

Discussion Document – Murton Parish Council Website

Current Situation

In order to comply with the Transparency Code the PC has to publish certain information on the internet. This information is currently held on a section of the website:

www.murton.org.uk.

The website was set up by the Institute Committee, but they have made very little use of it lately and prefer to use Facebook for their digital communications.

The website is hosted by *Namesco Limited (names.co.uk)* and their software *SiteMaker* is used to build and display information on the website. This was free software and is being withdrawn in September 2019 because it is no longer fit for purpose. This means the PC website cannot be updated and it will eventually cease to function.

The fees for this service have been shared between the Institute and the PC (each paying the fee alternate years and reclaiming the VAT). In February of this year the fees were:

Renewal of use of the name murton.org.uk for 3 years	£27.99
SiteMaker for one year	£54.99
VAT	£16.60
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	£99.58

There will be pro rata refund if we do not opt for one of *Namesco's* new products.

Considerations

- A problem with free or inexpensive software with a one-off payment is it is often an introductory deal or is a product with limited support. The use of it is dependent on the skills and the available time of the user to learn to use the software, and to design the site.
- Using an external supplier, providing ongoing support, ensures continuity should the current user(s) be unable/cease to do so.
- Legal compliance and updates eg GDPR, accessibility for disabled users will be maintained by an external provider.
- A professionally designed website will enhance the standing of the PC.
- Should the website need to develop into a more community website an enhanced design would be possible.
- Links to The Villager, Warcop Range Firing Times and to the Institute Facebook page can all be included.
- The renewal for the name **murton.org.uk** will remain constant regardless of which route is taken.

Options for the Future

Namesco are proposing a transfer to their new software, *Build Me a Website*. This software is much more sophisticated and offers many more functions than the PC needs. The price for the most basic package is an initial £349 plus £29.99 monthly subscription. This includes:

- Support in developing 'your vision'
- Working with us to build 'the website of your dreams', but they write the copy
- SEO optimisation – ie search engines can find the website
- Compatible with all devices, ie PCs, phones, tablets etc.
- Maintaining the website by e-mailing them a list of amendments once a month (max of 2 hours' work)
- Dedicated technical support

Rocket Sites Ltd (www.rocketbsites.co.uk) is a small company based in Carlisle and used by local businesses including PCs and village halls. Following recommendation by another Clerk, also a CALC employee, the Clerk has had a conversation and e-mail exchanges with director Matt Strickland who understands the basic requirements of a PC and can offer:

Full website design and development using WordPress allowing the Clerk to update basic text and add documents. (compatible with all devices, GDPR compliant, training and technical support)	c £800.00
Webhosting (annual fee) Individual e-mail addresses for clerk, councillors and support in setting these up	£75.00

Samples of **Rocket Sites** website:

Super simple, just PC: https://www.burghbysandsparishcouncil.co.uk/	c £800.00
More community style: https://www.kirkbamptonweb.co.uk/ - more enhancements than we currently need.	POA
This is the website maintained by the Clerk who recommended Rocket Sites Ltd: http://www.kingmoorparishcouncil.org/	POA

Clerk's Recommendation

That the **Namesco** option is rejected. The annual cost of c£360 is prohibitive and namesco do not allow access for website updates. Currently the website is updated weekly with Warcop Range information.

The alternative provider, eg ***Rocket Sites*** option, is considered. There is a one-off fee but the on-going support is essential for 'future-proofing' the website with regard to updated software, legal compliance and support for anyone working on the website.

Should 'free' software be used there will be a cost to the PC in terms of the hours taken by the Clerk to learn how to use the software, design and develop the site and transfer the current documents to the website.

Rocket Sites has been recommended by a parish clerk colleague and other parish councils use the company.

The current website will be frozen at the end of September. The Clerk cannot guarantee having the available hours to complete the task in time. Time will be needed to work with the developer.

The facility to develop the site in the future will be available should it be needed, although additional costs would be incurred.

June Watson

Clerk to Murton Parish Council