

ANNUAL COUNCIL 09 MAY 2018

5. IT and Website development

Now that the website is up to date we are looking at its performance and appearance in an attempt to make it more user friendly to the Council and the public, improving the aesthetics and making it look more professional.

At present the website is HTML which is a Hyper Text Mark-up system which requires code in computer language to enter text and upload documents which can be quite time consuming to maintain. This can be overwritten by adding a Content Management System such as WordPress which will enable the user to upload text and documents with ease (as easy as writing or attaching to an email).

The website can be improved to make it more responsive to smart devices such as tablets and mobile phones. The layout can be improved to make better use of the screen which at present shows the content as centred with large white strips to the right and left. Inclusion of a 'search' button for ease of finding information on a certain subject of interest will improve public access.

An improved website facility will be required later in the year as work proceeds on the Neighbourhood Plan and it is suggested it should be developed over the next few months.

Attached at Appendix 5 is the system specification developed with our IT provider and the quotation covers the likely requirements for the Town Council website and allow for further development.

Members are aware of continuing problems with the laptop computer used by the Town Clerk. This has seen nearly 9 years continuous use and now needs to be replaced.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Council proceed with the development of an improved website facility and an overall allocation of £4,000 be approved from balances to implement this and acquire a new laptop.

6. Colliery Planter Scheme - Collingwood Road

The Deputy Town Clerk has progressed this scheme and met with the Probation Service who are happy to undertake the following works at Collingwood Road:

Litter pick - we would need to arrange collection
Edging and cutting/trim of grass behind garage
Weeding and clearing of the brick circle planter
Repairs to the planter - replacing missing bricks
Planting of planter

NCC have agreed to provide bricks, sand and top soil. I am sure they will also remove any litter collected.

It is proposed that Town Council contribute up to £200 for purchase of planting, annual or shrubs which NCC will then provide along with a planting plan that the Probation Service can follow.

If this project is successful it may be possible to consider other areas for the probation service to work on too.

RECOMMENDED that the joint project be approved and the costs met from the Environmental Projects budget.

7. Promenade Bins

Over the past four years the Town Council has undertaken a programme of litter bin replacement around the bay and throughout the town in consultation with Northumberland County Council Neighbourhood Services the statutory authority for litter collection and cleansing.

At the previous meeting a motion was considered to 'Set in place a bin replacement programme on the Promenade to be completed from the Town Improvement budget in the financial year 2018/19'. This part was deferred for consideration at a future meeting pending more information on cost implications and discussions with Neighbourhood Services.

As the department responsible for litter collection and bin emptying, on behalf of the statutory authority Northumberland County Council, Neighbourhood Services has expressed concerns over two issues if the blue wheelie bins are replaced along the promenade:

- 1) Capacity - this has been shown to be right now after being more than doubled less than 4 years ago. Significantly more bins will be required to achieve the right capacity. Take away litter blocks capacity of traditional bins leading to overflowing.
- 2) Operational difficulties - specific vehicle and team used for promenade emptying with custom hoist for tipping which is time and cost efficient. Change of vehicle and collection service would require extra resources and reduce service elsewhere in town.

On the question of cost that would be dependent on the type and number of new bins required around the bay to achieve the same capacity and the relative removal and installation costs at each location.

RECOMMENDED that Members consider the above issues.

8. National Pay Award

Notification has been received that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has reached agreement on the new pay scales for 2018-19 and approved by NALC, ALCC and SLCC to be applied with effect from 01 April 2018.

This amounts to an increase of 1% and the same is anticipated for April 2019.

RECOMMENDED that the National Pay Award is accepted and applied.

Appendix 5

Bespoke Responsive Website (PC / Tablet / Mobile Friendly) consisting of;

- 1) Custom designed front end templates based on existing logo colour scheme
- 2) Content Management System (CMS) including;
 - Secure control panel for Staff to edit site.
 - Page editor that allows all digital media to be utilised within the site template on the site. - File Upload facility ensuring that documents, images and attachments can easily be added to a page without the knowledge of coding.
 - Digital media facility allowing web links, PDFs and even you tube videos to be added to the site.
 - Page Roll back facility allowing changes to be undone up to 10 steps through backups attached to the database - at the click of a button.
- 3) Meetings & Minutes module
A purpose built council specific module that allows meetings to be scheduled with document upload facility for associated agenda / minutes and supporting documents.
Meetings are Auto Archived after date of meeting, with details of the next relevant committee meeting then appearing on the front page of the site.
- 4) Councillor and Staff profile page with contact details
- 5) News facility with Archive section
Offers staff the ability to add / edit unlimited news articles in a format that is crawled and indexed by Google search engine.
Facility to auto archive after set date when items are no longer relevant.
- 6) Multiple sections as agreed with Council
e.g. Events, Community, Services, History, Neighbourhood plan. Sections to be discussed in full with Council during design phase.
- 7) Social media share facility
Buttons below each News Article or Event that allows visitors to share these direct to Facebook / Twitter from the website - creating links direct to official news items / events.
- 8) Site search facility
Ability for users to search entire site for specific content.
- 9) Shortcut Icons for public
Icons that link directly to internal and external pages for council services i.e. Play Areas or NCC partnership services.
- 10) Forms section
Services - allowing residents to send enquiries relating to services direct to council
Community - allowing local groups to submit events to officers for review that can then after moderation be added to the community events section

11) Document Upload Facility

Allowing staff members to add documents, PDFs, images and word documents.

12) Gallery

Facility to upload and group images into albums for visitors to browse

13) GDPR compliant cookie statements and privacy policies in place on site

14) First year hosting and backups included free of charge.

Hosting includes automated daily, weekly and monthly backups on our own dedicated servers run at secure Datacentres in the UK (Rackspace Ltd).

***Note**

The quote covers 50 hours web development with the facilities listed above and ensures time is available for additional requirements where necessary. At a minimum you will receive everything listed above to a professional standard but the additional time allows for further customisation without added cost. Any remaining time left after development will be made available for future changes once site is live should they be required.

**Annual hosting including backups and CMS support (12 months from launch)
Subsequent annual fee for 12 months.**

Secure email facility for staff and councillors

Dedicated mailbox for staff and councillors

Dedicated mailbox facilities featuring -

- POP 3 or IMAP facility (use with Outlook or other desktop mailboxes)
- Online Webmail access - securely access your mail from anywhere
- Mobile Phone Email friendly (Our email works with most brand of phone - Samsung, Apple, Nokia etc)
- Unlimited aliases (have multiple email aliases going to one email mailbox)

Annual charge, per mailbox