

Medbourne Parish Council

Web Site Policy

1. Introduction

With effect from 13th June 2016 Medbourne Parish Council, the Village and the Village Hall have a new combined web site at www.medbourne.org.uk. This new web site has been developed under the auspices of Medbourne Parish Council who have been involved from the outset. The need to build a new site was triggered by Leicestershire County Council as a result of their decision to terminate (in August 2016) support of the infrastructure that supports predecessor Village and Parish Council web sites.

This document sets out the principles and processes for ownership, governance and maintenance of this web site.

2. Technical Background

The new site has been developed as a freestanding web site that is independent of its host environment. As such it will function fully when hosted on a PC. It can be moved from one host environment to another without the need for any re-development. This contrasts with most web sites, including the three predecessor sites; these sites were heavily dependent on host-specific features. For this reason development of the new site has been a major task; the decision to use a **local development model** is therefore an insurance against future problems of the ilk that have triggered this major re-write.

Principle 1: The site is to remain host-independent.

- This does not preclude using widgets from elsewhere on the internet, e.g. Google Calendar, Twitter plug-in, Forms Generator, etc.
- There are further justifications for this principle later in this document (see Section 9).

3. Domains

The following domains are associated with the site:

Primary domain:

- www.medbourne.org.uk is the master domain and its Home Page provides links to all three sub-sites:
 - www.medbourne.org.uk/village reaches the Village Home Page.
 - www.medbourne.org.uk/parishcouncil reaches the Parish Council Home Page.
 - www.medbourne.org.uk/villagehall reaches the Village Hall Home Page.

Secondary domains:

- www.medbourneparishcouncil.co.uk maps onto www.medbourne.org.uk/parishcouncil.

- www.medbournevillagehall.co.uk maps onto www.medbourne.org.uk/villagehall.

Ownership of Domains:

- Medbourne Parish Council owns www.medbourne.org.uk and www.medbourneparishcouncil.co.uk.
- Medbourne Village Hall Management Committee owns www.medbournevillagehall.co.uk.

Consistent with the above, the domain owners pay the domain management fees for their respective domains. In fact, www.medbourne.org.uk is provided free of charge with the web hosting service, see Section 7. Domains have to be renewed every two years when there is a small renewal fee. Failure to renew results in the site disappearing from the internet!

Principle 2: The Parish Council owns the primary and secondary domain names relating to its content.

4. Development and Maintenance Roles

The site has been developed on a free-of-charge basis by the Site Administrator, henceforth known as Admin. It is agreed with the Parish Council that ongoing maintenance of the site is effectively sub-contracted to Admin.

However, it must be possible for the Parish Clerk to maintain the Parish Council pages. This is a requirement of the Local Government Transparency Guidelines [1].

It must also be possible for the Secretary and Bookings Manager of the Village Hall to maintain Village Hall pages.

There is a distinction between the site's *template* and its *content*. The template is the set of headings and menus found on every page. The content is the information on the page. Making changes to the template must be done by Admin. The need for this is relatively infrequent. Making changes to content is relatively straightforward and there are a variety of programs that can be used, e.g. Microsoft Word.

5. Ownership of Copyright

It is always the case that the copyright of images belongs to their creators. Many contributed pictures will carry a specific copyright statement. Any documents on the site that are down-loadable should carry a copyright statement in line with the Council's Data Protection Policy.

What follows relates to the copyright of the text on the site's pages. There is a copyright statement on every page; this is in the footer section of the template. These statements are as follows:

- On the Parish Council pages: Copyright ©Medbourne Parish Council 2016.
- On the Village Hall pages: Copyright ©Medbourne Village Hall 2016.
- On the Village pages: Copyright © Medbourne Village 2016. This reflects the fact that the text may have been contributed by anyone in the Village. It is not practical to attribute every page differently. The existence of a copyright statement, albeit unspecific, should act as a deterrent to potential copiers.

6. Access to the Host Environment

Put simply, a web site is just a set of files organised within a set of folders. The web site is uploaded from a local PC to the internet using File Transfer Protocol (FTP). The folders and files on the host are an exact copy of those on the source PC. It is possible to configure Windows Explorer to show the files on the host in exactly the same way as files on a local drive. An upload or download can be as simple as cut-and-paste; this employs FTP under the covers to move the files.

For security reasons the folders on the host are password protected. There will be one master password for the whole web site and individual folders can also be protected with optional passwords. The site is organised so that all the Parish Council's files live in one folder. The same applies to all the Village Hall files.

Whilst the online passwords will be set and maintained by Admin, they will be shared, as appropriate, with others authorised to maintain the site.

Principle 3: The FTP password for the entire site will **always be known** to both the Site Administrator and the Parish Clerk.

Principle 4: The FTP password for the Parish Council folder will be known to both the Site Administrator and the Parish Clerk.

Principle 5: The FTP password for the Village Hall folder will be known to the Site Administrator, the Village Hall Secretary and Bookings Manager.

Consequently, all the individuals mentioned in Section 4 will be able to access the host for maintenance purposes. Where two individuals are updating the site in parallel there must be a protocol where the latest version of a file is downloaded from the internet, updated and then uploaded; this is because local copies of files may be rendered out-of-date by updates done elsewhere. This mode of working is not recommended. So, for example, if the Village Hall wants to maintain its own pages, they will not be touched by Admin unless specifically requested to do so.

7. The Hosting Account

The web site has been hosted on servers provided by BT. The BT Hosting Account is set up as a business account separate from any domestic account or phone line. The charges on the account relate to the provision of host services (web space) and the management of domains. All these charges, with the exception of the Village Hall's domain, will be paid by the Parish Council either directly, if possible, or indirectly via a bill tendered by Admin.

Via the Hosting Account the web site can be managed and administered online. This includes management of domains and email addresses (see below), management of FTP passwords, access to site usage statistics, site optimisation (for search engines), management of billing and account details, etc.

Principle 6: The login ID and password for the Hosting account **will always be known** to both the Site Administrator and the Parish Clerk.

8. Email Addresses

With the Hosting Account comes one free domain and ten email addresses. One email address is the owner of the Hosting Account and is its login ID. For security reasons this email address is not reproduced here. It is good practice to use domain-specific email addresses within a web site. This way, if personnel change the site remains unchanged. All that has to happen is to redirect the domain-specific emails to the new personnel.

These are the domain-specific email addresses built into the site:

- admin@medbourne.org.uk
- clerk@medbourneparishcouncil.co.uk
- chair@medbourneparishcouncil.co.uk
- neighbourhoodplan@medbourneparishcouncil.co.uk
- booking@medbournevillagehall.co.uk
- secretary@medbournevillagehall.co.uk

Emails to these accounts are redirected to the current holders of the relevant roles. The re-direction is set up using the email management facilities within the Hosting Account.

9. Local Government Transparency Guidelines

The Local Government Transparency Guidelines [1] place specific demands which have had a material impact on the design of the new web site. In summary the guidelines require that:

- The Parish Council has its own PC on which is kept the complete library of documentation that the Council is required to publish.
- Where the Council publishes information on a web site to meet its transparency commitments the Council's PC should be the source of the information that is put online.

The local development model (Section 2) has been chosen to support these requirements. Given all the principles established so far, assuming that the site maintenance is delegated to Admin, the Parish Clerk is able to download the entire web site from the host to the Council's PC. Ideally, this will be done at regular intervals, e.g. monthly, as it also provides an additional independent backup of the site in case of a problem. Given the portability of the site and ownership of the domain, the Parish Council is able to re-host the site from its own PC at any time. This is to comply with the transparency guidelines; it is not expected to happen.

Principle 7: The Parish Council should use the means at its disposal to ensure that it is always in a position to re-create / re-host the web site should the need arise.

10. Scope of Coverage

Information presented on the web site will be limited to items relating only to Medbourne and Nevill Holt; this applies to the Village sub-site. The two other sub-sites relate only to Medbourne

in any case. In the past requests from other villages to host information have been turned down. The policy has been applied evenly in order to be fair to everyone. Acceding to requests from other towns and villages would generate a large amount of extra maintenance work whilst diluting the relevance of content to Medbourne residents.

Principle 8: The site is for information pertaining to Medbourne and its residents and will not be made available to other towns and villages with the exception of Nevill Holt.

11. Commercial Exploitation

In many respects the *raison d'être* of the Village sub-site is to advertise local groups, businesses and events. The same applies to the Village Hall sub-site whose purpose is to advertise and expedite use of the Village Hall. All of this is provided as a service to the Village at no cost. The site will not include any paid advertising, or be commercially sponsored, as this may represent a conflict of interest for the Parish Council.

Principle 9: The site may not include paid advertisements and may not be commercially sponsored.

Under no circumstances may Admin, or any other individual, use the site as means to gain revenue. All charges for use of the site will be “at cost” and all maintenance effort will be provided voluntarily.

Principle 10: Maintenance of the site, if delegated, is done so on a voluntary basis by the Site Administrator. Expenses will be refunded at cost by the Parish Council.

12. Editorial Responsibility

On a day-to-day basis decisions have to be made about site content and its suitability for publication. These are some of the considerations that must be taken into account:

- Compliance with the Data Protection Act.
- Observation of copyright restrictions and attribution of copyright to owners.
- Information must be in scope, i.e. it must apply to Medbourne or Nevill Holt.
- Images must be suitable and, in the case of those involving young persons, there must be parental permission to publish. Contributed photographs may be rejected on quality grounds, e.g. out of focus.
- Information must be up-to-date. Information which becomes out-of-date may be taken down as this tarnishes the site as a whole.
- Information should not compromise the branding, look-and-feel, ease of use, colour scheme and general tidiness of the site.
- Content needs to be relevant and interesting. Submitted content may be corrected, re-worded, re-formatted, decorated with relevant images, etc. The site’s house style will be applied.

Principle 11: In delegating maintenance of the site, the Parish Council accepts that day-to-day editorial responsibility for the site rests with the Site Administrator.

13. Summary of Principles

This document has highlighted eleven principles. When taken together these principles represent a contract for engagement between the Parish Council and those working on its behalf to maintain the web site.

The principles are re-stated here:

Principle 1: The site is to remain host-independent.

Principle 2: The Parish Council owns the primary and secondary domain names relating to its content.

Principle 3: The FTP password for the entire site will **always be known** to both the Site Administrator and the Parish Clerk.

Principle 4: The FTP password for the Parish Council folder will be known to both the Site Administrator and the Parish Clerk.

Principle 5: The FTP password for the Village Hall folder will be known to the Site Administrator, the Village Hall Secretary and Bookings Manager.

Principle 6: The login ID and password for the Hosting account **will always be known** to both the Site Administrator and the Parish Clerk.

Principle 7: The Parish Council should use the means at its disposal to ensure that it is always in a position to re-create / re-host the web site should the need arise.

Principle 8: The site is for information pertaining to Medbourne and its residents and will not be made available to other towns and villages with the exception of Nevill Holt.

Principle 9: The site may not include paid advertisements and may not be commercially sponsored.

Principle 10: Maintenance of the site, if delegated, is done so on a voluntary basis by the Site Administrator. Expenses will be refunded at cost by the Parish Council.

Principle 11: In delegating maintenance of the site the Parish Council accepts that day-to-day editorial responsibility for the site rests with the Site Administrator.

References

[1] Local Government Transparency Guidelines. See:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-transparency-code-2015>

This is supplemented by *LAIS 1372 Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities* published by Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils (LRALC).