

Hermitage Parish Council

Proposal for improved Website and Social Media Presence

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Overview

This document outlines a proposal to improve the online presence of Hermitage Parish Council. The current HPC website - <http://www.hermitagevillage.com/index.html> is:

- Difficult for users to find the information they require
- Hard to maintain and requiring technical knowledge
- Based on out of date technology

Additionally most of the people who could manage it have either left the Parish or no longer have time to look after it.

This proposal outlines a way forward to put in a far more effective and easier to manage system which requires a small amount of HPC funds to be spent on hosting costs. Additionally the new site will tie in with use of social media to improve communications and encourage engagement with parish citizens.

New Website

The new website will make use of technology called a **Content Management System** (CMS). The CMS takes away the complexity and requirement for technical processes to update the website. Instead the CMS makes updates and changes as easy as using Microsoft Office (see screenshots later in this document).

The technical work to implement the website will be performed by Oliver Cronk with support from the Online Working Group (see below). Timescales for the implementation will be dependent on the other commitments that Oliver has – but the aim is to get the new site online by the end of 2016.

The Website design will be minimalist – featuring some photos of the village but designed to be accessible and work across different devices (so phones and tablets as well as computers) so that it works for as many people as possible.

The new website will be made available for testing and reviewing to the Parish Councilors prior to going live. The website design will be agreed by Online working group. The test site will be retained after go live and be used for training and future testing purposes. The test website URL is likely to be <http://test.hermitagevillage.com>

The CMS proposed is called **WordPress**. WordPress powers over 75 million sites on the web – as it is free, easy to use, robust whilst also being very flexible. Many UK Government departments make use of Wordpress for simple websites and blogs. More information on WordPress can be found at: <https://wordpress.org/>

Online Working Group

This will agree the implementation details (such as the design and structure) and ongoing management of the online and social presence will be created. Initially the members of this group will be Sue Russell and Oliver Cronk but other members of HPC are very welcome to join and contribute – as are interested members of the public. One member of the public currently manages the domain name and so they will be consulted in order to facilitate the switchover to the new site. It is highly likely we will look to get students living in the parish to get involved – as it will be good experience for them and lighten the workload on HPC members.

Administrative access (to add and edit pages) will be made available for the Clerk and the Working Group.

Hosting

In order to host the Wordpress Content Management System an appropriate web hosting facility is required.

3 quotes have been obtained from UK based companies for basic web hosting:

Hosting Company and URL	Annual Cost (exc VAT)	Notes
123-Reg https://www.123-reg.co.uk/web-hosting/	£83.88 for the first year thereafter £119.88 annually	
UK2.NET https://www.uk2.net/web-hosting/#pricing	£57.24 for the first year £95.40 thereafter.	Or £85.68 for 2 years paid upfront.
1&1 Internet Ltd https://www.1and1.co.uk/hosting-linux?	£47.88 then £83.88	

1&1 Internet Ltd is the recommended option – they offer the best value and are the largest company of the 3.

Payment is likely to require the use of a credit card.

Social Media

As part of the new website a Twitter account and a Facebook have been created to help engage with a broader range of citizens living in the Parish. Currently the Facebook Page has a post about the MUGA (that has not been publicised).

It is proposed that when new pages are added to the website then the Twitter account and Facebook page will be automatically updated with a post with a link to the pages on the website – helping to notify people when there is new content to look at.

Further use of Social media can be explored but at this initial stage it will be made clear on the HPC social presence that the main use will be to broadcast information – rather than for it to become a 2 way communications channel for dialog.

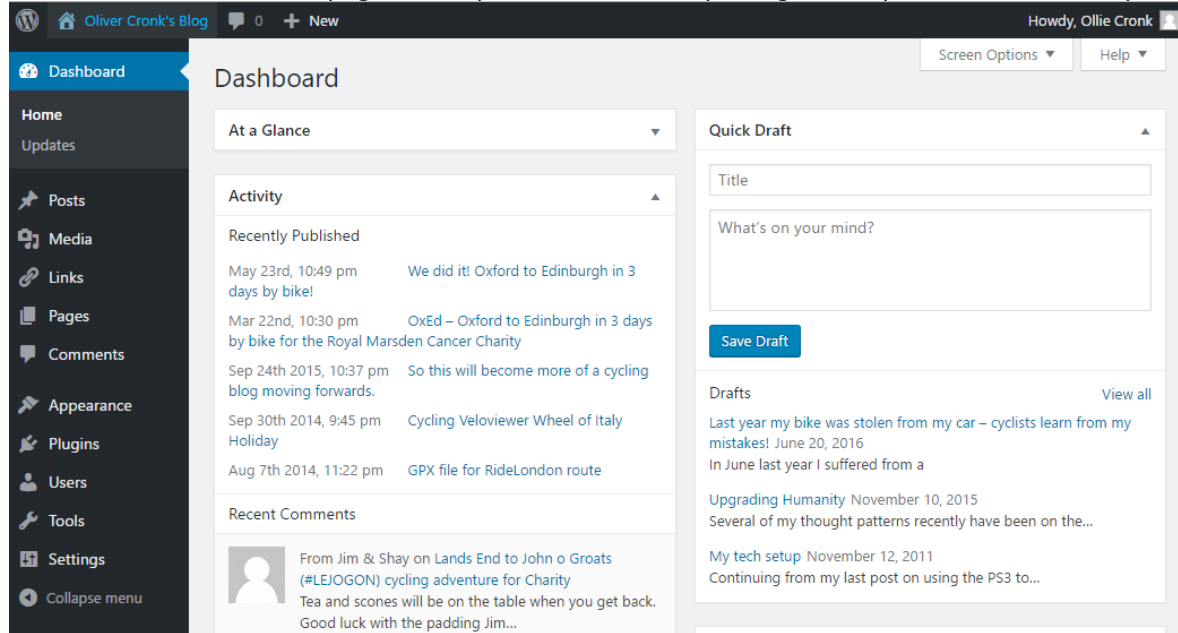
Training

Training on the use of the CMS will be provided by Oliver Cronk to interested members of the HPC and the Clerk. This is likely to require around 1 hour. Further details of this are TBC.

Screenshots

This section includes some screenshots of what the Wordpress Content Management System looks like for those managing the website and/or creating pages:

Administration dashboard page. What you arrive at after you login with your username and password:



Part of the editing a page screen. The pages update in realtime (i.e. once you save the page is updated straightaway – there is no need to upload anything as it is all done within the web

