

### Enhancements to the Town Council's Website and Enabling Facebook

Town Council 18 July 2017

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

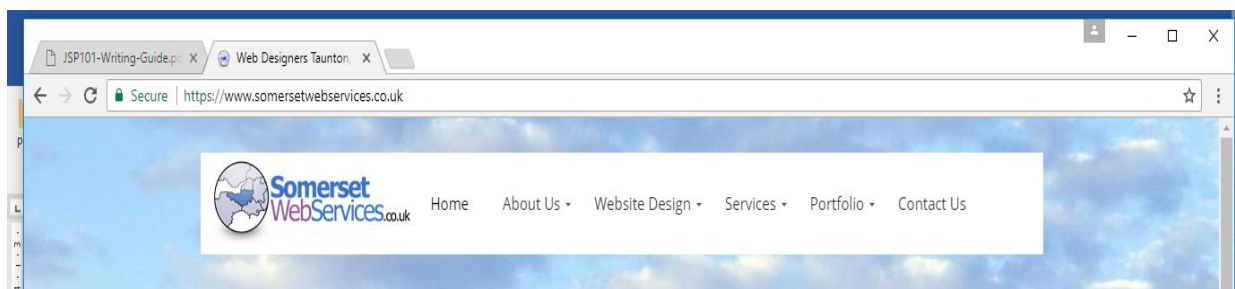
- (i) Enhancements are made to the Town Council's website regarding security, compatibility with mobile devices and widescreen and improvements for staff when updating the website.
- (ii) That the Town Council publishes an Ilminster Town Council Facebook page to continue and improve visibility to the community.
- (iii) To electronically link the website to the Facebook page through a plug in.

#### Introduction

1. On Thursday, 29 June 2017 the Town Clerk and the two admin support staff attended a training session at Somerset Web Services who developed the Ilminster Town Council website. The training was very informative and led to a discussion about the requirements for the website to be hosted on a secure platform, the way forward for the Town Council to engage with social media and how to keep the website up to date from a staff perspective and usability on different devices.
2. The importance and advantages of having a social media presence were also discussed. Messages on social media sites reach a wider audience than using a website alone and are a good way to signpost people back to the website for information.

#### Background Information

3. The website should be hosted on a secure platform - with the web address starting https - which looks like this:



With people becoming more conscious about online security, it is important for the website to be secure as some search engines will automatically drop a website down the search list if it is not deemed to be secure. This is particularly important as the website has the 'Contact Us' page where people supply their personal information which currently is not encrypted.

4. A 'plug in' can be bought and used to generate a Facebook post from the website and it is envisaged this would be used for the agendas and the minutes; this would ensure that at least one or two posts would go out each week. The weeks where there were no

meetings, a post would be put out highlighting what the Town Council does such as the open spaces, the role of the councillors, the market house and the market.

5. To ensure that the website remains usable it needs to be made compatible with a widescreen format and mobile devices as the evidence suggests that increasingly people are viewing websites on mobile devices.

### Costs

6. Ilminster Town Council currently pay £499 per year for the website hosting and support. To be moved onto a secure platform the charge would increase by £101 to a total of £600 per year. The secure platform would provide higher performance which means the website will perform better and will load faster for users.
7. A one-off fee of £150 would usually be charged to upgrade from a non secure platform to a secure platform but in this instance it will cost £50. The current hosting platform is due for payment in November, however if it is decided to move to a secure platform the increase in cost would only take effect from November but the move across to a secure platform would happen as soon as it has been approved by the Town Council.
8. Whilst moving the website to a secure platform it would be advisable to give the website an update; this would mainly be to the back end of the website to make it easier for staff to update the front of the website. The look and general format of the website would be refreshed to be improve accessibility and the user experience e.g. it would be easier to read for people with conditions such as dyslexia. This general refresh will hopefully ensure that the website stays current for a few more years. This would cost £500.
9. There is a device which is referred to as a 'plug in', which can be used to create a Facebook post when creating a page or post on the website. This would be a great way to be able to have a Facebook presence without creating too much extra work for staff. The aim of having the Facebook page is to engage with more people in and around Ilminster but always directing them back to the website. This would cost £50.
10. The total cost for the work described above would be £600 which would include moving the website to a secure platform "lick of paint" and 'plug in' for Facebook. There would be an ongoing increased annual charge for the website hosting on a secure platform.

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**Report Prepared:** 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017