Scrutiny Briefing paper on MDDC Website

April 2016

Background

The MDDC website was a hosted website provided by a company called Goss. The content of the website has always been the responsibility of MDDC staff and each service had a nominated officer to update their pages. The technical requirements were completed by an officer in ICT.

In 2014 it was agreed that we would move away from a hosted website and develop our own "open Source" website using Umbraco as the platform for this. A project group was set up to design and develop the templates and completely revamp the content and look of the website. When the website project ended a new web group was set up to manage the content and continued development of the site.

The number of web contributors was reduced from 30 plus (on the old Goss website) to 8-10 staff who update all the content for all services, this ensures the content style remains the same and reduces the need for continued refresher training for staff who rarely update the website. The new web group meet regularly to discuss development and new ideas. It is essential that the website is up to date and continues to develop as technology and customer expectations change.

New website

The new website went live over phased stages in 2014 and all content including parish websites are now on the Umbraco website.

The new website is mobile rendered, this means it will resize the content to fit into the screen of mobile devices, it has improved accessibility, reduced content and has been designed on "top tasks" approach to make it simpler to use.

On line forms are available to make applications, report issues and make payments.

Development work is still in progress to make the website more interactive by embedding more on line transactions, and where possible to make these transactions fully self- service removing the need for officer intervention.

There is a facility to rate the website on each page and this feedback is used to help improve the content of the website.

News features are provided at the top and bottom of the front page and updated regularly.

Quality assurance

We have added software called Siteimprove to enable better management and maintenance of the website. This tool is capable of reporting errors in all content including downloadable items such as broken links, misspellings and non-compliant words/terms. Siteimprove also ensures the website is compliant to WCAG 2.0 standards for accessibility.

Analytics

Currently, it is not possible to collect and report analytical data for the website until training has been received and time allocated to use an appropriate tool. Google Analytics has been selected for this purpose as it is free to use, however due to budget restraints, training will not been available until the new financial year.

Once training has been received and an analytics tool is in use and now that all the content has been moved from the Goss site to the new website, we will be able to get meaningful stats to understand how well the website is being used, most popular pages, on line forms and use this data to make continued improvements.

Parish websites

Templates were developed by ICT for the Parish and Town Council's to use to set up their own website. In January training was provided for parish clerks who wanted to take up the offer of the free templates, the training was run over 3 days and 21 parishes attended. The continued maintenance of the content and management of the parish website will be their own responsibility.

Feedback from the training:

Thank you all very much for the website training session which I attended earlier in January. Your time and help was much appreciated as has been Richard's continued support.

We have been on the case and transferred some information and are redrafting some to bring it all a bit more up to date and in keeping with the new website template and style. We're hoping to get it done asap but have to fit it in around other commitments of course. Am looking forward to getting Stoodleigh live – it will be more user friendly (for uploading and users), simpler, easier to read and up to date!

Register of interest details are now available on lour website for all Members that have returned the form. Going forward we are developing an on line register of interest which should make this simpler and quicker. If there are any parishes who would like to pilot these new on line forms, please get in touch.

Looking forward

- Increasing the user interaction and enriching the content by embedding mapping, videos and photo galleries

- Increasing the number of online forms to encourage channel shift – reducing the number of calls being directed to the call centre by enabling customers to self-serve

- Continue to review the size of the website keeping it concise where possible, making use of the newly anticipated features of the next version of Umbraco

- Will continue with 'top-task' approach but driven by the analytical data we receive