



## VCS Parish Council Websites

Apr 2026(2)

VCS Websites Ltd ("VCS") have developed a website package to meet the needs of most Parish and Town Councils. Our aim is to help you get compliant quickly and affordably, and to make the work easier for the clerk rather than harder. Our director has been a Vice-chair and temporary Clerk so is well aware of the workload involved.

There are two package levels available:

- **Classic Package.** This is our standard offering, based on a "one size fits all" approach to suit the needs of most smaller Councils and their villages. Our system is carefully designed so that it is easily expanded to meet the requirements of larger councils as well.
- **Custom Package.** This is for Councils who want a tailor-made website and design and accordingly have a reasonable budget allocated, or they need to cover much more community management. (Hardly ever required.)
- **An apology!** – We cannot offer you Gold, Platinum or Moon-on-a-Stick package options *etc* – because we believe all our Parish Councils, large or small, deserve to benefit from our Classic system. Clerks already have enough to think about...

### The VCS Parish Council Websites Classic Package

Most Parish and Town Councils adopt our Classic Package for which our aims are:

- 1) To give a quick, easy and affordable transition for Councils running old websites that are no longer fit for purpose (or perhaps never were!) and cannot be made compliant;
- 2) To give a "no-brainer" path for Councils without a website to get started with a simple, well-organised website which is easy to maintain, and clear and easy for parishioners to access;
- 3) To use our many years of commercial business and website experience to create a system that makes **less work** for the clerk, **not more**.

### Guaranteed Compliant!

A few years ago, VCS replaced a non-compliant website for a council who had received a severe warning letter from The Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO). We took the call from the Clerk and could genuinely tell them not to worry, we would fix it. As expected, their new VCS Parish Council Website met all the requirements and was **approved** as being **fully compliant**.

## What is in the Classic Package?

Everything that we believe most Parish Councils will need. The design of the system is such that it requires only a very short learning curve for a Clerk to get used to, especially if they have ever managed a website before, but even a new clerk will not find it taxing. The concepts are the same behind most websites, only so much quicker in our system as we have done **all** the layout work for you behind the scenes - you upload a document of a certain type, it will appear in the right place for you. Clerks who switch over to our system are usually amazed by this, and always grateful.

Features include:

1. Secure UK-based website hosting.
2. Our classic template layout (Updated version from April 2026).
3. Logins for your website users (those who can make changes) - one for clerk, and others if required, such as the chair, or village hall manager, etc.
4. The following items in the website:
  - a. Logo and header
  - b. Home page introduction
  - c. Contact details
  - d. About the Village and Clubs & Societies pages
  - e. Notices & Events
  - f. Planning applications
  - g. Agendas and Meeting Minutes
  - h. Councillors with their DPI records and Portfolio(s)
  - i. Governance & Policy documents with review dates
  - j. Financial reports and Annual Returns & Asset register
  - k. Notifiable Payments over £100 if desired (often simply included in minutes)
  - l. Council Sub-committees (.eg. Finance, Planning) and their minutes
5. Free website help and support via email.

## Accessibility

It should be stressed that we are genuinely WCAG 2.2AA accessibility compliant. A good proportion of suppliers who say they can offer compliant websites are not being truthful; and this is easily demonstrated using free online checking tools.

We also believe our admin “back end” for entering information is the simplest available, and we have many clerks to endorse that, who have endured other systems and then moved to ours.

The WCAG 2.2AA requirements are quite difficult to meet in a site which has regular updates. Note that the RNIB website is built in the same system as ours. The beauty of our “one size fits all” system is that we will have many people using the same dedicated system, and this gives rise to quality feedback, from which we can fix any things that may arise, just once, for all the councils using our system. This is how we keep our prices so low and our clerks so happy.



### What is involved with Classic Package setup?

1. Free discussion of best way forward for suitable domain name and email strategy.
2. Register and configure your domain name (e.g. **www.aspicparishcouncil.gov.uk** or **www.aspic-pc.org.uk** etc).
3. Set up SSL (https://) secure hosting on our server.
4. Set up the site template, with one of our numerous colour schemes of your choice.
5. Set up Website Admin user for clerk, and other users if required, & issue secure passwords.
6. Load up of basic information onto site as above, using your words and pictures supplied in usable format and from your existing website if appropriate;  
This includes 7 years of past Minutes (more if you need them), 7 years of Financial reports and AGAR Returns, all governance documents with the adoption and review dates, newsletters and so on.
7. Search engine registration with Bing and Google, and other built-in SEO work.
8. Secure, reliable and fast hosting with nightly backup schedule included.
9. Training as needed and free website support via email.

### Village Hall Bookings add-on

We can interact or link to two (or more) Village Hall Booking systems and can either handle billing or you pay the third party direct. Please ask for a quote.

### Can we have...

What if you want a feature that is not in the Classic Package? We are determined to keep our package simple for most councils, but also meet the needs of larger ones. We have “modules” we can switch off and on at will, so if you think you need something, the chances are we have already done it for someone, or we have it in the pipeline. Some things we might not agree will be of benefit to our package if we don't think it makes a good fit, but we can always do bespoke work to order and will gladly discuss with you and quote.

### Transparency Code

We have scope for as many governance documents as you need under our documents section.

We have a DPI link for all councillors.

We have a payments system option to allow you to quickly add all disclosable payments as simple entries on the website directly after they are approved for immediate display. (Rarely used option, because most Councils simply include these in their minutes.)

We provide all the means for you to meet the various legalities and requirements, and it will be up to you, going forward, to upload the meeting dates, the meeting agendas in advance, the approved minutes in timely fashion, the payments, accounts and annual reports & governance documents.

## Security & GDPR

Drupal software is considered extremely secure, and we apply all latest security releases to all our 150-odd websites. We expect your website administrator(s) to choose strong passwords, to protect them properly and never share login details with anybody.

The way the Parish Council Websites system works, the GDPR considerations are limited to uploading your policy document, and then **not** uploading to the website any personal information that breaches your own guidelines. All other matters are internal to the council. VCS Websites Ltd are registered as data controllers with ICO.

## Domain Name cost

It is now rare to offer new .org.uk domains to Parish Councils, although we can create a website using one you own. There may be a modest set up fee to do so.

**Special offer on .gov.uk-** You have the option to pay £192 (+ VAT) for 10 years direct with our supplier, and you can reclaim VAT. (If you wish to move to a different web supplier later, the domain name remains yours, so there is no risk.)

If you do this there is no additional annual fee payable to us. We do not add anything on to the supplier's charge, except a nominal one-off **£50 charge** by us to correctly submit the .gov.uk application for you and then configure the domain.

**Please note:** we offer the very special pricing on .gov.uk domains and email for our website clients. This pricing is not viable for us without the modest hosting charge, so if you choose just a .gov.uk with us and/or email services, we still charge you for the web hosting cost. So, you may as well get a compliant new website at the same time!

If you have already purchased a .gov.uk with another supplier you can leave it where it is and we can ask them to configure it to our systems. There is no fee from us to do this if they are competent.

However, you may decide to switch the domain management over to us - we are likely to be cheaper on renewal, and having the management for your website and email needs all in one place is more efficient.

## Dedicated email

It is essential these days that a clerk has a dedicated email for their council work. It is also strongly recommended that all your councillors have their own council email address. This does not yet have to be under the official domain name.

If you already have email set up with another competent supplier, under the council domain you have already chosen, there is no need to move it.

If you only require a clerk's email address, this can be costed and arranged.



## Classic Package Costs

There is an option for website only, if you have email already hosted elsewhere, and an option for combined website and email hosting. You can ask for a quote for email hosting alone, but it will most likely be more expensive as our rates are designed for our website clients.

| <b>Item</b>  | <b>Pricing by Councillor Seats:</b> |          |          |           |           |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
|  | <b>5</b>                            | <b>7</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>13</b> |
| <b>WEBSITE ONLY</b><br>Setup Classic Package<br><i>this is a one-off cost</i>            | £ 175                               | £ 240    | £ 290    | £ 360     | £360      |
| Annual Website Hosting cost<br><i>includes domain management and<br/>nightly backups</i> | £ 175                               | £ 240    | £ 275    | £ 310     | £360      |
| <b>WEBSITE WITH EMAIL</b><br><b>for clerk and councillors</b><br>Initial Setup Cost      | £ 250                               | £ 320    | £ 370    | £ 400     | £ 450     |
| Annual Website Hosting (as above)<br>together with Email Service                         | £ 265                               | £ 320    | £ 370    | £ 400     | £ 450     |

*Annual hosting is usually billed annually or 6 monthly*

## Ongoing Help and Support

Access to website support via email is included.

Support with Email access difficulties on your device *may* be chargeable – because this should fall under your own local IT support.

## Training

Training is **£ 35 per hour**. A competent web editor can probably start without paid training as we offer a **free introductory online training session** of about 30 mins.

For those that need more help, one or two hours via Zoom shared screens is ample to get someone up to speed, but we can arrange as much as is required. In person/on-site training is also available if desired (travel fee will apply.)

## Managed Website Updates

We offer an option to do all your updates for you - your agendas, minutes, up to 20 news or events items per month, change of Parish Councillor details (incl. DPI) at elections or casual vacancies. Update of any statutory docs *ad hoc*. AGM agenda and minutes and annual financials. **£30 per month** (*in normal circumstances*)

## Example sites:

We have helped dozens of councils and local government organisations to become compliant, and saved our Clerks so many hours with our carefully designed system that makes the monthly chores as simple as possible, when sending things up to the web. There is less stress too, as we back this up with free friendly support should any be needed. We are often mentioned and recommended in Clerk Association chats, and numerous references are available – please ask.

We are, from April 2026, rolling out an updated version of our standard package template. It has the same easy to use layout but with some technology upgrades, and an even simpler management system for your clerk!

We have examples of different colour schemes (all WCAG tested for contrast) and sites with different levels of information:

| <b>Council</b>                    | <b>Colour</b>  | <b>Type</b>            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| aldhamparishcouncil.gov.uk        | Blue           | Council                |
| mistleyparishcouncil.gov.uk       | Forest Green   | Council                |
| manningtreetowncouncil.gov.uk     | Blue Endeavour | Council & Town         |
| littlebromleyparishcouncil.gov.uk | Olive          | Council & Village      |
| branthamparishcouncil.gov.uk      | Teal           | Council & Village Hall |

As at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 all the above are running on the original Classic template but will be updated soon. The new template can be seen in use here:

flitchgreenparishcouncil.gov.uk      May Green

*A portfolio can be found at **[www.parish-council.uk/parish-council-websites](http://www.parish-council.uk/parish-council-websites)***

## Thanks for your interest

We hope our services are of interest and look forward to working with you to achieve a new website that helps your clerk, pleases your residents, and satisfies the authorities.