



Goostrey Parish Council

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES of the MEETING on TUESDAY 19th JANUARY 2021, at 7.30pm via VIDEO CONFERENCE

Present: Cllrs Morgan (PM)(Chairman), Sulej(JS)(Vice Chairman), Lord (SL), Morris(KM), O'Donoghue(IO'D) and Rathbone (TR)

In Attendance: S Jones Clerk to the Council.

1. **Declaration of Interests** - No declarations were received.
2. **Apologies for absence** – There were no apologies for absence.
3. **Minutes of meeting of 17th November 2020 – Resolved:** *The Finance Committee resolved to accept the Minutes of the meeting on 17th November as a true record of the meeting.*
4. **Actions from the Meeting of 17th November 2020**
 - i. Clerk to request information on how the Bankline audit report works as there does not appear to be any transaction numbers on it, making it difficult to reconcile the transactions. Action: Clerk to progress this with Nat West. **Completed- Nat West confirmed that the report the report is functioning correctly. However, it is still not helpful in reconciling the transactions.**
 - ii. **Assets** – Cllr Morgan to report on audit of Assets at the January 2021 meeting (**see Item 7**)
 - iii. Emergency procedure – Clerk to complete the procedure by mid-November and circulate the finished document to the members of the Committee and arrangements for the testing of the documentation will then be made – **Work in progress. (see Item 9)**
 - iv. **Action:** Clerk to purchase COVID supplies ie sanitizer dispensers, hand sanitizer, PPE before the end of 2020. **In progress, will be purchased before year end.**
 - v. Clerk to ask the Staff Committee should decide who will carry out the review and when it should take place, ensuring it was in line with social distancing guidelines - **Not completed due to lockdown.**
 - vi. Clerk to check insurance cover to see if there is any provision for “Unexpected disruption to village hall facilities” – **There is no current cover however, dependent on the verdict on a current court case a precedent could be set for claims to be made. However, following the analysis of the Village Hall accounts and after the receipt of the grant payments there is no current loss for 2020 to claim. Further Action:** Clerk to seek further funding for business closure due to COVID-19. A grant has been received for the lockdown in November 2020 and the Clerk will apply for a further grant for the lockdown in January and February 2021. **Completed.**
 - vii. Clerk to add an item to the Agenda for the Parish Council meeting on 24th November to consider approval of the Budget for 2021/22 and the Precept Amount for 2021/22. **Completed.**

- viii. **External Auditor Query** - Clerk to send the response to the External Auditor before 20th November 2020. **Completed.**
- ix. **Proposal to Share the role of Village Hall Supervisor with another village** organisation - Cllr Morgan to inform the Chairman of the VHMC of the Finance Committee's decision. **Completed.**
- x. **S106 Monies**
- PM to contact ANSA to find out how to start the project and find out how we utilise revenue funds for maintenance of the existing equipment.
 - Clerk and PM to investigate additional funding streams.
 - PM to feedback to the Amenities Committee. **PM has received a response from the resident working on the Booth Bed Lane Play area project and he seems keen to continue with the project.**
5. **Financial position vs. budget for the period from 1st April to 31st December 2020 – Resolved:** *The Finance Committee resolved to accept the Financial Position vs Budget report for the period from 1st April to 31st December 2020.*
See report in appendix.
6. **Draft Unaudited Accounts for the period from 1st April to December 2020 - Resolved:** *The Finance Committee resolved to accept the Unaudited Accounts for the period from 1st April to 31st December 2020.*
See report in appendix.
7. **Assets** – To review the format of the asset register and to carry out an audit of the assets on the register. Cllr Morgan confirmed he had completed the Audit of the assets external to the Village Hall and presented an updated spreadsheet indicating the current state of the assets and any remedial work required (see Asset Register in appendix).
The assets requiring remedial work are the responsibility of the Amenities Committee and the works and any forward planning for replacement of assets will be reviewed at the Amenities Meeting on 3rd February 2021.
Resolved: *The Finance Committee resolved to repeat an inspection of the village in August 2021 and then every 12 months thereafter.*
Action: Clerk to Add and item to the agenda of the next Amenities Committee meeting.
8. **New Accounts System** – The Clerk reported that she had reviewed the Rialtas Accounts System and was in the process of completing a review of Scribe Accounts. The Clerk will present her recommendation for either a new system or to stay with the existing system at the Parish Council Meeting in February for approval by the council.
Action: Clerk to obtain comments from existing users of Scribe Accounts and to produce the report before the Parish Council Meeting in February 2021. The report should be circulated to the Finance Committee in advance of the February meeting.
9. **Emergency Procedure** – To review the Emergency Procedure. The Clerk reported that the document would be completed week commencing 25th January. It was agreed that all members of the Committee would review the document and provide feedback to the Clerk. However, Cllr Sulej would test the Website instructions and Cllr Morris would test the Finance instructions.
The Clerk raised an issue with her mobile number being part of the security on the Parish Council Bank Account, in that a code is sent randomly to grant access to the account. This cannot be

removed however it may be possible for a Councillor who is already a signatory on the Nat West bank account to have read only access to the online banking application. This would be sufficient in an emergency situation as Cllr Morgan has full admin access to the Bankline Application which is used for payments. Cllr Lord volunteered to take on this role if required. **Action:** Clerk to consult with Nat West to find out what is possible.

10. Proposal to Consider Taking on Responsibility for the Bog Bean from CEC –

Cheshire East are formally considering requests for local councils to take on CEC owned assets which include verges, public buildings etc. In advance of putting the proposal to the Parish Council it is appropriate to review any potential costs:

- Grass cutting (this is not an immediate cost but would need to be considered in the long term if TR decides not to continue cutting the grass)
- Pruning/removal of trees.
- Public liability insurance for falling branches/accidents etc.

The Committee reviewed the proposal and considered that the Council needed to know on what terms the assets would be transferred from Cheshire East Council to the Parish Council. It was also noted that Cllr Rathbone has been cutting the grass and maintaining the Bog Bean on a voluntary basis for many years. When he is no longer able to do this the Parish Council will need to review the level of grass cutting and maintenance required and the cost. Presently Cheshire East Council does not pay for any maintenance of the area.

The Parish Council will consider a motion to make a decision in principle to apply to Cheshire East Council to transfer the Bog Bean and other possible village assets at the meeting on 26th January 2021.

11. To Consider Website Theme Upgrade - Netwise has advised that the current theme will cease to be supported by them after June 2021. The cost to upgrade the theme will be £199.00. See report in appendix.

Resolved: *The Finance Committee resolved to approve the upgrade to version 2 of the website theme at a cost of £199.00 (No VAT).*

12. Minor Items and Items for the Next Agenda

- i. **Parish Council Insurance** – We have been advised that the new terms will be sent one month before the renewal date (1st April 2021). We need to consider if there are any significant changes to the cover we require and notify Came & Company of these as soon as possible. **Action:** Clerk to circulate the renewal documentation when it arrives for consideration.
- ii. **ESET Antivirus Software for Parish Council Computers** – The Clerk advised that the renewal of the licences was imminent but that it may be better to change the software to a suitable alternative at a reduced cost such as Total AV and/or use Malwarebytes which is free of Charge as the Council is a Nat West customer. Cllr Sulej suggested that a malware packages such as Malwarebytes should be adequate for the purpose and if Total AV had equivalent malware protection it would be suitable. **Action:** Clerk to assess products malware protection and report back to the committee, with recommendations for implementation.

- iii. **Village Gates Project** - KM reported that the cost for the project has been estimated by CEC Highways at approximately £8,000. This will go to the Area Highways Group for consideration and we should await a decision from the group before considering the costs further.
- iv. **Village Hall Recharge** – IO'D requested that the Finance Committee review all charges from Cheshire East for the Recharge before any payments are made.

Action: Clerk to request the promised recharge reports from the School Business Manager.

13. Next meeting – 6th April 2021

14. Close meeting - The meeting closed at 20:30

APPENDIX

ITEM 5. GOOSTREY PARISH COUNCIL Budget vs Actuals Quarter 3 2020-21

at 14th January 2021

SUMMARY	Actual Q3 2019/20	Actual Q3 2020/21	Budget 2020/21	% Budget
Total Income	£59,150.24	£57,352.04	£65,637.00	87.38%
Projected Spend	£32,979.16	£35,819.65 *	£67,137.00	53.35%
Excess over budget	£26,171.08	£21,532.39	-£1,500.00	

*includes £13,000 for Recharge 2020/21 to be moved to reserves to be paid in 2021/22

£1500 caretaker services pay added to budget

RECEIPTS	Actual Q3 2019/20	Actual Q3 2020/21	Budget 2020/21	% Budget
Adjustment				
4405 Precept Payment	£44,012.00	£44,012.00	£44,012.00	100.00%
Village Hall Lettings	£13,582.10	£1,529.42	£20,000.00	7.65%
4006 Performing Rights Recharge	£137.55	£15.30	£225.00	6.80%
4450 Bank interest	£716.55	£451.32	£600.00	75.22%
4407 Lunch Ticket Sales	£693.00	£0.00	£800.00	0.00%
4475 Exceptional income	£0.00	£11,344.00	£0.00	0.00%
Pay phone	£9.04	-	-	
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£59,150.24	£57,352.04	£65,637.00	90.12%
PAYMENTS				
3003 VAT payment	£375.49			
3005 PAYE account	£57.88			

May achieve 10% of target

Will not be achieved but unlikely to affect budget as invoice for this year is approximately the same

Bank rates reduced unlikely to achieve target

Event cancelled

Covid 19 Small Business Grant plus Nov 2020 lockdown grant ring fenced to support VH

Additional grants expected for Jan/Feb 2021

VAT reclaim to be submitted for Q3 2020/21

Parish Council	Actual Q3 2019/20	Actual Q3 2020/21	Budget 2020/21	% Budget		
Administration						
7601 Audit and accountancy	£760.00	£770.00	£800.00	96.25%	underspend	£30.00 estimate for year
7901 Bank Charge	£25.00	£216.66	£25.00	866.64%	overspend	£300.00 estimate for year
7510 Computer	£364.50	£108.58	£300.00	36.19%	underspend	£14.00 estimate for year
7502 Telephone & Broadband	£279.18	£312.51	£450.00	69.45%	underspend	£50.00 estimate for year
7602 Website	£300.00	£300.00	£375.00	80.00%	underspend	£75.00 estimate for year
7504 Office supplies/printing/postage	£715.38	£477.15	£1,000.00	47.72%	underspend	£800.00 estimate for year
8204 Insurance	£0.00	£0.00	£900.00	0.00%	underspend	£200.00 estimate for year
7603 Legal & Professional Fees	£40.00	£0.00	£1,250.00	0.00%	underspend	£1,250.00 estimate for year
7605 Subscriptions	£882.00	£897.50	£1,000.00	89.75%	overspend	£78 estimate for year
7050 Councillors Expenses & General Expenses	£0.00	£0.00	£100.00	0.00%	underspend	£100.00 estimate for year
7512 Accounting system	£0.00	£0.00	£312.00	0.00%	Licence purchase in February 2021	
7550 Parish Magazine	£250.00	£250.00	£280.00	89.29%	underspend	£30.00 estimate for year
7580 General	£75.95	£0.00	£200.00	0.00%	use to fund £200 LCAS Award Fees (Quality & Quality Gold)	
TOTAL Administration	£3,692.01	£3,332.40	£6,992.00	47.66%		
Donations/Grants						
7401 Goosfest				0.00%		
7402 Roseday				0.00%		
7403 FOGS				0.00%		
7404 Goostrey Archive				0.00%		
7405 Guides/Scouts				0.00%		
7406 Homewatch				0.00%		
7407 Friends of BB Lane PF				0.00%		
7408 s137 - Donations & Grants	£2,257.00	£2,360.00	£6,200.00	36.40%	incl Hand Sanitizer, U3A, RBL & Food Bank	
TOTAL Donations	£2,257.00	£2,360.00	£6,200.00	38.06%	underspend	£3,840.00
Salary & Expenses						
7016 Clerk's Expenses	£0.00	£0.00	£100.00	0.00%	underspend	£100.00
7000 Clerks Salary (£12.39 per hour)	£9,042.73	£9,785.43	£13,500.00	72.48%	underspend	£339.57 end of 3rd Quarter
7006 Employers NIC for Clerk	£523.84	£479.19	£1,000.00	47.92%	underspend	£270.81 end of 3rd Quarter
7015 Training	£220.00	£237.44	£500.00	47.49%	underspend	£137.56 end of 3rd Quarter
TOTAL Salary & Expenses	£9,786.57	£10,502.06	£15,100.00	69.55%		
TOTAL PARISH COUNCIL	£15,735.58	£16,194.46	£28,292.00	57.24%		

Amenities	Actual Q3 2019/20	Actual Q3 2020/21	Budget 2020/21	% Budget
Maintenance - Village				
5000 Village maintenance - Grass Cutting	£1,385.90	£1,697.56	£2,065.00	82.21%
5010 Noticeboards & Benches Repairs	£1,048.73	£33.33	£850.00	3.92%
5001 Graveyard Maintenance	£2,483.23	£2,024.91	£3,000.00	67.50%
5003 Rose Day Stand & Toilets	£20.00	£0.00	£750.00	0.00%
TOTAL Maintenance - Village	£4,937.86	£3,755.80	£6,665.00	56.35%
Parish Projects				
5760 Speedwatch	£400.00	£150.00	£800.00	18.75%
5750 Senior Citizens' Lunch	£1,675.48	£0.00	£900.00	0.00%
5750 Christmas Lights (BB & St Lukes)	£592.46	£0.00	£750.00	0.00%
6202 Planters/plants	£588.48	£0.00	£1,000.00	0.00%
6203 VE Day 75th Anniversary Event	-	£0.00	£500.00	0.00%
TOTAL Parish Projects	£3,256.42	£150.00	£3,950.00	3.80%
TOTAL Amenities	£8,194.28	£3,905.80	£10,615.00	36.80%

	Estimates	
	1697.58	
Works at Church Bank incl bollard. Estimate to install new bench is £397 not incl	397	
	2024.91	
Will not be spent this year	0	
	TOTAL	£4,119.49 plus actual
	Estimate Year end	4573.32
	Estimates	
	400	
SDU on BB Lane inspection cost. Estimate Battery changes £400	1000	
£1000 moved to Donations for Congleton food bank donation	200	
Christmas Lights Switch on Cancelled.	£1,150	
Two gabion planters to be purchased for Church Bank Corner for £1150 not included	200	
donate £200 to RBL in Nov 2020 not included	TOTAL	£2,950.00 plus actual
	Estimated Year end	£3,100.00
	Amenities Total Estimated Year end	£7,673.32
	underspend of	£2,941.68

Village Hall	Actual Q3 2019/20	Actual Q3 2020/21	Budget 2020/21	% Budget
VH Expenses				
5004 VH Improvements	£280.88	£145.00	£1,000.00	14.50%
5005 VH Recharge	£0.00	£0.00	£13,000.00	0.00%
5006 VH Performing Rights	191.12	£14.39	£225.00	6.40%
5008 VH General Maintenance	£872.01	£987.15	£1,500.00	65.81%
5007 VH School Kitchen Hire fee	£44.00	£0.00	£125.00	0.00%
VE Day Celebration Event	-	£0.00	£300.00	0.00%
TOTAL VH Expenses	<u>£1,388.01</u>	<u>£1,146.54</u>	<u>£16,150.00</u>	7.10%
VH Salary & Expenses				
7001 VH Supervisor Salary (£10.00 hr)	£3,808.48	£130.05	£6,000.00	2.17%
7010 Staff Expenses	£137.59	£10.07	£200.00	5.04%
7012 Caretaker Services Pay	£1,037.81	£0.00	£1,500.00	0.00%
7005 VH Clerk Salary (£12.39 per hr)	£982.94	£999.36	£1,218.00	82.05%
7002 VH Cleaner Salary (£10.00 hr)	£1,694.47	£0.00	£3,162.00	0.00%
TOTAL VH Salary & Expenses	<u>£7,661.29</u>	<u>£1,139.48</u>	<u>£12,080.00</u>	9.43%
TOTAL Village Hall	<u>£9,049.30</u>	<u>£2,286.02</u>	<u>£28,230.00</u>	8.10%

suggest we try to purchase as much of the COVID sanitiser, soap, cleaning materials and ppe out of this years budget and use the £2000 spare in the alternative budget for this year if necessary.

Consider reducing to £10,000 (no Rates £2000, lower bills)

VH Cleaning costs & border clearance

£200 moved to Donations for RBL donation

saving of £4,369.95 £6,000.00 year estimate
mobile phone

Inserted budget figure(not previously included)

On target

saving of £2,371.50 £3,162.00 year estimate

increased by £1500 to show Caretaker Services pay
which is part of VH Income

Spend from Reserves	Actual Q3 2020/21	Budget 2020/21	
Hall & Lounge Lighting projects	£2,658.00	£3,000.00	88.60%
Election Fee	£0.00	£7,000.00	0.00%
Recharge for 2018/19	£0.00	£2,767.01	0.00%
9502 VH Recharge for 2019/20	£0.00	£13,000.00	0.00%
9501 VH Capital Projects	£2,019.98	£2,019.98	100.00%
Bar Servery	£12,988.00	£15,000.00	86.59%
New SDU	£0.00	£3,000.00	0.00%
Village Planters (TBC)	£0.00	£5,000.00	0.00%
New Bench	£0.00	£850.00	0.00%
VH Floor Refurbishment	£0.00	£2,000.00	0.00%
Office & Committee Room Windows	£0.00	£4,000.00	0.00%
Loft Stairs and extended boarded area	£0.00	£4,800.00	0.00%
TOTAL Village Hall	£17,665.98	£59,436.99	

Underspend £342.00 COMPLETED

Unpaid landlord & tenant maintenance

To be paid and refund for overcharge on council tax to be applied

New PC, UPS & LED Ceiling Lights (not in budget)

Under budget by £2012 COMPLETED

Ordered due for installation in January 2021

See 3 year budget

Maximum estimate for Bench purchase £678.00 + VAT. Installation to be paid out of Amenities Budget

Move to 2021/22 and include in £13000 recharge (to be put into budget for 21/22)

Move to 2022/23 or into longer term plan

Move to 2021/22



Goostrey Parish Council
Unaudited Accounts
1st April 2020 to 31st December 2020

RECEIPTS

Adjustment	
Precept Payment	£44,012.00
V. Hall Lettings incl VAT	£1,529.42
Bank Interest	£451.32
Lunch Ticket Sales	£0.00
Performing Rights	£15.30
Exceptional Income	£11,344.00
	£57,352.04

PAYMENTS

PAYE Control	£57.88
VAT Control	£375.49

Administration	£2,562.40
Audit	£770.00
Donations/Sponsorship	£2,360.00
Maintenance - around Village	£3,755.80
Miscellaneous Items	£0.00
Parish Projects	£150.00
Salary & Expenses - Parish Council	£10,502.06
V.Hall expenses	£1,146.54
V.Hall Salary & Expenses	£1,139.48
	£22,819.65

Excess of Receipts over Payments **£34,532.39**

Balance at 01/04/20	£157,803.81
Excess of Receipts over Payments	plus £34,532.39
Less spend from General Reserves	less £0.00
Less spend from Capital Reserves	less £17,665.98
Balance of accounts at 30/06/20	£174,670.22

General Reserves (incl Current Account)	£131,468.94
Capital Reserves	£43,201.28
Total Reserves	£174,670.22

Represented by	
Current Account	£25,997.35
Deposit Account (General Reserves)	£30,373.42
Santander Account	£77,166.86
Skipton Building Soc	£40,865.83
Caxton FX Prep Paid Card Credit	£266.76
	£174,670.22

Phonebox	Fixed	Main Road - Bank View	All glass panels in tact but really needs refurbishment inside and out. Paint flaking badly in places and losing its charm. Doesn't smell of wee!	Needs specialist refurbishment but the Leylandii on two sides will hinder a full job.	Remedial action in 2021/22	£1.00	£1.00	December, 2012	£1.00
Defibrillator	Fixed	Phone Box	Seems okay no damage are contact details correct.	Check contact details	No suggestions except annual inspection and action if required. Check details and any records with those named on the unit.			April, 2013	£0.00
Notice Board	Fixed	Precinct	Solid, newish, some signs of rust on legs but fairly superficial at this time	None	No suggestions except annual inspection and action if required.		£220.00	Unknown	£0.00
Seat	Fixed	Bogbean	Solid. Slats (wooden) warn and cut but still solid. Nothing protruding to injury users.	Refurbish - sand and paint slats or replace.	Refurbish in 2021/22		£325.00	Unknown	£0.00
Seat	Fixed	Bogbean	Only back feet fixed. Damp and mossy with some loose logs. Fixings at rear rusted.	damp in the winter months which is hastening deterioration and it is unattractive to sit on. Replace in 2022/23	Replace in 2022/23	£130.00	£130.00	June, 2001	£0.00
Metal Village Sign	Fixed	Bogbean	Post solid. Paint flaking on sign itself and post paint worn in places. Lichen.	Repaint	Refurbish in 2021/22		£901.99	Unknown	£0.00
Seat	Fixed	Shearbrook Bank	Solid but right hand leg badly corroded. Slats sound but benefit from refurb. Nothing protruding	Refurb (memorial bench)	Refurbish in 2021/22		£325.00	Unknown	£0.00
SID Post	Fixed	Shearbrook	Post solid.	None	No suggestions except annual inspection and action if required.	£1,522.70	£1,522.70	May, 2008	£913.62
Planter	Fixed	Boothbed Lane/Main Rd	No signs of cracks but big chip out of rim.	None	No suggestions except annual inspection and action if required.				
Planter	Fixed	Boothbed Lane/Main Rd	No signs of cracks but small chip out of rim.	None	No suggestions except annual inspection and action if required.				
Planter	Fixed	Boothbed Lane/Main Rd	No signs of cracks.	None	No suggestions except annual inspection and action if required.				
Seat	Fixed	Boothbed Lane Junction	Solid - nothing protruding. Needs a lick of paint. Piece of metal sticking up from base of one fixing leg.	Refurbish and investigate metal at base	More detailed inspection and refurbish in 2021/22		£325.00	Unknown	£0.00
Notice Board	Fixed	End Booth Bed Lane	Solid needs a clean.	None	No suggestions except annual inspection and action if required.		£220.00	Unknown	£0.00
SID post	Fixed	New Platt Lane	Solid no issues found	None	No suggestions except annual inspection and action if required.				
Seat	Fixed	Boothbed Crescent	Back right bench. Fixing feet rusty but fairly solid. Bench wobbly but okay. Solid to sit on with no protruding parts. Right arm looseish	Consider replacement but in better condition than the one on Bogbean	Replace in 2023/24				
Planter	Fixed	Boothbed Lane crescent	Left - no damage no chips	None	No suggestions except annual inspection and action if required.				
Planter	Fixed	Boothbed Lane crescent	Right - no damage no chips	None	No suggestions except annual inspection and action if required.				
Fido Dog Bin	Fixed	Booth Bed Lane	new, solid	None	No suggestions except annual inspection and action if required.	£109.00		July, 2019	£109.00
Seat	Fixed	Sandy Lane	Looks quite new solid.	None	No suggestions except annual inspection and action if required.	£325.00	£325.00	June, 2009	£260.00
Picnic Table 1 - northern mo	Fixed	Booth Bed Play Area	No damage seen - solid.	None	No suggestions except annual inspection and action if required.	£1,244.00	£1,074.00	February, 2008	£497.60
Picnic Table 2 - closer to ga	Fixed	Booth Bed Play Area	One table top slat loose.	Bench needs attention.	Remedial action in 2021/22				
Seat	Fixed	Boothbed Crescent	Back left a memorial bench. Solid. Fixing feet rusty front right has protruding metal. Seat solid.	base. Consider replacement but in better condition than the one on Bogbean	More detailed inspection and refurbish in 2021/22	£280.00	£280.00	July, 2002	£0.00
Planter	Fixed	Booth Bed Lane		REMOVE FROM LIST		£113.00	£113.00	June, 2001	£0.00
Planter	Fixed	Front of Precinct Shops	Missing - relocated	REMOVE FROM LIST		£113.00	£113.00	June, 2001	£0.00
Planter	Fixed	Kettle Store	Missing - relocated	REMOVE FROM LIST	Remove from list as re-located assets.	£113.00	£113.00	June, 2001	£0.00
Planter	Fixed	Kettle Store	Missing - relocated	REMOVE FROM LIST		£113.00	£113.00	June, 2001	£0.00

Planter	Fixed	Old Paddock corner	Missing - relocated?	REMOVE FROM LIST		£113.00	£113.00	June, 2001	£0.00
Lighting Column (if these are the ones in the Village	Fixed	Village Hall car park.	6 x streetlight type all look okay and two floodlights.	None	No suggestions except annual inspection and action if required.		£696.07	Unknown	£0.00

ITEM 11. To Consider Website Theme Upgrade - The item below is the mail received from Netwise regarding the upgrade.

NETWISE V2

Important Update

Since NetWise created the first Parish Council website back in 2015 there have been many changes, not just regulatory but also technological. After five years it's time for us to say goodbye to our old theme and look to the future with a faster, more reliable theme that encompasses all the latest regulations and technology.

Why is a new theme needed?

In April 2015 WordPress version 3.76 was current. In December 2020 WordPress version 5.6 is being released. Between then and now, WordPress has released 391 updates.

WordPress themes have a life cycle simply because the technology that supports them advances. As Wordpress core developers continue to push Wordpress updates (which they will do habitually in days, months, and years-to-come) with new features and security solutions through patches and new versions, the theme that you are using will not work as well with the new Wordpress core updates, or as well today as it did the first day that it was created. This could eventually lead to issues where as you update Wordpress, you will notice the theme itself may begin to wield unruly bugs and security issues of its own that weren't present before. This is a natural degradation of software that ultimately happens anytime that any software is no longer declared supported and as the world of other software (especially any that your software has a relationships with) continues to advance.

In the short term this can be avoided by simply turning off Wordpress auto-updates or by not updating your Wordpress core when regular Wordpress updates are available, you may notice that your version of the Wordpress core software also becomes buggy and has security flaws as hackers identify new security vulnerabilities, or as new Wordpress features provided by Wordpress core come to fruition and old features become legacy or outdated and also unsupported in the ways they were supported before.

Say Hello to NetWise V2

Our current theme is almost five years old and whilst it still works reasonably well, we are conscious that it's coming towards end of life. We have been developing a new theme for over twelve months that is faster, more lightweight and meets with all the new coding standards as well as the regulations that local authorities need to adhere to. We will continue to support the existing theme until June 2021.

NetWise V2 is 100% compliant with WCAG2.1aa accessibility regulations, in addition, it has built in functions for Operation London Bridge, Forth Bridge and Menai Bridge in the sad event of the death of a senior Royal.

We've improved all the functions such as the document system which now allows for documents to be published as a HTML (no coding needed) page and also a PDF download. This complies with GDS guidelines about publishing and the need to publish by HTML where ever possible. Although this is only a recommendation at present, we expect that it will become a requirement in future years and so we've planned for that so that you can stay ahead of compliance.

NetWise V2 uses less plugins as we've written the code to power most functions straight into the theme. This makes for a faster, more reliable and secure website.

The homepage is flexible enough to display any kind of information giving your local authority website a unique clean look tailored to your needs. It displays well on all devices too ensuring that your visitors have a great user experience.

How do I upgrade to V2?

If you joined us from July 2020 onwards then we'll automatically upgrade you before June 2021. We'll contact you prior to upgrading to let you know what will happen and when.

If you joined us prior to July 2020 then we'll only upgrade you if you request it. We've put together some introductory offers as we're keen to see as many clients as possible make the switch.

The price depends on which package you're currently on with us. See below.

Introductory Offer

For those on Basic & Standard Package - £399

For those on Premium Package - £199

For those on Premium Plus Package – Free Upgrade

For clients who came on board since 1st July 2020 on any package – Free Upgrade

For clients who have purchased either WCAG edits or London Bridge - £149

So, for example, if you're currently on our Standard package but have already paid for London Bridge module then you'll need to pay just £149 to upgrade to NetWise V2.

Do I have to upgrade?

We can't force people to upgrade however we appeal to everyone to give it consideration not least for security reasons. PHP (the software that powers Wordpress) is also changing to new versions each year. We know that our current theme is at its limit for PHP upgrades, it will continue to work for perhaps a few more years but as the news are reporting huge surges in cyber attacks during 2020, it makes sense to run the most secure package possible.

We will only support changes to the old theme until June 2021, it will continue to operate until that time but we will no longer offer support in terms of updates etc.

Simply reply to this email or contact us if you wish to upgrade.