

Agenda item no. 12	
Report to	Burwash Parish Council
Subject	New Website
Date	13 November 2018
From	Councillor Betty McBride

Summary

Burwash Parish Council's current website – burwash.org – is hosted by ExtraCMS. The site is cumbersome, inflexible and difficult to update. A recent site crash demonstrated the supplier's unwillingness to provide a prompt support service. The Council has made the decision to move to another supplier. We need a website which will serve the needs of an ambitious and forward-looking Parish Council. A site that conforms with data protection and transparency requirements, communicates speedily and effectively and encourages engagement with the community.

Following extensive research, four potential providers have been identified.

Our requirements

The four shortlisted sites meet our basic requirements – and each offers additional useful, interesting or *nice-to-have* features we can explore over time. Our basic site and provider requirements are:

- An online solution which is easy to navigate (for the users) and straightforward to update (for us)
- GDPR and transparency code compliant – all site content is protected with SSL encryption (HTTPS)
- An understanding of Parish Council business needs
- A good support service
- Maximum cost over five years: £2,500

Comparing the sites

The providers, descriptions, costs and links to reference sites are listed on the table below. Current clients of the shortlisted companies have given positive feedback on both site performance and back-office support. Accessing the links (below) to Parish Council sites currently supported by the shortlisted companies is the most direct - and efficient - way of assessing their merits.

The costs have been calculated to cover a typical five-year site lifetime. The breakdown of costs varies between companies, but typically there is a set-up charge and then annual fees for updates, maintenance and support. All of the options come in under the notional five-year budget for our current site (£2,500).

Recommendation

We should be bold and go with The App Office. It is a flexible, mobile solution that meets our current communication needs and positions us to take on future opportunities and challenges. We will work with the supplier to determine the weighting between mobile app and website. Their existing parish council clients are impressed with the company and the service it renders. Significantly, there is a 'safety ticket' within the website solution because The App Office uses Wordpress - a universal, industry-leading system which will enable us to move to another supplier with relative ease should the need arise.

To Resolve:

Burwash Parish Council website will move to a new supplier and hosting arrangement. Following identification of the preferred supplier at Full Council, Councillor McBride will finalise arrangements and (working with the Clerk) undertake the transfer from Extra CMS to the new provider in the New Year. A reserve provider will be identified at Full Council, as a back-up should negotiations with the preferred supplier prove unsatisfactory.

	COSTS	EXAMPLE SITES	REMARKS	YOUR NOTES
Eyelid Productions	Set up: £900 Annual UMS* and hosting charges: £266 5 year cost: £2,230	http://broadmayne.org/ https://halchereford.gov.uk/ https://eyelidproductions.co.uk/wordpress-websites-for-parish-councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up by Parish Councillors • NALC award winner • Over 60 PC sites and good references • All content transferred • Site search, surveys and comments pages • Google maps and planning applications • Slideshows and calendars • Wordpress • Eyelid is essentially a one man operation – however references say he is great to work with • Web hosting to a third party – easyspace.com 	
Netwise	Set up: £599 Annual UMS: £300 5 year cost: £2,099	https://hucclecotepc.gov.uk http://biddenham.org.uk https://wadhurst-pc.gov.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training a strong feature, with video tutorials –youtube links • Document archive • Creation of community notices and events seen as important feature – create recurring events • <i>Access to members</i> section • Overall good reference – but there were concerns about the email service that comes with the package – it has never worked properly at Wadhurst. NB We are having separate emails 	

The App Office	Set up: £400 Annual UMS: £420 5 year cost: £2,500	https://eastgoscotepc.org.uk Please download the mobile app on the East Goscote PC home page. See the mobile app on the http://www.witney-tc.gov.uk website home page https://gamlingay-pc.gov.uk http://eatonpc.org.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a website and/or mobile app solution which would give BPC a powerful integrated tool to communicate & engage with the community via their phones, tablets and desktops. • Instant access to information – useful for mobilising people in emergencies or for event participation • Push notifications • Interactive diary • Forms – bookings, reporting issues, surveys etc • Fully interactive - users can comment, send photos • The App Office has been featured in positive testimonial articles in the Clerk magazine • Research indicates that over 60% of users access their information from mobile devices – OFCOM reports that two thirds of us now own a smartphone, using it for nearly two hours every day to browse the internet, access social media, bank and shop online. 	
Xreflow	Set up: £1200 <i>(inc. 1st yr UMS)</i> Annual UMS: £250 5 year cost: £2,200	https://www.sedlescombe.org.uk https://www.ultracars.co.uk/ https://dbpoloclub.com/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local links • Established website supplier, however they are new to parish business. The contact person is local and knowledgeable about the sector. • Currently has three PC sites in development. • Good reference • Clean, straightforward PC site – good planning page • Newsletter template • Emphasis on support for Clerk • Cheaper if we go live before 2019 (£1,800) 	

* UMS: Updating, maintenance and support.