

Kettleburgh Website APM 29th May 2024

Parish Councils are legally required to have a website where many important documents must be displayed. Since September 2020, all parish, town and borough councils must have a website that complies with the Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1AA rating so that it meets Accessibility Guidelines asset in the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility regulation, as can be seen on the Gov.uk website. This is all part of making the operation of government 'transparent'.

The long-standing website was accidentally deleted by the host service in November 2022. It transpired that backup had been inadequate and as a result content was lost, and many links broken. For months the host service posted documents on our behalf while options were considered.

A new website was looked at first and the council made extensive enquiries about the potential for a package of facilities - a website and other ICT services such as Microsoft 365 to ensure secure councillor emailing and secure storage of council documentation. But the opportunity for grant funding for this was lost with the announcement of elections in 2022. As a result the council looked at the business case for all options including do nothing. It concluded that the do minimum option of giving the current site another chance and building on it offered best value. The host service had by then improved its data security processes considerably. The current facilities could be used better. The cost would be just £60 annually, in contrast to £1000-£1500 set up cost with an annual fee on top for a new site with more bells and whistles.

Resumption of Website. On that basis in August 2023 the Clerk with the agreement of the long standing webmaster Trevor Jessop and complimentary support from an ICT professional took over the site. Free training was received, and work began restoring and updating it.

Since then, data has been replaced, and many links restored. This work is ongoing. The new site is one of few village sites where both the Parish Council's needs and those of the wider community are happily and collaboratively provided for in just one place. There are now many new pages; clearer sign posting for the Parish Council and its meetings and Planning Applications, Public Rights of Way, Access Land, Flooding, community services both national and local, and more.

The Future. The webmaster needs residents to help by:

- Generally using the site more
- Reporting broken links
- Sending more News Items
- Providing photographs of the Parish, people and events
- Contributing to a new History of the Village page
- Indeed, any ideas and information that would be of interest in the village.

Right now, the probable level of use of the website still doesn't appear to support investment of public money in a more feature rich site management system. But it would be worth seeking firm evidence of use by setting up analysis tools that are available. Knowing residents' demands for features would also be most helpful.