

Annual Report 13/14 for ORAC AGM – Occold Village web site

www.occold.com

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Date: 12 May 13
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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. Since 2012, the bulk of the website has been hosted on the 'onesuffolk' platform, provided free by Suffolk County Council albeit some pages still have to be hosted on my personal web space.

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 and there are 31 followers on Twitter.

The website also serves to bring people together with family histories relating to Occold and currently there are 56 surnames being researched. In addition, we have recently done an extensive family history into 7 of the Rectors of Occold (1771 – 1986) and are currently researching the 15 names on the War Memorial.

The website also provides an Email Alert Service which can be used to disseminate time critical information e.g. police alerts, road closures, extreme weather reports, lost and found etc. Disappointingly, only 25 email addresses have signed up out of the circa 150 homes in the village. Perhaps people don't want to know about what's going on?

3. Advertising

The web site offers an advertising medium for both businesses and For Sale/Wanted ads – and it's FREE! Only ~24 businesses have a presence and very few classified ads.

4. Village Recorder

I've recently taken on the role of Village Recorder for Occold. This involves ensuring the survival of valuable material for future local historians by seeing that the present is adequately recorded at local level and being on the look-out for items of historical interest which might be overlooked or lost for ever.

Such material will be deposited at Suffolk Record Office together with a one page annual summary of local activity e.g. changes to buildings or infrastructure, major events and individual achievements.

Since most of the material is collected electronically, I have added a new Village Recorder page to the website to publish this information.

5. Local collaboration

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, Framsdon and Pettaugh.

6. 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.

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