

Broadwas and Cotheridge Parish Council

Report for meeting of the Parish Council to be held on: 14th June, 2021

Purpose of report: To consider future website arrangements

Author of report: Richard Burrows Chair

Thanks to the initiative and support of Cllr Dale the Parish Council has a functioning website, which provides parishioners and interested parties with the opportunity to find out more about the Parish Council and to get in touch.

All Parish Councils have websites by law under the Transparency Code and this reflects the important role the websites play in contributing to public access in order to ensure engagement and transparency.

Councillors are asked to consider whether we should continue with the present arrangement or commission a new one.

The Clerk has advised the Parish Council that other councils she supports, use a professional service provider.

In summary the benefits of such a move can be identified as follows

- providers and sites comply with recognised best and nationally endorsed standards re local government
- providers and sites provide assurance re legal compliance and data security
- adoption would standardise input and management arrangements from the Clerks perspective whereas currently all input is managed by Cllr. Dale.
- Providers and sites meet high standards of content management and accessibility

Potential benefits of a new arrangement

- The standard sites are very easy to navigate and everything is made simple for the user such as public or auditors.
- All Agendas and Minutes are kept together. All annual reports and policies available from one key access point which carry the information back to previous years as required by legislation.
- All press releases available from one key access point.
- Providers and sites provide additional benefits/services eg. Weekly updates to subscribers, clear and simple access to all information, information is easy for the Clerk to manage independently, forms and surveys can be created and additional subject matter added to the site.
- The Clerk would be able to integrate and manage key aspects of her role, which would provide councillors with an assurance that the Parish Council was compliant with standards and requirements, especially in regard to confidentiality.

Benefits of the present arrangement

The present arrangements have some benefits, they are low cost and are bespoke. However, with the retirement of Cllr Dale, the management of the site would in effect be delegated to a 3rd party, which may have implications in terms of confidentiality and liability. Cllr Dale has kindly expressed his willingness to continue to be involved, and should the Council choose this option it is possible that through a clear agreement any risks could be addressed. If the present arrangements were to continue there may be a need to undertake further work to ensure that the website fully reflects the Council's commitment to best practice and full compliance.

Details of 3 potential external providers.

The following 3 providers have been identified for Councillors to consider, and their website provide necessary information to inform any decision, subject to discussion and completion of any further enquires requested by Councillors.
(Indicative costs are indicated).

1. Parish Council Websites

(Click below for website).

Parish Council Websites UK | Parish Website Packages

Initial enquiries indicate that the 'Complete Package' at a cost of £649 would cover time for the migration and build to a new site. The website hosting and support would be charged at **£15 per month**, giving a total first year cost of £829.00 + VAT. Second year would be £180 + VAT which is for the hosting only.

2. VISIONICT Websites.

COUNCIL WEBSITES - Vision ICT

No initial enquiries made but website indicates a first year cost in the region of £650 + £175 per year plus VAT

3. **CLICK BELOW FOR Aubergine websites:**

Council Websites | WCAG 2.1 AA Compliant (aubergine262.com)

One-off set up: £800 + VAT

Annual hosting & support: £199 + VAT

Total: £999 + VAT

The Clerk has advised that www.parishcouncilwebsites.org.uk is currently the one used by all other councils she supports, and she is able to comment on her experience of this provider.

It is likely that Councillors will want to attach some weight to the views of the clerk, both in respect of her experience of the above provider but more generally in terms of the standards expected of Parish Councils and her role in respect of management of information and transparency. Councillors are also reminded that when exercising a preference they should also take into account other factors such as overall value for money, key strengths and features.

Councillors are asked to

1. Consider the information provided

2. Determine if it is in the best interests of the Parish Council to make new arrangements for its website and if so to
3. Identify a preferred provider
4. If not to agree to continue with present arrangements subject to a formal agreement and terms and conditions

Richard Burrows - Chair