

## Batheaston Parish Council – New Web Site Evaluation

**This report contains commercially sensitive information, and is not to be disclosed other than to BPC councillors and the BPC Parish Clerk**

The key requirements for the new web site are

- WCAG 2.1 AA compliant (legal requirement)
- Ability to easily publish all the required council documentation (policies, minutes/agendas and supporting documents for all meeting, councillor details, etc) as required by the Transparency Code, a requirement of the Standing Orders.
- Enable the web site to be the main source of news and event information for Batheaston, visible in a clear way so that the timetable of forthcoming events is always visible to the parish

The current web site is

- Not WCAG 2.1 AA compliant
- Is time consuming to edit and has pre-set editing behaviours that limit what can be published easily/flexibly
- Is not set up to act as a flexible news and events platform

### New Web Site Suppliers

Quotations for a new web site have been obtained from 3 sources

A - Councillor Vandesteen – initial investigation for budgetary purposes

- 4 systems quoted, 2 full, 2 ballpark.
  - o Full systems approx. £6000
  - o Ballpark systems £10-20 000

B - Councillor Jeffryes – detailed investigation

- 2 systems quoted
  - o Full systems approx. £2500

C - Parish Clerk – initial investigation based on SLCC membership

- 1 system quoted (via SLCC membership)
  - o Full System approx. £700

All systems are charged as a sum to create the web site, plus an annual hosting/backup and support contract. The annual contract is typically about £500 – additional support is usually charged at about £50-80 per hour.

Key features of the 5 full systems

- A – systems are relatively expensive - it does not appear that the suppliers have produced Parish/Town council web sites previously.
- B – quoted to a detailed requirements document, quotes give detail of how the system will meet the specifications. One system based on Wordpress, other on a specialist CMS. Both suppliers have a track record of council and public sector web sites.
- C – unlike the other systems, this is a pre packaged system – i.e. the site is already designed – it can be configured on details, plus the content loaded by BPC, but essentially it is a standard

package (which is why it is substantially cheaper). The package was only launched about 8 weeks ago.

### Initial observations

The market for Parish/Town Council web sites can be considered to be specialist, in that

- Councils do not have large funds available, so a relatively low cost system is required. This may not fit in with some web design company's markets – i.e. many suppliers do not want to deal with systems that cost less than £10k
- The essence of a local council web site (ignoring the local content detail) will have strong similarities between councils – i.e. if a web design company is able to make good use of their experience in this market, then they can offer either a medium or low cost site design package, based on their not having to start from scratch, and already understanding many of the core requirements that are common across councils

This is why there is such a large range of costings.

### WCAG 2.1 AA Compliance

The UK Government requires that all Public Sector Web Sites and Mobile Apps meet the accessibility specification of WCAG 2.1 AA. This ensures that the sites and apps can be used by almost all citizens – despite disabilities. The implications of this requirement are quite far reaching – a site normally has to be designed from the ground up, as accessible – this is not something that can be added later, as a final polish to a design. It also means that some web design features that are seen in commercial web sites are simply not allowed – they cannot be made accessible.

### Current stage of the evaluation

1. Of the 3 groups of systems, only the systems priced under £3000 are being considered, initially. There is little point in looking at the £6000+ systems (unless the lower cost systems prove to be impractical), when they do not appear to have any advantages to BPC, and the companies involved do not have a track record in Parish/Town council web sites.
2. The limitations created by working to WCAG 2.1 AA are critical – these need to be fully understood, and also how these could influence the choice of system supplier. This is therefore the immediate focus.
3. Once this has been understood, then the difference between the pre-packaged solution and the two custom solutions (designed based on previous council web site experience) needs to be understood – i.e. what advantage would be gained by BPC – pre pack or semi custom ?