

Occold Web Site Report 2011

1. The Occold website, www.occold.com, has been maintained on a day-to-day basis over the past 12 months - with News & Events updates being done several times a week.

2. The key indicators show about 9,000 visitors from 47 countries have visited - averaging around 750 visits per month. It is impossible to say how many of these are visitors with a genuine interest in Occold, as opposed to robots such as email miners and search engines.

3. There is no firm evidence that Occoldians use the website as their first choice to find out what is going on. I still hear continual whinging that 'nobody told me it was happening'!! However, I believe turn out at most village events remains 'respectable' at least, but whether this is down to Oracle, posters, word of mouth or website, is impossible to say.

4. I am also employed by Debenham Parish Council to manage their website - the Parish Council see it as an important tool in disseminating information on news and events in Debenham and also helps to promote it as a tourist destination.

Over the past 6 months, I have developed a brand new website for them based upon a Content Management System (CMS) provided by 'onesuffolk' - a branch of Suffolk County Council who promote FREE websites for local community groups.

This was officially launched on 18 April and appears to be proving popular and is a preferred option to the older website. You can take a look at the site by visiting <http://debenham.onesuffolk.net>

5. The reason for mentioning this is that I have bagged <http://occold.onesuffolk.net> as a possible new hosting platform for the Occold website. Note - This address may not be active as yet as it has only just been registered and I have done nothing with it.

6. The new CMS does offer a rich set of features which can be used to enhance any local website. For instance, you can initiate discussion forums - basically items for discussion which people can then comment on.

Experience with a similar facility on the Occold website however, proved fairly fruitless - nobody seemed to want to discuss anything!!!

7. It can also support 'polling' whereby ORAC, Parish Council or indeed any individual or organisation can raise a question and ask people to cast their vote. If nothing else, it might provide a measure of how many people have a real interest in Occold.

8. The advantage is that it is FREE. Currently, Occold website is hosted on my personal webspace which costs me around £50pa. I'm happy to continue this, but anything which is free is not to be ignored. Furthermore, this would give ORAC independence from any financial dependency and could, if it wished, appoint another Editor who would find it fairly easy to take over the content management. The downside is, that it does not allow community groups to charge for business advertising. But when I launched the new Debenham website, I trawled all Occold based businesses offering them free advertising - so far with ZERO result!!

9. The other reason for moving it, is that it could offer some of the other features which currently the Occold website does not have. I have not yet decided if and when it might move - I'll most likely let the Debenham one settle down first and use it as a learning activity for Occold. ORAC are invited to give me a steer as to whether they think it might be a good idea – please have a look at the Debenham website and you will get a better idea of what can be achieved.

Regards

Barry