

Website accessibility regulation impact

Background

The regulations have been around since 2018 but come in to force on 23rd September and relate to the accessibility of website content and targeted at the public sector in particular

On all range of equipment including smartphones and Smart TVs, as well as tablets, laptops and desk computers. The regulations apply to developments of new websites and to a lesser extent to any updates to existing websites depending on the nature of the material being updated.

Glington PC will not be compliant with the new regulations but may well continue to use the existing website because of clauses about the reasonableness of compliance (cost and work involved) but best practice and public pressure will mount to urge compliance

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps>

Costs and use Gov.UK email addresses - relevant considerations

Cllrs will recall that there were discussions about the desirability of Gov.uk email addresses being used by Cllrs to separate the parish council business from personal business in meeting GDPR requirements. At the time we explored hosting these by PCC and the cost was in the order of £32 per councillor and Clerk per year. In the case of GPC in excess of £384 per year

Our website hosting fee in the current year was £107 and in addition there are domain name renewal fees payable in alternate years

Castor parish council (CPC) were forced in to action because the hosting company to their old website gave the parish council ONE months' notice that they would cease to host the old website as it utilised old software / technology. CPC explored nine different website providers claiming to provide websites for the public sector three of whom dealt exclusively with parish and town councils

CPC have a new website up and running within the month notice given by the previous hosts. The package came with unlimited Gov.UK email addresses to Councillors and employees or some volunteers at an annual cost of £300 plus VAT. In addition there was a one off setup fee of £600 and a one off Gov.UK email address fee of approx. £60

The website is compliant with GDPR and the new regulations and has several advance features including a facebook feed; all planning application with pins located on a map of the area and directly linked to the planning portal. Some aspects of the website do need tweaking but the link below shows what can be achieved in a short timescale.

<https://castor-pc.gov.uk/>

Conclusion

Glington Parish council is well placed financially in the current year to consider an improved website and Gov,uk email addresses. Full compliance with regulations and best practice and I would recommend serious consideration of the possibility

