees working on laptops to recreate sheets displayed on the large screen monitor. The QR quiz used a collection of everyday items or places where QR codes were used. Two sessions were delivered by volunteers from outside the project team.

Five of the sessions were scheduled to take place in the evening, lasting approximately 1½ hours. One shorter session was scheduled to follow on directly after a Coffee morning talk, to assess the feasibility of this for future ‘drop-in’ sessions (see Table 4 below). All sessions were advertised by email, the Hwb Events calendar, Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp.

**Table 4. The IT Support Programme**

Session	No. attending	Topic	Date	Duration
1	30	Avoiding online fraud	03/01/2023	7.00-8.30pm
2	16	Simply Spreadsheets	25/01/2023	7.00-8.30pm
3	8	Easy Email	01/02/2023	7.00-8.30pm
4	18	Quick QR codes & Quiz	08/02/2023	11.30-12.30pm
5	22	‘Ask My G.P.’	16/02/2023	7.00-8.30pm
6	14	Successful video calls	22/02/2023	7.00-8.30pm

We are awaiting confirmation of availability for a follow-up talk on computer/online safety. Other topics listed in Table 3 above that have not yet been delivered will also form part of our ongoing IT Support Hub programme.

### Delivering the sessions

It was important to ongoing engagement that the sessions should be accessible: friendly, relaxed, with limited use of jargon (and explaining any that was used) and not over-long. Provision of refreshments also helped foster a café feel to the events.

Although each session in the programme was planned carefully, the pace was led by the attendees. Where appropriate, sessions were split according to capability and we were grateful for volunteer input to ensure a high facilitator: attendee ratio. At the close of each session, we reminded those present that 1:1 follow-up support was available and contact details were provided. We also informed them that follow-on sessions would be given.

### Evaluation

Evaluations were completed by participants at the end of each session and were anonymous. Whilst there was some variation in the questions posed, there were four recurring themes: self-reported increase in awareness, understanding, skills and confidence. We also asked whether people planned to change an activity as a result of the session, and how they rated the session overall.

### Programme outcome

We were pleased at the interest shown in the sessions and resulting turnout. Several people approached team members to express disappointment that they had been unable to attend specific sessions and asking for a rerun. Overall, all the sessions were generally well rated, with the majority rating them 4 or 5 in terms of helpfulness (Table 5).



**Table 5. How would you rate this session overall?**

Session	No. attending/forms returned	Overall rating				
		Very unhelpful				Very helpful
How safe are your details online?	30/20	0	0	1	7	13
Simply Spreadsheets	16/13	0	0	1	4	8
Easy Email	8/4	0	0	0	1	3
Quick QR Codes & Quiz	18/15	0	1	2	6	6
Asking about askmyGP	22/20	0	0	2	3	15
Successful video calls	14/9	0	0	0	1	8

There were issues with the Village Hall Wi-Fi (a recurring problem across the village) for a few of the sessions and this was highlighted as a factor by a few, including for the one more negative score.

Table 6 provides a comparison of the scores (expressed as percentages) across all 6 sessions for impact on awareness, understanding, application of new skills and confidence related to that specific topic.

Please note that evaluation of the first session did not include a question about confidence.

**Table 6. Comparison of responses across all sessions**

Evaluation questions	Generic rating score %				
	1= Lowest score; 5= Best score				
The session has...	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Increased my awareness</b>					
1. How safe are your details online?	0	0	0	60	40
2. Simply Spreadsheets	0	0	0	31	69
3. Easy Email	0	0	0	25	75
4. Quick QR Codes & Quiz	0	0	7	33	60
5. Asking about askmyGP	5	0	20	20	55
6. Successful video calls	0	0	0	22	78
<b>Increased my understanding</b>					
1. How safe are your details online?	0	0	16	16	68
2. Simply Spreadsheets	0	0	8	15	77

3. Easy Email	0	0	25	0	75
4. Quick QR Codes & Quiz	0	0	13	27	60
5. Asking about askmyGP	0	0	15	20	65
6. Successful video calls	0	0	22	11	67
<b>Encouraged plans to apply new skills</b>					
1. How safe are your details online?	0	0	0	20	80
2. Simply Spreadsheets	0	0	8	54	38
3. Easy Email	0	0	0	25	75
4. Quick QR Codes & Quiz	0	7	0	0	93
5. Asking about askmyGP	0	5	10	55	30
6. Successful video calls	0	0	0	44	56
<b>Increased my confidence</b>					
1. How safe are your details online?	-	-	-	-	-
2. Simply Spreadsheets	0	7	8	77	8
3. Easy Email	0	0	0	25	75
4. Quick QR Codes & Quiz	0	0	20	53	27
5. Asking about askmyGP	5	0	25	20	50
6. Successful video calls	0	0	0	44	56

All sessions clearly had a positive impact on attendees against all four categories, with all sessions bar one having a combined score at least 75% for ratings of 4 and 5. The askmyGP session attracted relatively lower scores and we would attribute this to a combination of a majority already being aware of the system and using it, and that the topic locally is a political one with some having strong views of the change to services associated with it.

## Conclusion

The willingness to apply new skills and the increase in confidence noted after all sessions is heartening. There is clearly an appetite to gain IT skills and this pilot has demonstrated that the sorts of sessions we have delivered are of value to the community, as exemplified by one comment:

*“I can now access the Doctor, order food on line etc. I’m very grateful to those who ran the course for all their hard work — & patience.”*

There are undoubted challenges to organising and delivering such a scheme and it would not have been possible without the funding and support we have received from Swansea RDP. We believe we are now well placed to continue this provision on a more established basis, as the Rhossili Community IT support hub. The aims will remain – to serve to connect the community, reduce isolation and the digital divide through boosting skills and confidence in using IT in everyday activities, all within a friendly social context.

## Maggie Kirk, Rhossili Community Hwb Project Team

