



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

1) 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.
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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.
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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.
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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)






01373 485757


01373 485757

Welcome

This Site provides all Sorts of information whether you are a Frome resident or a visitor to Frome, including the latest news, local services, Frome Town Council business and lots more.


Quick Links

Covid-19	FIND	Report or Request
Grants	Committees/Meetings	Jobs




Your Council

Find out about Frome Town Council, plus information on Mendip District and Somerset County councils.



Your Community


Information on our parks and green spaces, community projects, grants, sustainability, transport and more.



Your Business

Discover how Frome Town Council supports local businesses including initiatives and events.


Latest News



Take part in a survey for the chance to win a £100

We're launching a survey to find out more about the health and priorities of people in Frome.


2 July 2021



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

Catch up on all the details from June's Council Matters meeting.

2 July 2021




Fun and games at Picnic in the Meadow

Not long now until our summer event which is happening on Sunday 11th July, 11am - 2pm.

2 July 2021


FIND - Directory



FIND

Partly Information Network Directory.


Town Clerk's Updates



The Town Clerk's Updates

Read the fortnightly update from Frome Town Council's Town Clerk, Paul Wynne.

Discover Frome








Visit Discover Frome

Discover Frome is our sister site with all things happening in Frome and the local area.


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[Privacy Policy](#)
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[Disclaimer](#)

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 Churchchurch Street West
 Frome
 Somerset
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 01373 485757
info@frometowncouncil.gov.uk





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


[The Village](#)[Community](#)[Services](#)[Parish Council](#)[News & Events](#)[Contact](#)

Welcome



Popular Links


- » [Latest News](#)
- » [Council Meetings](#)
- » [Agendas & Minutes](#)
- » [Contact the Parish Office](#)
- » [Parish Councillors](#)
- » [Community Bus](#)
- » [COVID19](#)
- » [Affordable Housing - Hartley Witney](#)




Village Updates

[Survey on Display Health](#)

[Notice of Election](#)






Rated one of the top ten prettiest villages in Hampshire, Hartley Witney is a perfect destination to browse its bijou High Street shops, have a leisurely coffee or something stronger, a pleasant lunch or a longer dinner. A quiet stroll will introduce you to the picturesque village green, duck pond and the famous Midway Oaks. By the way – if you wanted to stay a little longer – as part of Hart – it is consistently voted one of Britain's best places to live.

The village can be found on the A30 about three miles (5km) north west of Fleet and eight miles (13km) east of Basingstoke, – about 20 minutes south from J15 of the M4 via the A33 and close to junctions 4a and 5 of the M3.


- The nearest train station is Winchester on the Waterloo – Basingstoke line and is about a 20 minute walk to the village although local taxis can be booked.
- A limited taxi T bus service runs from Reading to Fleet Station and separately from Aldershot to Hartley Witney.
- Local taxis are available.

Latest Events




Wassail Night

January 2021 - to be confirmed






Spring Half Term Youth Film




Spring half term



Spring Clean Litter Pick

March 2021 - to be confirmed

[Home](#)[Community](#)[Services](#)[HW Parish Council](#)[Contact](#)[Accessibility](#)

[Privacy policy](#) | [WDC Compliance](#) |   

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

UK Local Councils

Printable Version | Login

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Didcot Town Council

Faith In Service

Town Clerk: Janet Wheeler
Council Offices, Brixwell Road, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 7HN
Tel: 01235 812637 | [Send email](#)

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Click here for our page on local organisations who are here to help

Home

COVID-19

Online Council Meetings

About The Council

Agendas & Minutes

Services & Facilities

Didcot Civic Hall

Parking

Community

Planning

Environment and Climate Committee

News

FAQs

Site Map

DTC Online

Events

Social Media

Which Council Does What?

Council Meetings

Wed, 14 Jul 2021 19:30
Planning & Development Committee

Mon, 19 Jul 2021 19:30
Environment & Climate Committee

Mon, 19 Jul 2021 19:30
Finance & General Purpose Committee

Gallery

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Didcot Town Council provides your local services. We strive to make Didcot a better place to live, work and play. Our website includes a wealth of information about how we conduct business and what we do. Use the search or browse the site to find whatever you are looking for. If you can't find the information you require then please contact us.

Latest News

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

Didcot Civic Hall car park will be partially blocked off due to a private event on **Monday 5th July**.

Access will only be permitted to the right-hand side of the car park (the section closest to Smeathones Recreation Ground) which will limit the spaces available. The section circled in the image will be accessible to the public and the rest will be blocked off.

Posted: Sat, 02 Jul 2021 14:00 by Chelsey Lorden

Tender Invitation for a Procurement Specialist - Willowbrook Leisure Centre

Tender Invitation for a Procurement Specialist - Willowbrook Leisure Centre.

Didcot Town Council invite you to quote for services regarding the Willowbrook Leisure Centre, Bowmont Walk, Off Aven Way, Ladbroke, Didcot, OX11 7AP.

See attached document for more information.

[Tender invitation \(PDF, 176 Kb\)](#)

Posted: Fri, 02 Jul 2021 17:15 by Admin Assistant

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

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

[Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return \(PDF, 48 Kb\)](#)

Posted: Wed, 30 Jun 2021 14:05 by Chelsey Lorden

Our Office is in the Didcot Civic Hall

Town Clerk: Janet Wheeler, Council Offices, Brixwell Road, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 7HN

Telephone: 01235 812637 **Email:** council@didcot.gov.uk

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