

PARISH ONLINE

MODERN, PROFESSIONAL WEBSITES FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

SERVICE OVERVIEW

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LOCAL
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2. INTRODUCTION TO PARISH ONLINE

2.1. OUR WORK

Our focus is on providing high quality cloud-based services to town, parish and community councils.

We believe that meaningful and usable data and tools have a place in all aspects of UK Government, so we've designed services that break down as many barriers as possible to give capabilities to your whole organisation, and where applicable, the public.

Our services have been designed to be low-cost, practical and high performance.

We operate as a not-for-profit through our social enterprise company, Local Authority Technology CIC. This guarantees that your subscription revenue is spent benefiting the services you subscribe to, and important social value projects within the sector.

When you subscribe to our services you're not just getting the service, you're getting our entire team. We maintain close relationships with our subscribers to make sure you have the best service possible and the best experience for your users.

2.2. WHY CHOOSE PARISH ONLINE FOR YOUR WEBSITE?



Our story. We've been providing best-in-class web technology to Government for the last 14 years in the form of Parish Online, the de facto standard mapping software for Local Councils. We've been frequently asked by councils to build their websites, even before we had this service, a testament to the trust they have in us!



Our finger on the pulse. We have over 2,500 local councils using Parish Online services and constantly engage with them to find better solutions and improve the way they serve their residents. We know council requirements inside-out and we enhance our learning through our connections with NALC, SLCC and County Associations.



Our web technology. Councils trust us to host and store their mapping data, website and emails. We use 100% green energy infrastructure on ISO certified UK-based servers.



Our team. Our small but effective team have extensive experience in cloud infrastructure, digital mapping, website technology, and local government policy and administration. We live and breath the local council sector to ensure our services are fit-for-purpose.



Our support. We pride ourselves on the support we provide to local councils through email, our knowledge base, videos and online training. We provide rapid email responses to ensure your daily work isn't affected.

3. SERVICE OVERVIEW

3.1. OVERVIEW

Parish Online Websites provides high quality, accessibility-compliant and informative website design and hosting for local councils.

Parish Online, the mapping software, is extremely popular and used by over 1,700 town, community and parish councils. Its success is based on its ease-of-use, reliability, ultra-low-cost, and rich functionality.

We've extended those principles to the world of parish council websites and given it our own twist!

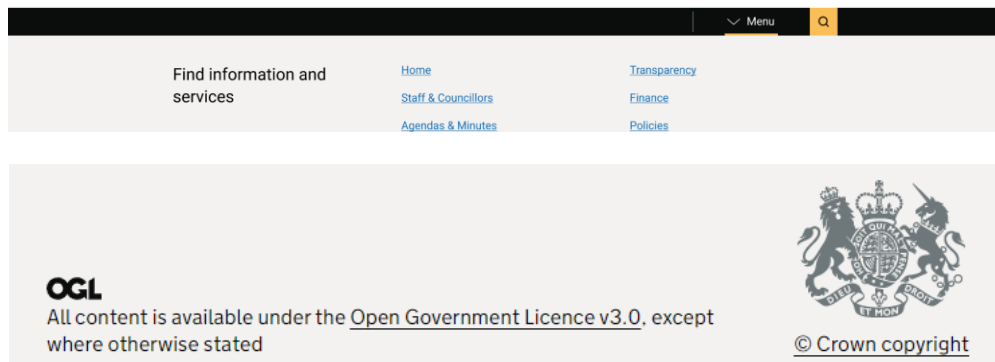
So now, Parish Online Websites sits side-by-side with Parish Online Mapping Software.

Our concept towards providing websites for Local Councils is a little different to others. Your council website is how your residents judge you and find information. So, just like your work, it should be professional, clear, transparent, and accessible. We therefore use the following principles for providing your website:



- **Aligns to Government design guidelines.** UK Government have design guidelines for content, accessibility and usability. We adopt these standards to create great-looking, clear, functional websites. This is a really important feature as it allows viewers of your site to instantly recognise that you're an official government body and promote the highest values of accessibility and transparency.

As the Gov.uk Design System (the look and feel of Gov.uk) evolves, your website will evolve with it, taking the wealth of research and experience of other government service teams, and ensuring your site stays at the cutting edge of progressive website design.

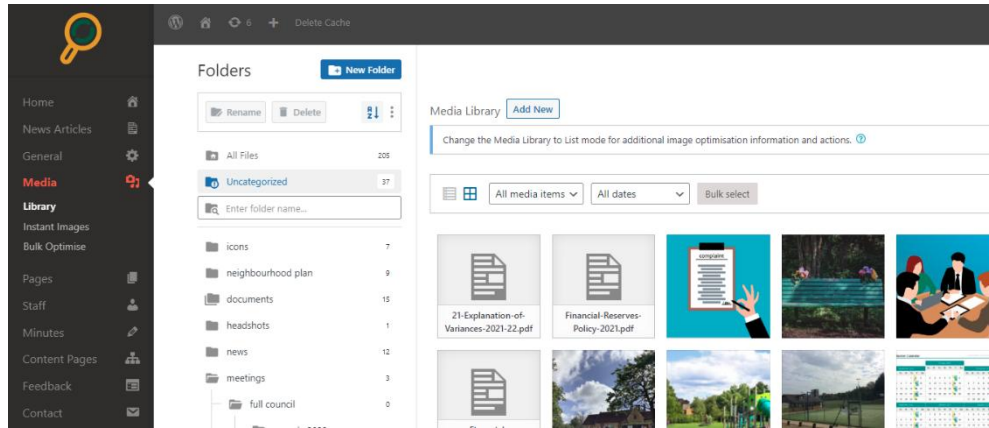


- **Making it easy to manage.** One of the main issues with websites is being able to add new content easily and efficiently without having to get a degree in computing. If the design doesn't allow

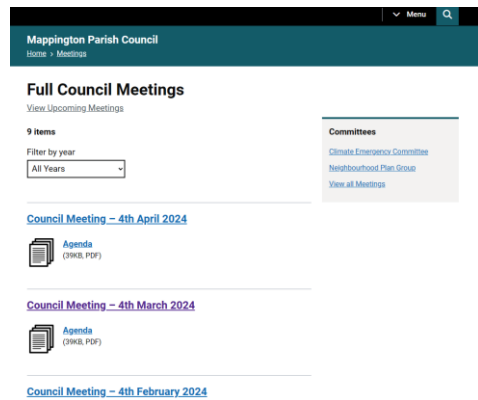
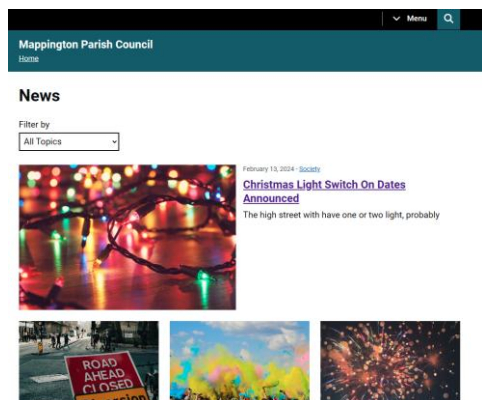
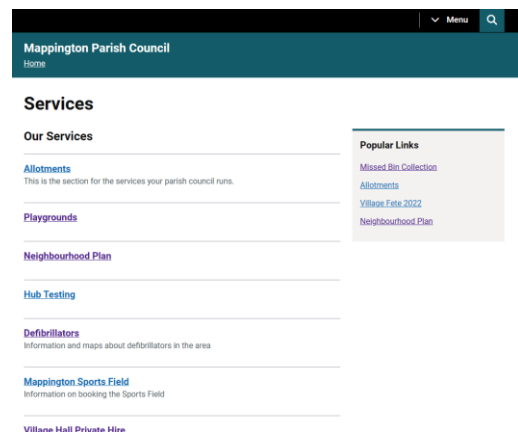
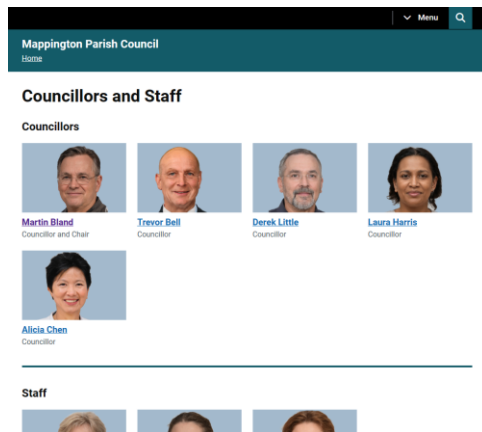


this then site content goes out-of-date and becomes useless to the reader. We provide an easy-to-use login interface which allows structured news, documents, and other content to be added without fuss.

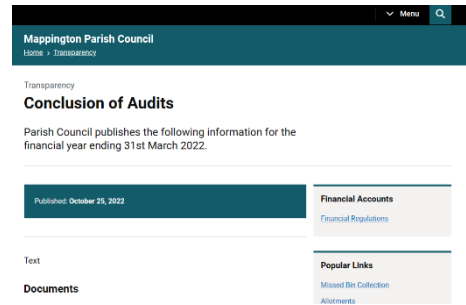
This interface comes with other configuration for the site, and will also evolve over time, ensuring you always have control of your site content.



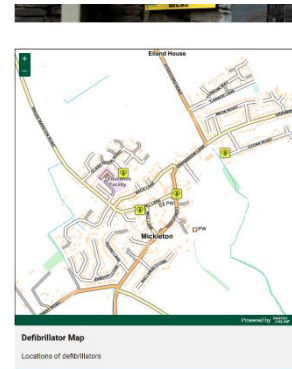
- Professional prescribed design.** By removing the scope for unbounded customisation, our Local Council websites are easier to manage which allows you to focus on relevant content rather than firefighting. If changes to the design need to be made, they are applied to all customers subscribed to the service, benefiting all. This applies to functionality and usability. This also means that your website won't rapidly go out-of-date and require a re-design, costing thousands of pounds. It's constantly updated to meet modern and Government-approved standards.



- **Transparency for public.** The Parish Online Website design makes it easy for the public to find what they're looking for. This includes making Local Council information and governance easy to find and transparent. To do this we integrate interactive mapping from your Parish Online subscription into the website to display information such as council assets, events, allotments, public land, temporary road closures, and neighbourhood plans, amongst others.



- **Integration with Parish Online Public Maps.** This ensures that the work you do in Parish Online is reflected on your website without duplication. Your time is precious, so having to publish content to your website manually is not efficient. We link your Parish Online digital mapping account to your website to make these integrations seamless.



- **Responsive design.** The website automatically adapts to the screen size of the user, so it works effectively on desktop, tablet and mobile.



- **Getting the basics right.** Our website hosting includes high service availability (it won't go offline), SSL certificates (it's encrypted and secure), and we mandate the usage of gov.uk domains. This means your website, which is there to serve you and your residents, isn't a burden, it's something to be proud of.



4. THE PACKAGE

The package includes:

- A great-looking website, built in-line with Gov.uk design standards
- An admin panel to add and edit content
- A gov.uk domain name*
- Up to 20 email mailboxes with 5GB storage (IMAP, webmail and mobile apps) **
- Online support and Knowledge Base
- Migration of key content from old website
- Integration with Parish Online Public Map
- Ensuring your existing email service transfers seamlessly**

You'll have functionality that allows you to keep your site up-to-date easily. This includes:

- Update Clerk, Councillor and Staff biographies,
- Publish text and PDFs for minutes and agendas,
- List and publish council services, owned land, allotment services and others through quick-links, search and interactive maps,
- Booking system,
- And much more as it gets added.

Our functionality list will continuously expand as more councils adopt the service and more requirements arise.

What you'll be required to do:

- Help us with the content migration from your existing site. We'll do as much as we can, but it'll require you to check over our work and get the site to a point where you're happy with it. Don't worry if you're not technically minded, we can give you guidance for the things you need to do.
- Make sure your team are informed of the switch and prepared to use a slightly different process, e.g. for uploading minutes. It'll be easy to do and we have Knowledge Base articles to help.
- Provide us with feedback along the way. This service is designed to constantly evolve and improve. We'll take your suggestions and create a list of prioritised improvements to implement.

** if you already have a gov.uk domain name then we'll simply take the management of it over when your renewal comes up with your existing provider. We are a JISC Gov.uk Domain Registrar so can handle the creation or transfer of your domain directly.*

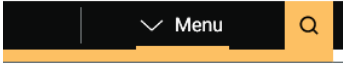
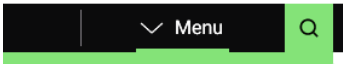
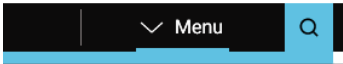
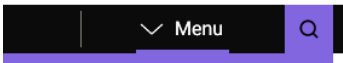
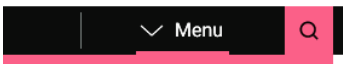
*** if you already have email packages then we'll make sure they all continue to work. We'll also assess the functionality and cost and make recommendations to make sure you're getting the best value for money.*

5. THE DESIGN

Our aim is to homogenise our template structure so that all local council websites have the same, consistent structure to them, yet have their own personality. This will make it easy for residents to access information. You're not paying us to build you a template, you're paying us to continuously ensure your website is the best it can be.

This unique proposition is unlike any other on the market. It means that some elements of your existing site might not be compatible with this new design, but with your help we'll find the best way to make those elements into the Government System Design.

Your site will:

- always meet the WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility standards, and will automatically improve as newer standards come into force, 
- include all features to ensure you comply with your legal responsibilities as a council, 
- include features to allow conformity to Gold-standard NALC Local Council Awards Scheme (LCAS), 
- have the look-and-feel of an authoritative Government website, 
- work on desktop, tablet and mobile (responsive design), 
- Have unique primary colour option and logos and homepage image to make the site personal to your local council,
- be ultra-fast,
- include the latest SEO techniques to ensure your services appear well on search engines,
- be secure, using the latest SSL encryption.

6. MAINTENANCE

We continuously improve the website structure, design and accessibility, to ensure you site always meets the latest best practice and legal requirements.

If there's something you need that you don't see yet, that doesn't mean it won't be added. Our service is designed to improve over time.

Your site will also be dynamic in order to take into account significant national events or change in policy, such as periods of national mourning for Royal Family members.

You have an easy-to-use Admin Panel to add the content you need.

For some pages, such as the Allotment page, the link to Parish Online Mapping Software means your pages are automatically updated. This saves time and reduces duplication.

7. SECURITY

As a public body, it's important to ensure your digital presence and communications are kept secure. Your Parish Online Websites site will:

- Use the latest web encryption
- Protect against attacks
- Store sensitive data appropriately

8. DATA MANAGEMENT

8.1. BACKUP & RECOVERY

SUPPLIER-SIDE

Parish Online operates a backup and recovery system that takes rolling backups which are then systematically stored in another location off-site to the main application.

CUSTOMER SIDE

In the event of any customer loss of data where the Parish Online system has a copy or backup, we will provide a re-supply of the latest copy available. This excludes deletions made through the Parish Online Admin Panel.

8.2. DATA SECURITY

Parish Online is hosted on high security cloud servers. Only key senior personnel have access to the hosting environment. The XMAP suite has been penetration tested by qualified external bodies at the request of customers.

9. JOINING AND LEAVING THE SERVICE

9.1. SIGN UP

Orders can be placed via email to support@parish-online.co.uk

9.2. TECHNICAL DEPENDENCIES

To be able to use Parish Online, the customer must have one of the following Web Browsers and a high speed Internet connection;

- Edge Stable Channel
- Firefox Stable Channel
- Chrome Stable Channel
- Safari Stable Channel.

It is recommended that the customer has a broadband connection with a minimum of 2MB download and 1MB upload speed.

9.3. ON-BOARDING

A new customer account is created immediately and is accessible immediately to council staff, albeit not published publicly. We'll then work through items such as;

- DNS management (getting your domain name attached to your account)
- Email settings (making sure DNS changes don't affect your email)
- Content migration

There are quite a few other steps for us to take, but none that we need to burden you with (unless you like the detail).

These steps will get us to a position where we make the site live.

9.4. OFF-BOARDING

If you choose to leave our service, then we'll keep the site alive for up to 2 months after your subscription expires to allow migration of content to another service.

9.5. END OF CONTRACT

At the end of the contract the customer will have no further access to the service or support.

10. AVAILABILITY

10.1. PERFORMANCE

Parish Online services are hosted on virtualised cloud servers. They provide both a highly available and scalable hosted solution with no single point of failure. Geosphere offers 99.9% SLA on its services and has a 99.999% SLA for its ISP backbone infrastructure.

We cannot provide a minimum download time for each page load due to the variations in customer's Internet connections. However, test show that under normal conditions on a Broadband connection a page refresh take less than 2 seconds.

10.2. AVAILABILITY

Parish Online Websites Admin Panel is available to access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with a 99.9% minimum uptime.

10.3. PLANNED MAINTENANCE

All maintenance and updates to the hardware and software will, where possible, be carried out outside of normal working hours to mitigate the risk of any disruption.

Planned downtime events will be communicated to the customers with good notice.

Status of services are available here: <https://parishonline.betteruptime.com>

11. SUPPORT

11.1. SUPPORT HOURS

Remote support by email will be provided between 0900 and 1600 Monday to Friday, excluding Public Holidays. The customer will also have a dedicated point of contact for specific contract or product queries.

11.2. SUPPORT TICKETS

We provides fast, unlimited off-site support through our ticketing system.

11.3. KNOWLEDGE BASE

The Knowledge Base has self-service tutorials and guides to help with using Parish Online Websites. <https://support.geosphere.com/portal/en/kb/website-service>

11.4. GENERAL SUPPORT

Geosphere engages with our subscribers to ensure they get the best possible service. We conduct regular reviews and vary meeting schedules and calls as per the client's requirements.

12. OUR SOCIAL VALUE CONTRIBUTIONS

The social value generated through each contract with Geosphere or Local Authority Technology CIC will vary depending on the specific uses of the software, but we have put forward the following deliverables to make sure contracting with Local Authority Technology CIC generates great social value.

Here are some general points to the following themes:

FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE

Geosphere is committed to fighting climate change, both through our own internal operations, and how our services assist and promote our customers to do the same.

In practice, we ensure our utility plans contribute to 100% renewal sources, we use low/no carbon forms of transport wherever possible and ensure our supply chain is as low carbon as possible.

We have committed to net zero by 2030 through the TechZero initiative, a scheme to help companies fight the climate crisis.

One of our key suppliers, AWS, has a Climate Pledge, their commitment to be net zero carbon by 2040.

We incentivise our staff and customers to reducing their carbon emissions through simple steps like conducting remote video calls instead of travelling.

We have a strict recycling policy.

COVID-19 RECOVERY

Should employment of new staff be required as part of the contract then we will look to hire local to the customer, wherever possible.

We have implemented a flexible hybrid working model which allows staff to decide if they visit the office on designated 'office days'.

The office has the ability for social distancing to be implemented.

TACKLING ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

We will support applicants to new roles financial support and active travel support to ensure they can reach their place of work easily and without financial burden.

We have an active training programme and funding for training materials that allow staff to choose training programmes that they are interested in, to enhance their skills or pivot to new areas of business.

We will always pay well-above the National Living Wage.

We have a supply chain policy that ensures our suppliers also tackle inequality, tackle modern slavery and give opportunities to those in deprived areas.

We ensure our supply chain is resilient from a capacity and cyber security perspective.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Discrimination has no place in this company. We will not tolerate discrimination from our customers or suppliers. Our company staff handbook has ethics and discrimination clauses.

We provide training, where appropriate, to educate staff.

We have signed up to the Disability Confident Scheme.

WELLBEING

We ensure our staff have a great work-life balance, and highlight where improvements can be made.

We have a sister company called Local Authority Technology CIC which has the sole purpose of providing high social value to our customers through the support of community events and underwriting costs of services.

13. REFERENCES

References available on request.

14. DEMONSTRATIONS

We showcase our existing customer sites as here: <https://www.parish-online.co.uk/websites#examples>