

Just under 12 months have passed since Pat & I visited Clystnet and requested them to place the website live, after having taken a morning’s training session. I’m sure he will agree with me that we have learned a lot by “hands on” use and continue to exploit the variety the site can offer.

To this meeting in 2017, I have spent 181 hours (or 22.5 working days) against a proposed 144, doing work relating to the site.

I never had any doubts that in order to keep the site fresh, I would need to ensure that the current information pages, e.g. News, Calendar, Notice Board are active on a regular basis and that items deemed to be news are rotated. Viewers switch off if they think a site isn’t managed. It is clear in particular that the events calendar gets a lot of attention (I am cautiously optimistic that this has encouraged a wider group of people to attend functions, although viewing an event doesn’t necessarily translate into a sale), and I have had a number of submissions of photos. I do hope that every member of the Parish Council leads by example and takes a few minutes to view the site at least once a week – everything you need is there, especially links into other sites such as Devon County and Torridge. There is even a farming link.

You kindly paid for me to attend 2 Facebook courses. My summary of what I learned is below.

- Key lessons came out of that course which, in themselves, justify the expense.

On the later session, the training started by advising that Facebook is not the medium for community or volunteer groups etc. Ours, like many others, is classed as a business (simply because it's not personal) and unless we are prepared to pay for advertising (personal credit/debit card online is the means) then we shall never be able to use the tool to the extent that we may desire. I remain unclear how this works in practice but we may eventually get asked to pay by placing advertising before the page is allowed to develop or ultimately .I persisted on the matter of payment because there was a lack of awareness amongst those present that this could or would happen to them - Facebook is a profit-making business and will ultimately enforce that.

However that is not to say that people who take the time to find our page can’t “follow” – I see BB Parish has just over 100 – proactive reach out will cost money. We could have been set up as a Group rather than a page but professional opinion suggested that would be more for *closed membership e.g. churches, large committees & friends etc.

Both Facebook and Twitter are grossly misused – their intent was never for business/non personal use – the primary aim is “an addictive keep up with family and friends device designed to invade every aspect of your lifestyle” (these were trainers words, not mine). The trainer did make her account dormant for 11 months – she said she found a new kind of freedom but in order to train she has had to go back to its use – she thought she could be on for 3-4 hours a day - this is not unusual. I must express here my personal concern about how healthy this is either physically or mentally, but I appreciate that is subjective.

Facebook is constantly evolving and unless you spend a lot of time on it daily (the trainer informed this appears to be their strategy) you are likely never to be up to speed with how it works completely. There are some new business things coming out soon (no one is sure what they are but they will affect us possibly).

The other consideration is that Facebook (and other social media) are not giving 100% fact in feedback to politicians about policing, control and misuse. The trainers advised it is part of their role to notify of inappropriate postings/tweets etc. Facebook rarely acknowledges these and if they do, they do not act - the few responses have been "the post did not breach

their guidelines" when clearly this was not the case (subjective possibly but the trainers can't have been wrong on each occasion). This may be worrying if BBPC is linked to anything which could be reputationally damaging(although they will be amongst many) - I feel this should be factored in any risk assessments PC keeps (as I assume the website is, although this is controlled by contracts and agreements).

I asked how do you close a Facebook account – the reply was “with great difficulty”.

Facebook will apparently put every obstacle in your way to ensure that anything apart from closure happens to the account – I am advised there are 7/8 checks that you have to find your way around before the account is closed – most simply end up dormant for ever and a day. I am unclear how this benefits Facebook (a profit-making business we must not forget) unless somehow it forms part of Google's (its owner) statistics and accounting bottom line. Facebook will very rarely intervene in account closure (on odd occasions they may do it for a fee paying business) – if the account owner becomes incapacitated or dies, the account simply rumbles on and has caused cases of distress to parents (there was one in the room) where there are postings on the account of a deceased young person – a relatively new tool and interesting how this will pan out for longevity as users die. It is possible to notify a “bequest” in your personal (not business)profile so that a.n. other can use and do something to the account if you are no longer able to do so - this is not widely known. Thus it is imperative that there are at least 2 admin folk, and another would be desirable.

I continue to hope that I shall be able to reinstate the tab for the Buckland Brewer Hall – ideally they would run their own site (as the shop has recently done and I congratulate them – our site is now linked to theirs), but at very least I cannot understand how it helps anyone, least of all the hall trustees, not to publish at no cost their services, prices, contact details and terms and conditions. I have advertised and hard promoted a number of events for them without their request or acknowledgment, and I would revisit my comments about the evident use of the events calendar. The recent Christmas Market took well in excess of 100 hits which is of course a potential 100+ extra “punters”.

If there is anything specific you require, please let me know, otherwise I shall continue to use my own imagination and discretion about design and article publication. Thank you for your support during this year.

Jane Lowe 10/12/17