

Great Easton Parish Council

Website Policy

1. PURPOSE

With effect from 1st September 2016 Great Easton Parish Council have a new combined Parish Council and Village site at: www.greateaston.org. The site has been developed by the Great Easton Parish Council. The need for a new site was triggered by Leicestershire County Council decision to terminate support of the infrastructure that provided and supported the previous Great Easton Village and Parish Council Websites.

This document sets out the principles and process for the sites ownership, governance and maintenance.

2. BACKGROUND

The new site has been developed to be a freestanding web site that will be able to become independent of its host. It will be able to be moved from one host environment to another without the needs for any major re-development. The previous sites were heavily dependent on host specific features. For this reason, the development of the new site has been a major task. The decision to use a local development model is therefore an insurance against future problems of the ilk that have triggered this re-write.

Principle 1: The site is to remain host-independent.

- This does not preclude using widgets from elsewhere on the internet, e.g. Google Calendar, Twitter plug-in, Forms Generator, etc.
- There are further justifications for this principle later in this document (see Section 9).

3. DOMAINS

The following domains are associated with the site:

- a. www.greateaston.org
- b. www.greateastonparishcouncil.org
- c. www.greateaston.info
- d. www.greateaston.net

Ownership of Domains:

Great Eaton Parish Council owns the respective domains all of the above domain names.

The domain owner pay's the domain management fees for the respective domains.

www.greateastonparishcouncil.org has been provided free as part of the first two year's web hosting and website builder service. The above domains have to be renewed every two years where there is a small renewal fee. A failure to renew would result in the site disappearing from the internet.

Principle 2: The Parish Council owns the primary and secondary domain names relating to its content.

4. DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE ROLES

The site has been developed on a free-of-charge basis by the Site Administrator and a small website team. It is agreed with the Great Easton Parish Council that all updates and ongoing maintenance of the site is to be effectively managed by the Site Administrator (known as Admin).

However, it has been made possible for the Parish Clerk to maintain the Parish Council Pages if required. This is a requirement of the Local Government Transparency Guidelines. (reference 1)

There is a distinction between the site's *template* and its *content*. The template is the set of headings and menus found on every page. The content is the information on the page. Making changes to the template must be done by Admin. The need for this is relatively infrequent. Making changes to content is relatively straightforward.

5. OWNERSHIP OF COPYRIGHT

It is always the case that the copyright of images belongs to their creators. Many contributed pictures will carry a specific copyright statement. Any documents on the site that are down-loadable should carry a copyright statement in line with the Council's Data Protection Policy.

What follows relates to the copyright of the text on the site's pages. There is a copyright statement on every page; this is in the footer section of the template. These statements are as follows:

- On the Parish Council pages: Copyright ©Great Easton Parish Council 2016.
- On the Village pages: Copyright © Great Easton Parish Council 2016. This reflects the fact that the text may have been contributed by anyone in the Village. It is not practical to attribute every page differently. The existence of a copyright statement, albeit unspecific, should act as a deterrent to potential copiers.

6. ACCESS TO THE HOST ENVIRONMENT

Put simply, a web site is just a set of files organized within a set of folders. The web site is uploaded from a local PC/ Laptop to the internet using File Transfer Protocol (FTP). The folders and files on the host are an exact copy of those on the source PC. It is possible to configure Windows Explorer to show the files on the host in exactly the same way as files on a local drive. An upload or download can be as simple as cut-and-paste; this employs FTP under the covers to move files.

For security reasons the folders on the host are password protected. There will be one master password for the whole web site and individual folders can be protected with optional passwords if required.

Principle 3: The FTP password for the entire site will **always be known** to both the Site Administrator and the Parish Clerk.

Principle 4: The FTP password for the Parish Council folder will be known to both the Site Administrator and the Parish Clerk.

Principle 5: The FTP password for the Village element of the site will be known to the Site Administrator and the Parish Clerk.

Consequently, the individuals mentioned in Section 4 will be able to access the host for maintenance purposes. Where two individuals are updating the site in parallel there must be a protocol where the latest version of a file is downloaded from the internet, updated and then uploaded; this is because local copies of files may be rendered out-of-date by updates done elsewhere. This mode of working is not recommended.

7. THE HOSTING ACCOUNT

The web site has been hosted on servers provided by Go Daddy. The Go Daddy Hosting Account is set up as a Parish Council account separate from any domestic account or phone line. The charges on the account relate to the provision of host services (web space) and the management of domains. All these charges will be paid by the Parish Council either directly, if possible, or indirectly via a bill tendered by Admin.

Via the Hosting Account the web site can be managed and administered online. This includes management of domains and email addresses (see below), management of FTP passwords, access to site usage statistics, site optimisation (for search engines), management of billing and account details, etc.

Principle 6: The login ID and password for the Hosting account **will always be known** to both the Site Administrator and the Parish Clerk.

8. EMAIL ADDRESSES

With the Hosting Account comes one domain and one email addresses. It is good practice to use domain-specific email addresses within a web site. This way, if personnel change the site remains unchanged. All that has to happen is to redirect the domain-specific emails to the new personnel.

These are the domain-specific email addresses built into the site:

- admin@greateaston.org.uk
- clerk@greateastonparishcouncil.org.uk

Emails to these accounts are redirected to the current holders of the relevant roles. The re-direction is set up using the email management facilities within the Hosting Account.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY GUIDELINES

The Local Government Transparency Guidelines [1] place specific demands which have had a material impact on the design of the new web site. In summary the guidelines require that:

- The Parish Council has its own PC on which is kept the complete library of documentation that the Council is required to publish.

- Where the Council publishes information on a web site to meet its transparency commitments the Council's PC should be the source of the information that is put online.

The local development model (Section 2) has been chosen to support these requirements. Given all the principles established so far, assuming that the site maintenance is delegated to Admin, the Parish Clerk is able to download the entire web site from the host to the Council's PC. Ideally, this will be done at regular intervals, e.g. monthly, as it also provides an additional independent backup of the site in case of a problem. Given the portability of the site and ownership of the domain, the Parish Council is able to re-host the site from its own PC at any time. This is to comply with the transparency guidelines; it is not expected to happen.

Principle 7: The Parish Council should use the means at its disposal to ensure that it is always in a position to re-create / re-host the web site should the need arise.

10. SCOPE OF COVERAGE

Information presented on the web site will be limited to items relating only to Great Easton. This applies to the Village sections within the site. In the past requests from other villages to host information have been turned down. The policy has been applied evenly in order to be fair to everyone. Acceding to requests from other towns and villages would generate a large amount of extra maintenance work whilst diluting the relevance of content to Great Easton residents.

Principle 8: The site is for information pertaining to Great Easton and its residents and will not be made available to other towns and villages.

11. COMMERCIAL EXPLOITATION

In many respects the *raison d'être* of the Village Parish Council site is to advertise local groups, businesses and events. All of this is provided as a service to the Village at no cost. The site will not include any paid advertising, or be commercially sponsored, as this may represent a conflict of interest for the Parish Council.

Principle 9: The site may not include paid advertisements and may not be commercially sponsored.

Under no circumstances may Admin, or any other individual, use the site as means to gain revenue. All charges for use of the site will be "at cost" and all maintenance effort will be provided voluntarily.

Principle 10: Maintenance of the site, if delegated, is done so on a voluntary basis by the Site Administrator. Expenses will be refunded at cost by the Parish Council.

12. EDITORIAL RESPONSIBILITY

On a day-to-day basis decisions have to be made about site content and its suitability for publication. These are some of the considerations that must be taken into account:

- Compliance with the Data Protection Act.
- Observation of copyright restrictions and attribution of copyright to owners.
- Information must be in scope, i.e. it must apply to Great Easton.
- Images must be suitable and, in the case of those involving young persons, there must be parental permission to publish. Contributed photographs may be rejected on quality grounds, e.g. out of focus.
- Information must be up-to-date. Information which becomes out-of-date may be taken down as this tarnishes the site as a whole.
- Information should not compromise the branding, look-and-feel, ease of use, colour scheme and general tidiness of the site.
- Content needs to be relevant and interesting. Submitted content may be corrected, re-worded, re-formatted, decorated with relevant images, etc. The site's house style will be applied.

Principle 11: In delegating maintenance of the site, the Parish Council accepts that day-to-day editorial responsibility for the site rests with the Site Administrator.

SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES

This document has highlighted eleven principles. When taken together these principles represent a contract for engagement between the Parish Council and those working on its behalf to maintain the web site.

The principles are re-stated here:

Principle 1: The site is to remain host-independent.

Principle 2: The Parish Council owns the primary and secondary domain names relating to its content.

Principle 3: The FTP password for the entire site **will always be known** to both the Site Administrator and the Parish Clerk.

Principle 4: The FTP password for the Parish Council folder will be known to both the Site Administrator and the Parish Clerk.

Principle 5: The FTP password for the Village element of the site will be known to the Site Administrator and the Parish Clerk.

Principle 6: The login ID and password for the Hosting account **will always be known** to both the Site Administrator and the Parish Clerk.

Principle 7: The Parish Council should use the means at its disposal to ensure that it is always in a position to re-create / re-host the web site should the need arise.

Principle 8: The site is for information pertaining to Great Easton and its residents and will not be made available to other towns and villages.

Principle 9: The site may not include paid advertisements and may not be commercially sponsored.

Principle 10: Maintenance of the site, if delegated, is done so on a voluntary basis by the Site Administrator. Expenses will be refunded at cost by the Parish Council.

Principle 11: In delegating maintenance of the site the Parish Council accepts that day-to-day editorial responsibility for the site rests with the Site Administrator.

References

[1] Local Government Transparency Guidelines. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-transparency-code-2015>

This is supplemented by *LAIS 1372 Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities* published by Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils (LRALC).

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