

Sutton Coldfield Parish Council

Interim Parish Council Meeting

15th March 2016

Agenda Item 20

Website Domain Name

This paper seeks authorisation for the clerk to register the domain name for the Parish/Town Council website and for the Clerk to commission an internet host together with a website designer and provider.

Background

1. The transparency code (February 2015) is statutory guidance issued under the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 which will apply to the Parish Council from 1 April 2016, at which point its annual income and expenditure will exceed £200k.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/408386/150227_PUBLICATION_Final_LGTC_2015.pdf

The Council will be obliged to publish a variety of information, such as expenditure items over £500. The assumption in the code is that publication will be done by way of a website. There are other reasons why the Council should have its own website as this would provide a vehicle for dissemination of other information about its workings (such as how to contact members and staff, copies of agenda, reports and minutes etc.) as well as information to promote Sutton Coldfield.

2. The question therefore arises about the domain name for the Council's website. As a local authority, the Council is entitled to use a domain name ending in .gov.uk, which demonstrates that it is a government body. This domain name is used by all principal authorities and many town and parish councils. Central Government has issued guidance about the options for web site names for parish/town councils:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/naming-and-registering-government-websites/local-government-naming-and-registering-websites>

3. It is understood that the Sutton Coldfield Parish Council will adopt the status of Town Council and the name Sutton Coldfield Town Council at the Annual Meeting in May. It is therefore recommended that the Parish Council's applies for a domain with town council in the name as opposed to parish council. The options available to the parish council for the naming the website for the future town council are :-

suttoncoldfieldtowncouncil.gov.uk

or

suttoncoldfield-tc.gov.uk

The name suttoncoldfieldtowncouncil.gov.uk is considered to be the easiest to use and is self-explanatory. Following the Council's decision on the name for the website, an application will be submitted to the Naming and Approval Committee (NAC) via the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) to secure the name agreed by the Interim Parish Council for the website. Work can then commence on building the web site for the parish / town council. The domain name will also feature in e-mail addresses for the Parish Council's staff and, from May onwards, for town councillors.

4. Pending the creation of the Council's own website, Birmingham City Council has created a temporary page on its website where information relating to the Parish Council is held:-

www.birmingham.gov.uk/sutton-coldfield-parish-council

Financial implications

5. The charge for the creation of a new domain name is £80.00 plus VAT, which covers the first two years registration. There is then a renewal fee of £40 plus VAT for each subsequent two year period. An allowance has been made within the parish council budget for 2016-17 in respect of website hosting and maintenance.

Recommendations

6. The Council is recommended to approve that its website should be named:-
suttoncoldfieldtowncouncil.gov.uk.

7. The Council is recommended to approve that the Interim Parish Clerk commissions an internet host and website provider for the Parish Council and progresses work to build the pages for the proposed website.
8. The Council is recommended to endorse the temporary arrangements that have been made for Birmingham City Council to host web pages for the Parish Council until arrangements are in place for the Parish Council to host its own website.