RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

Website Migration.

From October this year all government/local authority websites are required to be compliant with the updated accessibility standard WCAG 2.2 A.A.

Without going into too much detail our current website does not meet that standard and without a significant amount of work it probably won't.

In addition, we are strongly encouraged to move to a .gov.uk website which would be a much more secure environment for our website.

Whilst the clerk has been out of action, the Chairman and myself have been looking after the Clerk's mailbox and it has become quite apparent how our current email system is far from robust in terms of filtering and spam management. We have all be subject to some spam emails in our Parish Council email accounts and the current webmail email system is not equipped with the best spam and phishing filtering system.

With these things in mind, I have been looking at alternative options for website/email provisions, with the following criteria:

- A .GOV.uk domain – modern, accessible and compliant with Government design guidelines
- WCAG 2.2. A.A compliant for accessibility
- GDPR compliant hosted on UK servers.
- Managed and maintained easily.
- SSL Certificated.
- Includes email accounts sufficient to serve our PC needs.
- A robust and friendly user interface for the website and email accounts.
- The service would include content migration.
- The email service would include existing account migration.
- Well supported and reliable.
- Cost effective.

I have sat through a number of webinars from various providers all telling me their offering is the best option and I have to say all have been impressive, although each one has had some element missing, or other positive enhancement until I came across one offered by Parish Online, these are the people that provide our online mapping service.

We did start to talk to Parish Online back in 2022 when they were first branching out into their website offering for Parish Councils to compliment their mapping service, at the time it was not a mature product and was lacking in a number of key elements I felt our Parish Council needed. However, possibly taking on some of my feedback back, they have developed a comprehensive website/email package in partnership with Zoro which looks the most compelling of all the offerings I have come across to date.

Their services tick all of the boxes above with some further enhancements we have wanted to aspire to previously, such as cloud storage and secure accessibility for documents, almost equivalent to Microsoft's most recent Office 365.

In terms of cost, their initial quotation is £480 + VAT per year. This includes some additional discounting for our Parish Online mapping subscription and for a limited period of time they are able to access government funding of £100 to cover the cost of the .Gov.uk domain, but this is a limited fund on a first come first served basis, so would need to act on soon.

For comparison, there are other suppliers out there: (these are all annual costs).

Provider	Offering	Initial and annual cost	Pros/Cons
Aubergine	Website only	£499 + VAT	No email, all other enhancements come at a cost. Promoted by SLCC. Most highly rated.
Parish Online	Website/20 email accounts – Cloud storage and workspace	£480 + VAT	All in – few upgrade options. Costs based on space GB's used. Includes .gov.uk domain & registration (worth £100) This is a relatively simple website.
Parish-Council.com	Website only	Bespoke pricing £78 per year +++	Everything is add on, plus lot of work put back to client.
Visionict	Website only	Bespoke Cost only on quotation	More about managing the Parish Council through systems.
Netwise	Premium Flexmail Plus Website & Email	With 10 email accounts £440 + VAT plus £699 start up	More developed than Parish Online many elements Radford may not be ready to use yet. But worth thinking about.
websites for parish councils	Website and email	Unclear about annual costs but one off starter fees range from £379 to £579.	Confusing options and pricing structure.

Our current website subscription still has a year to run, however, the current provider cannot offer .gov.uk websites, the email offering is a limited basic webmail service. We cannot get a refund. Equivalent to approximate £290 in remaining subscription period.

However, there would be some value in running both concurrently and moving over from one live system to the other as this would allow us the back stop of an existing working site until we are sure of the transition, rather than waiting for an eleventh hour switch over.

Ends.