

Annual Report 12/13 for ORAC AGM – Occold Village web site

www.occold.com

Author: Barry Woods
Role: Editor
Date: 7 May 13
Email: editor@occold.com

1. Background

The Occold web site continues as a voluntary effort by the Editor - who is happy to continue in this role in order to provide a service to the community.

The focus of the web site remains that of providing a communications media for fast changing news and archiving of longer shelf life material. It is also used where a web site capability to deliver high volume and colour imagery is a requirement e.g. photographic, audio or video content.

2. Key Indicators

Visitor numbers have remained fairly static at 600-800 visits per month albeit, without detailed analytics, it is difficult to pin down how many are 'real' as opposed to 'robots'.

I don't get the feeling that the website is being used by individuals or local organisations to its fullest extent in spite of advertising its presence both face-to-face and in ORACLE.

The website also serves to bring people together with a family history relating to Occold and currently there are 68 surnames being researched.

3. Changes this year

On 1 Aug 2012, the website was re-launched using a Content Management System (CMS) provided by 'onesuffolk' (funded by Suffolk County Council) and also hosted by them. This has a number of advantages.....

- It is FREE!!
- The CMS allows the web site to be maintained by anyone without the need to have any technical understanding of web design
- It provides a number of enhanced features e.g. blogs, voting, photo-galleries etc which can be used to enhance the effectiveness of the web site
- The overall 'look and feel' is embodied in the CMS hence it provides a seamless and consistent appearance to visitors

Although most of the pages have been migrated, some of the older pages are technically challenging and time consuming hence some of the old web site pages remain hosted on my personal web space with suitable links from the new web site. These will be migrated as soon as time permits.

At the time of transfer, I set up a blog inviting comments as to what people thought of it and to make suggestions for improvement – so far with a deafening silence!

4. Email Alert Service

Occold Parish Council has agreed to provide an email alert service for individuals and organisations in Occold. This has been implemented on the website and I am acting as Gatekeeper to send out alerts e.g. police notices, severe weather warnings, bin collections, road closures, major events etc after ensuring they meet the required standards of good taste and decency. The service can be used by any individual or organisation but nobody has so far used it.

To date, there have only been 22 subscribers (same as last year!) in spite of advertising the facility. It would seem that Occold folk don't want to be told about what's going on!

5. Advertising

The web site offers an advertising medium for both businesses and For Sale/Wanted ads – and it's FREE! Only ~20 businesses have a presence and very few classified ads.

6. Relationship with Neighbouring Villages

As Editor of the Debenham website, I already share information between the two sites e.g. events, alerts, for sale items etc. And this works both ways since I advertise similar Occold items in Debenham as well.

We also have a localised group of web site editors hence major events etc are shared and publicised in Thorndon, Redlingfield and Pettaugh.

7. Future Direction

I remain convinced that villages like Occold should have a world class website and, in spite of it not being used to its fullest extent, I am happy to maintain it for the foreseeable future.

However, the new CMS makes it very easy for anyone to maintain the web site and I would be more than happy to hand it over to anyone who would like to take it on.

END OF DOCUMENT