

Notes of the Communications Committee Meeting held virtually on Wednesday 22 July 2020 at 10:00am.

Present: Cllr C Shepherd (Chairman), Cllr A Bubb, Cllr B Hopkins, Mr R Smyth, Mr S Martyn and Jo Halpin Jones

In attendance: Geraldine Scanlon (Communications Officer).

Actual meeting start time 10.20am

140. Apologies for absence.

Cllr D Wright, Cllr M Noble and Cllr J Stokes

141. Please indicate if there are any interests, which should be declared. A declaration of an interest should indicate the nature of the interest (if not already declared on the Register of Interests) and the agenda item to which it relates. If a disclosable pecuniary interest is declared, the member should withdraw from the room whilst the matter is discussed.

None received

142. Minutes of meeting held on 24 June 2020

a) To approve minutes

It was resolved to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record.

b) To consider matters arising.

Cllr Shepherd asked if the Social Club wished to write an article for the Village Voice. Cllr Hopkins advised that with the current situation at the Social Club and their inability to hold events such as live bands, bingo evenings etc there was little to advertise in an article but would approach those concerned to write something once the future of the club was known.

143 Village Voice

a. Current Financial Position

Jo Halpin Jones enquired what the current financial situations was regarding the actual income received for advertising. Councillor Shepherd explained the predicted income for the year was £16,000.00, the current total shown as received on the budget comparison was £10,440.00 however the money received for advertising sold throughout July was still to be added to that total. Jo Halpin Jones queried why the costs of Village Voice 124 had not been shown. Councillor Shepherd said it was authorised for payment in June but would not show on the budget sheets until July.

Cllr Hopkins said he felt it had been a good attempt to get the advertising for the magazine

Jo Halpin Jones advised she had a copy of Hunstanton Town and Around that she will give Mrs Scanlon with highlighted potential advertisers.

b. Content

Jo Halpin Jones explained the last Village Voice had only just been delivered therefore there has been little content received for Village Voice 126 however she hoped the next edition would have more content now groups are starting to meet again.

c. Advertisers & Finance.

Councillor Shepherd explained Mrs Scanlon is to continue to approach businesses in an attempt to increase advertising. Mrs Scanlon said she had noticed advertisers within the magazine are now advertising on Facebook which is free. Councillor Shepherd felt the magazine is something that people keep and can refer too whereas an advert on Facebook is a real time means of advertising.

d. Distribution.

Mrs Scanlon advised all rounds had been covered for the latest edition of the Village Voice with distributors coming to the centre to collect.

Councillor Bubb asked if the volunteers annual thank you tea party could be organised in advance this year to enable more people to attend. After discussion, the date set was 9th December 2020 with the venue yet to be agreed.

144. Website

Councillor Shepherd advised a report had been circulated from Mr Martyn regarding the Parish Council website, Accessibility Review.

**Dersingham.org.uk – the Parish council website
Accessibility Review**

I have been asked to look at the Parish Council website and review its accessibility. This is necessary because the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 requires public sector bodies, which includes local councils, to ensure reasonable adjustments are made to websites so they are accessible to people with various disabilities. These include:

- Impaired vision
- Motor difficulties
- Cognitive impairments or learning disabilities
- Deafness or impaired hearing

From 23 September 2020 all local council websites will have to comply with those regulations.

The actual requirement is to comply given the resources of the individual council. In other words, if full compliance would require a complete rebuild of the website, at considerable expense, it's permissible to do some work now and other work bit by bit over a period of time. There is an automated tool available online, the WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool and I have used this as part of my assessment of the Dersingham site.

On first running the tool over Dersingham.org.uk it flagged up numerous issues, but on closer inspection these were mostly minor and all were easily corrected. For example, on certain areas of the site the text did not have sufficient colour contrast

from the background. Although this was not noticeable to a normally sighted person, it could cause difficulties for someone who is partially sighted.

I have done the necessary work to the site and corrected the errors of coding that were flagged up. There are now 'no errors' being shown when the automated test is run.

Issues with PDF or Word documents

Not all issues can be detected with an automated scan of the site. One of the major accessibility issues for websites is the use of either PDF or Microsoft Word documents within the site, rather than documents created with the web coding language HTML. Documents created with HTML are responsive to the different sizes of device used to view them, so that they adjust in layout depending on whether the viewer is using a phone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer or even a large screen TV. PDF and Word documents are designed to be printed, usually on an A4 sheet of paper, they do not automatically adjust to the viewing device. There are other accessibility issues with these formats, so we should be trying to reduce or eliminate their use and make as many documents as possible HTML coded.

There are three areas on the Dersingham site where PDF documents are used.

- Occasional documents that are referenced from a page on the website, for example the Neighbourhood Plan which is referenced from the Home page.
- The online version of Village Voice magazine
- Parish Council documents such as minutes, agendas etc.

In future any document such as the Neighbourhood Plan that is required to be referenced from the website should be converted to an HTML document and have its own page on the website. This is something I could do, providing there are not too many of them.

Regarding Village Voice, it is not practicably possible to convert to HTML a 70 plus page magazine which is comprehensively formatted for print. The amount of work would be huge and most of it would not be possible to automate. We should put a statement on the Magazine page of the website that magazine is in PDF format and may not be fully accessible. When I say fully accessible, many people with disabilities will be able to read and gather information from a PDF, it's just not the best way of presenting the information, but it is adequate in my view.

The same applies to Parish Council documents. The amount of work to convert them to HTML would be huge, but there are procedures that can be applied when the original documents are written in Word and then converted to PDF that make accessibility much better. In essence, documents must be clearly written, have structured and tagged headings and must avoid the use of complicated formatting. The font used must be clearly readable in every part of the document and there must be adequate colour contrast. Documents should be written in normal paragraph style and formatting such as two columns should be avoided. There is comprehensive

information about structuring Word documents for conversion to accessible PDFs at the website <https://accessible-pdf.info/en/>

Finally, the website will need to have an Accessibility Statement on it. There is a Government provided template for this, although it is a lengthy and rather complicated document. I will look at implementing the Statement as soon as possible.

To summarise

The website in its present form complies with accessibility requirements with the exception of the PDF documents mentioned above. Future Parish Council documents should be structured as described above in order to achieve maximum accessibility, but this is something that can be worked at over time. The Accessibility Statement will need to be in place by the 23rd September at the latest and at that point the website will be adequately compliant. If any questions arise from my review then please don't hesitate to contact me.

Stephen Martyn

Mr Martyn advised he had run a check on the Parish Councils website using a tool provided to highlight areas needing alteration. Initially he felt there were several areas for improvement however once he had gone through, he was able to make most of the changes needed to meet the standards required. The website needs to be compliant by the 18th September 2020, currently the Parish Council website is 90% compliant. Mr Martyn advised an accessibility statement would have to be shown on the website however there is a government template he is able to use and adapt.

Councillor Shepherd stated she would liaise with Mr Martyn to discuss information that needed to remain on the Corona virus updates shown on the website. It was felt the page still needed to be in place however the content could be updated with some older information being removed.

145. Facebook.

Councillor Shepherd advised there has been no regular updates on the Council Facebook page. Councillor Stokes had been invited to attend the Communications meeting to discuss the running of Facebook as he is administrator to the Dersingham Village Group page. As Councillor Stokes was unable to attend Councillor Shepherd proposed the item be deferred to the next Communications Meeting.

146. Noticeboards.

Councillor Shepherd advised there was no update on the noticeboards being purchased for installation at the Village Centre. Councillor Bubb asked if there was progress with DVCA on purchasing a noticeboard. Councillor Shepherd advised there was no update and DVCA appear to be happy using the noticeboard already in place. Mr Martyn advised there had been no resolution by the trustees regarding a new noticeboard.

147. Correspondence.

None received.

148. Items for inclusion at the next meeting.

To retain same agenda.

150. Date of next meeting.

2nd September 2020 to be held virtually.

With no further business the meeting closed at 10.55am