

Loxley Village Website Re-build, 2016

Background

Loxley's website www.loxlevillage.com was last overhauled in 2008 by TKStarley, who hosted and maintained it from then till 2016 free of charge.

The Parish Council supported the inception of a number of Community project groups in 2016, which were and continue to be massively supported by members of the Parish. These groups are led by members of the community rather than by the Parish Council itself, although individual Parish Councillors are involved in them.

These groups include a Neighbourhood Development Plan Group, which required a website repository and up to date online facilities that the existing website could not support, owing to technical advancements. A quote was obtained from incumbent Smoof (TKStarley's new name) for £2000 + VAT all inclusive.

With grant funding available from Groundwork (UK) for Neighbourhood Development Plans, the Loxley NDP Group successfully bid for a first tranche of funding to include rebuilding the website to provide the facilities required for the NDP.

Groundwork (UK) Due Diligence

NDP Project Manager and Parishioner Peter Coote submitted an application on 3 May 2016 which included £2000 for the website overhaul. Groundwork discussed the details of the quotes for the components of the bid with Peter by 'phone and confirmed that they were happy this represented value for money. Groundwork also confirmed that grant money for the NDP did not need to go through a formal 'three tenders' process that would be necessary for Parish Council funds.

The grant was approved and paid.

NDP Funds

As the NDP has no bank account of its own, the grant funds received by the NDP are paid in to the Parish Council's bank account and NDP invoices are paid from there. The NDP funds are accounted for separately as they can only be used for the specific items listed in the grant applications.

Loxley Parish Council Due Diligence

Regardless of the fact a three party competitive tender was not required, LPC carried out an appraisal of three alternative web companies active in the Parish Council Website sector, to ensure Smoof's pricing was competitive. This involved looking at their price lists, contacting them by phone and/or email, investigating the viability of the companies involved and evaluating the Five Year Cost of Ownership for Smoof vs the other three companies.

The findings are attached below and clearly show that Smoof as best value for money. There is also a clear advantage of engaging the incumbent "known quantity" supplier.

All prices below are before VAT, Prices correct at 18/08/2016				
Company:				SMOOF
Their website:				smoof.io
People:	Two web-designers	Single named owner	Tom Starley, Lucy Goldby plus 3 staff	Owner plus three staff
About the company:	This is a new business, registered in June 2015 by two website designers. One of the partners had a previous business which went in to compulsory liquidation after only 20 months, having never filed any accounts. This potential partner was suggested by a parishioner based on the apparent cheap prices.	Not very clear what the registered name of the business is - the 'testimonial' on the site is from a relative of the owner who also happens to be a Parish Clerk, so looks like a small affair. Their 'see all testimonials' and 'see all our projects' links don't take you anywhere so not a great advert! xxxxxxxx-pc.gov.uk not a great advert either with overlapping text boxes!	SMOOF is the rebranded webdesign business of TKStarley, which developed the existing Loxley Village website in 2008. Hence the company is a known and trusted partner and has successfully supported and hosted the existing website for the past 8 years, in which time they charged no maintenance fees at all.	Claim to be the largest suppliers of parish council websites in England & Wales. The company was registered in 2005 but their accounts show little activity, with cumulative P&L reserves of £13k over 11 years. The owner is actually a solicitor.
Pricing	They have three levels at £399/449/599 for build, with corresponding mtce and support packages of £100/200/300 pa. With the quantity of data Loxley requires it is likely we would need the £599 package. (Confirmed with one of the owners that the demo site is their £599 offering and that most parish councils have this option).	Discussed requirements with the owner and he believes we need the 'gold' level. Pricing £469/649/829 for the three levels. They provide a support package for £60 per month, which covers up to 3 hours work, They charge £26/hr if you go over this.	All inclusive price of £2000	Like others, they provide a three tier pricing structure with build costs of £150/£250/£500 plus annual HOSTING of £100/200/300. Looks like we would need the gold option for all the features we want. Didn't respond to request for information so only the costs from their website are known.
Build	£599	£829	included	£500
Hosting	included in support cost	Incl for first 12 months - £10/month thereafter. Hence £480 over 5 years.	included	£1500
5 yr Support	£1500	£3600	included	unknown
Training	£240 (£120 pp, min two people) + expenses	Online training included	included	unknown
5 year cost	£2339 + training expenses	£4909	£2000	£2000 + support + training
How much data will they migrate?	3 years worth	Said would migrate all	All	unknown
Hourly rate for changes	£40	£45	Maintenance included, significant changes to be negotiated	unknown
The three competitor companies have been anonymised to ensure their businesses are not impacted by LPC publishing this online.				
The Parish Council have full business names.				