

**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING** 

**REPORT 62/21** 

12 JULY 2021

The purpose of this Report is for Members to receive a proposal from Councillor Ian Bond for a process to begin the development of a new Town Council web site

#### No. DETAILS

#### I) BACKGROUND

- a) The current web site was set up in 2010 using one of the range of models provided by what was at that time the leading provider of web sites for Town and Parish Councils: parishcouncil.net.
- b) Although providing the then Town Council with the means of achieving transparency and a degree of engagement with residents and visitors it is clearly no longer fit for purpose.
- c) Councillor Ian Bond's submission, attached to this Report, provides a clear analysis of its shortcomings and examples from his research of modern, effective and legally compliant web sites developed by other Town and Parish Councils.

### 2) PROPOSAL

Councillor Ian Bond's proposal, based on his submission, is that the Town Council:

- i) agrees in principle to launch a new VTC website as early in 2022 as is possible;
- ii) notes that a budget of £6,000 is likely to be sufficient to cover the first year's costs;
- iii) considers and agrees what governance arrangements it wishes to have, such as a member working group;
- iv) receives a further report to its August meeting, informed by officer advice, that:
- v) identifies at least three potential suppliers who will then be contacted with a formal request for a proposal and quote for the work;
- vi) confirms an appropriate budget allocation to cover the costs; and
- vii) proposes a draft accessibility statement, to be published on the existing website as is now a legal requirement, setting out the council's plans.

# A new website for Ventnor Town Council

### 1. Summary

The current VTC website does not meet the Council's legal obligations, and needs urgently to be replaced. Doing so would also offer opportunity to improve the appearance and functionality of the website, to review the Council's branding, support promotion of the town as an attractive place to live, work and visit, and to improve communication and interaction with our residents.

By using one of the standard website formats designed specifically for town and parish councils, it should be possible to deliver a replacement within a setup budget of no more than £6,000 and over a timescale of a few months. The key constraint would be VTC staff time, in cataloguing and reviewing existing site content, and preparing fresh material for the new site.

It is recommended that the next meeting of the council identifies potential suppliers and proceeds to obtain quotes, and that VTC plans to undertake the task between October – December 2021 with the launch of a new site very early in 2022.

#### 2. Current state

Since September 2020, the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations (2018) oblige websites of all public bodies to meet (at least) WCAG (Website Content Accessibility Guidelines) 2.1AA standard. This requires that all content is perceivable, operable, understandable and robust, and can be used easily and safely by users with a wide range of accessibility requirements, from both desktop and mobile devices.

The current VTC website falls significantly short of meeting these standards. The potential defence of 'disproportionate burden' – that the work involved would be unreasonable for a smaller public body to undertake – is becoming unsustainable, since even very small parish councils now commonly have websites that conform.

Furthermore, the existing website has considerable scope for improvement, having:

- no search functionality whatsoever;
- a lot of information (both about the council and the town) that is out-of-date;
- a visually unappealing format with little and poor use of photographs;
- little functionality that encourages people to visit the site or use it to interact with the council.

# 3. Opportunity and criteria

As well as achieving compliance with current legislation, a new website is an opportunity for the Council to review its branding and improve the level of engagement and interaction with our residents.

The website should be a first stop for all information about the Council, and play a part in promoting the town.

Interaction with the town could be improved by ensuring easy access to all meeting documentation, by using the website to manage online consultations, by integrating with social media, and through add-on functionality such as an events calendar as a focal point for news about everything going on in Ventnor, or a business directory to showcase local services.

I suggest that our criteria for selecting a website supplier and a site should include:

- Full compliance with WCAG 2.1AA, GDPR and the Transparency Code;
- Visual attractiveness:
- Easy to use including easy searchability and optimisation for mobile devices;
- Easy to amend and update, independent of support from the supplier;
- Flexibility and range of functionality/options;
- Availability of training and helpdesk support (email, online or telephone as required);
- Reliable, resilient and secure hosting;
- Future proofed with a supplier committed to maintaining and updating the site structure;
- Social media integration;
- Options for reporting tools and usage metrics (e.g. Google Analytics);
- Support for the implementation process, including appropriate training;
- Affordability (implementation cost, and recurring costs for hosting, maintenance and support)

# 4. Suppliers

Various suppliers specialise in providing websites for parish and town councils, with a ready-made template structure that makes implementing, supporting and future-proofing a council website considerably cheaper and easier than designing a site from scratch.

These offer the functionality that all councils need (such as councillor and staff details, meetings calendar, library of agenda reports and minutes) and commonly offer additional functionality that we would be able to decide whether or not to use. They are commonly built on the WordPress platform, which is well known and relatively easy to use.

Example website home pages from three such suppliers are set out in the Appendix.

# 5. Timescale and cost

A typical timescale for the task of preparing a new website, including training, would be two or three months, from commencement to site launch.

The critical factor is likely to be timescale within which the council itself is able to review the contents of the existing site and to take the decisions and create material for the new site.

The first-year setup and launch costs are estimated to fall within a range of £4,000 - £6,000, depending on the functionality required and the level of training and support, and any bespoke work (for example fully indexing past pdf agendas, minutes and reports) that we might need.

We would need to obtain high quality photographs for the site, either at cost working with a local photographer or more cheaply if we can work with a local camera club or resident(s) with the appropriate equipment and skills.

Ongoing annual hosting and support costs, including domain name registration and periodic WCAG compliance testing, are likely to start at about £500-600, the actual cost depending on the level of support package required (less the annual cost of our existing site of £300).

Recognising that we have a staff vacancy to fill that will have a key role to play in achieving a new website, the recommendation is to plan for a timescale of October to December 2021 to complete the preparatory work, with the launch of a new website targeted for January 2022.

### 6. Process

The stages of the implementation process are likely to be:

- *Sitemap and content plan*: We would work with the supplier to build a sitemap of our current site and confirm a structure for the new site;

- *Content audit*: VTC would review the content of our current site, decide what is to be copied over and what content needs to be amended or created from scratch for the new site;
- Site development and branding: We would take the key decisions on site branding (colours, logo, imagery etc), selecting from whatever preconfigured options and optional additional functionality the chosen supplier offers, with the supplier using this to create a temporary development site for the council to review;
- *Site population*: The pages and site structure created by the supplier would be populated with content by some mix of automated bulk and manual import. Content would be checked to ensure that pages adhere to the accessibility requirements;
- *Site testing*: After the content has been added, the site would be reviewed and tested, to make sure that all links, navigation and search functionality works properly;
- Training
- Site launch

### 7. Recommendations

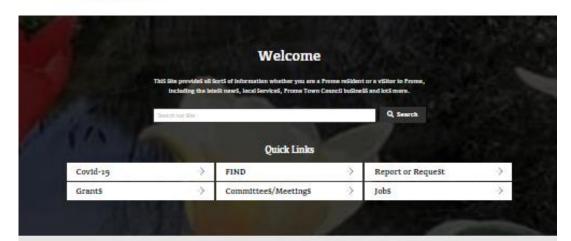
That the Council:

- agrees in principle to launch a new VTC website as early in 2022 as is possible;
- notes that a budget of £6,000 is likely to be sufficient to cover the first year's costs;
- considers and agrees what governance arrangements it wishes to have, such as a member working group;
  - receives a further report to its August meeting, informed by officer advice, that:
- identifies at least three potential suppliers who will then be contacted with a formal request for a proposal and quote for the work;
- confirms an appropriate budget allocation to cover the costs;
- proposes a draft accessibility statement, to be published on the existing website as is now a legal requirement, setting out the council's plans.

# Appendix: Website example 1 – Frome TC by Zonkey (zonkey.co.uk)









Your Council

Find not shoot Frene Town Council, plus information on Mentily District and Seminari County councils.



Your Community

Information on our parks and grown spaces, community projects, grants, surioustability, transport and more.



Your Busines

Discover how Frome Telesin Council exposes local businesses including initiatives and exercis.

### Latest News



Take part in a survey for the chance to

We're browning a survey to find our mere about to

a July sons



Latest from the Council Chamber -Council Matters, 30th June 2021

Clearly up on all the details from June's Council Matters

1/10/2 7001



#### Fun and games at Picnic in the

Not long three used our number owner which is happening on Sunday sich July, sizes + spin.

1/1/2 2021

# FIND - Directory

Panily Information Name of Directory.

# Town Clerk's Updates



The Town Clerk's Updates

Read the foreignist update from Frome Town Council's Town Clerk, Paul Wymae.

### Discover Frome



### Visit Discover Frome

Discover Frame is our sinter site with all thing

Home Centact US AccelSINITY Terms & ConditionS Privacy Policy Cookie Policy

FIND

Prome Town Hall Christoburch Street Welk Frome Somerfeet BAss sEE 01373 455737







# Website example 2 – Hartley Witney PC by Aubergine (aubergine262.com)



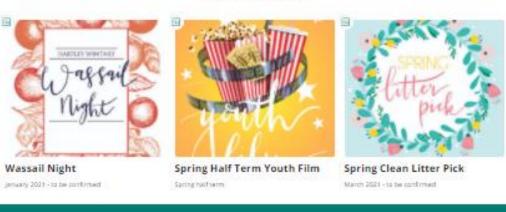


Sated one of the top ten direttlett villaget in Hampshive, Hamley Winniey is a perfect destination to browte bit bijou High Street chops, have a lenurely coffee or something stronger, a peakant junch or a conger direct. A guiet stroll will introduce you to the picture open village green, duck pond and the femous Wildmay Oaks. By the way - If you wanted to tray a little longer - as part of Hart - it is consisted by one of Britain's best picted to live.

The village can be found on the A30 about three miles (Son) north west of Fleet and eight miles (TSkm) eact of Sleetingstoke. - about 25 minutes south from (60 of the M4 via the A32 and close to justificate its and 5 of the W5.

- The respect train station is Winobfield on the Waterloo Datingtroke Fine and Rubbur a 20 minute wells to the village although local tasks can be booked.
- A Embed for T but service runs from Reading to Fieel Station and separately from Aldershot to Humbey Windney.
- a Local table are qualistic.

# **Latest Events**





# Website example 3 – Didcot TC by 2commune (2commune.com)





Jown Clerk: Jarrel Wheeler Hoad, Distoni, Oxfordshine lef: 01235 812637 | Send email



A.Z of Services

Latest Tweets

blely GUVIYU

In bishandmith

hit.ly/STe/ICT

Police us an Iwiter

facebook

盘 GOV.UK

OXFORDSHIRE South Oxfordshire District Council

**②** FixMyStreet

VWXYE

Q

### Home COVID-18

Online Council

About The Council

Agendas & Minutes

Services & Facilities

Didoof Civio Hall

Parking

Community

Planning

Environment and

News

Site Man

DTC Online Events

Spoisi Media

Which Council Does What?

# Coronavirus (COVID-19)











#### Latest News

Didcot Civic Hall car park spaces limited on Monday 5th July

Didost Civic Hall car park will be partially brocked off due to a private event on Wondey 5th July.

Access will only be permitted to the right-hand side of the cer park (the section closed to Smalltones (forwards on Growth) which will limit the spaces available. The section october in the trage will be accessible to the public and the real will be backed off.

Posted: Set, 07 Jul 2021 14:00 by Challey London



Tender Invitation for a Procurement Specialist - Willowbrook Leisure Centre

Tender Invitation for a Procurement Specialist - Willowbrook Leasure Centre

Didcot Town Council trivite you to quote for services regarding the Willowbrook Letsure Centre, Bowmont Walet, Dff Ayon Way, Lestygrove, Distosi, OX11 7AP

Posted: Pr. 02 Jul 2021 17:15 by Admin Assistent

# Council Meetings

Wed, 14 Jul 2021 18(30) Planning & Gerelopment Committee

Nov., 19 Jul 2021 19:30 Environment & Climate Committee

#### Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return

Notice of Public Highlix and Publication of Unaudilled Annual Governance and Accountability Hatum.

Robce of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Covernance and Accountability (PDF, 48 Kb)

Posted: Wed, 30 Jun 2021 14:25 by Chelsey Lorden



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HTML5 validated. WCAG compliant. Page generated in 0.0723 seconds.