

## What Kind of Website Do You Need?

These notes are intended for non-profit charitable organisations considering setting up a website with my help. I apologise if they seem a little prescriptive, but I feel that would be beneficial for all concerned to have a clear understanding of my modus operandi. Whilst I do not charge registered charities any fees, I would expect reasonable expenses (for example travel to meetings) to be re-imbursed. The charity would be directly responsible for the payment of fees to the Web Hosting Service.

**The design of the site will be determined largely by what you want people to do when they visit your site.** Make sure you are absolutely clear about this, before proceeding any further!

Designed correctly – a web site will expand your organisation's ability to share information about its aims and beliefs. In particular your site will provide easy access to information about your organisation – what it does, who it benefits, how it raises and uses its funds and, most importantly, invites new people to participate.

Next, you will need to register a **Domain Name** for your organisation. Your web address is the first impression people have of your organisation. As a charity you would probably wish to have a URL ending in [.org](http://.org). A domain ending in [.org.uk](http://.org.uk) will probably be less costly.

Next, you will need to check if your proposed Domain Name is still available by checking the following three sites:

[www.networksolutions.com](http://www.networksolutions.com)

[www.register.com](http://www.register.com)

[www.domainbank.com](http://www.domainbank.com)

The next thing that you need to do, is consider the structure of your web site. **Simplest is best** to start with.

There will always be a Home Page, consisting of your organisation's logo and "Welcome" statement. **This page should include a brief explanation of the purposes, aims and core values** of your organisation. This could take the form of a 'Mission Statement.'

Headings / Titles for subsequent linked pages (no more than three or four to start with) will need to be decided upon. A good 'rule of thumb' is to think in terms of a A4 page with point size 12 text. Space will

need to be allowed for any graphics / photos that you wish to include on any given page.

Next will be your decisions as to what information (including text and/or pictures) each page will contain.

A list of contacts, (you **must** get each person's agreement first) with e-mail addresses could usefully occupy one page. Private postal addresses and phone numbers will **not** be put on the web site for obvious reasons.

Only one telephone number and one postal address should appear on the site (usually either the Charity HQ, or, the phone number only, of the Web site Co-ordinator).

Another page could be devoted to a listing of upcoming events and meetings. Another idea might be a 'News and Views' page with stories about particular individuals or events.

**Next, comes the all-important decision – the appointment of a 'Web Site Co-ordinator' - who will be solely responsible for collating, vetting and forwarding all the information, informing changes and updates to be made.**

A decision will need to be made on the frequency of site updates (I can accommodate monthly, quarterly or annual). A calendar timetabled schedule with named individuals, stating who will do what and when will need to be worked out.

As an example, if your decision was to go for monthly updates of your web site, the Co-ordinator would need to be in a position to forward all the information about forthcoming changes one week in advance of when they are required to appear on the website. It is often a good idea to set the timing for updates in tandem with the dates of meetings. The website could, I suggest, be updated a week ahead of each meeting. That would mean that all information requiring web site changes must have reached the co-ordinator TWO weeks in advance of the meeting itself, to give them ample time to get the requested changes to me at least 7 days prior. Information submitted late would NOT be added to the website and will be returned by the co-ordinator.

In addition I have to stipulate that any and all editing of the web site itself would be done exclusively by myself. Without exception, I have found that organisations having more than one person editing, get into difficulties very quickly. Your agreement to having the roles clearly defined in this way would be a pre-requisite to involvement on my part.

If, after reading the above, you would still like to proceed, then specific answers to the following questions would provide me with a good starting point:

- 1) Exact Name of Charity
- 2) Registration Number (Charity Commissioners)
- 3) Logo (scan and send via e-mail)
- 4) Mission statement
- 5) List of Contacts with designation (only those who wish to be listed on a web page) with e-mail addresses as appropriate. You may wish to identify one single e-mail address and / or telephone contact for general enquiries from the public.)
- 6) Name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of co-ordinator who will take sole responsibility for receiving and forwarding all information relating to the website. I would deal only with that person and all requests by any other route will be politely declined.
- 7) The chosen or preferred Domain Name.
- 8) Update frequency (monthly or quarterly)
- 9) Meeting schedule for the next 12 months, including location, date and time of AGM.
- 10) Any other information considered useful / relevant.

Once this information is to hand, I will obtain quotes from web hosting companies and prepare an off-line set of sample pages for your approval. I would hope to be able to demonstrate these pages in person at an appropriate meeting. I would then proceed to put the actual website together and, with your final approval, proceed to place it on the chosen host server.

Many thanks for reading this. I look forward to helping you develop a web site that is both useful and productive for your organisation.

Best Wishes: *Nick C.*

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