

Goodnestone Parish Council

Proposal for Dedicated Web and Email Addresses and for Electronic Document Storage

Prepared by Councillors Aldington and Stamford

Introduction

It is best practice for Parish Councils to keep personal and council related matters separate. When using email, it is therefore desirable for councillors and council officers to use a dedicated email box.

To support the identity of the council and to make it clear when communications relate to council matters, it is also desirable for councils to set up a dedicated domain name (the part that comes after the '@' in an email address), and to create email boxes that use that domain name.

It further supports the identity of the council if the web site address matches the email domain name.

We also propose creating a dedicated document repository so that documents can be stored online and accessed by Councillors and the Clerk. This is discussed at the end of this document.

Options for the Address

Parish Councils are entitled to use addresses ending in .gov.uk. It is common for parish councils to register domain names of the form 'goodnestone-pc.gov.uk'

It is also possible to register other addresses, such as goodnestone-pc.co.uk or goodnestone-pc.org.uk, or even gpc.org.uk (if this has not already been taken by someone else).

Despite the modestly higher cost (see below), I would recommend the goodnestone-pc.gov.uk form of the address.

Options for the Website

The website is currently run voluntarily by Jon Aldington, who is prepared to continue to provide this service. Jon runs the goodnestone.org.uk website and the Parish Council pages form part of this.

Options for the website are:

- Leave the website as is at goodnestone.org.uk, but have the goodnestone-pc.gov.uk address simply redirect to the Parish Council landing page on goodnestone.org.uk
- Move the whole website to a new goodnestone-pc.gov.uk addresses
- Move the Parish Council content only to a new goodnestone-pc.gov.uk address, leaving other content on the old website

The way the website is currently set up, it would be a significant effort to move the Parish Council content only and some effort to move the entire website.

I recommend we go with the first option for now, then consider the best route forward once the email addresses are set up.

Email Addresses

Once we have registered the goodnestone-pc.gov.uk (or whatever alternative we choose), we can register email addresses of the form <anything>@goodnestone-pc.gov.uk

I would suggest we register a few generic addresses such as 'clerk', 'chair' and 'contact', with the 'clerk' address a dedicated mailbox, the 'chair' address simply forwarding to whoever is chair at the time and the 'contact' address forwarding to either the clerk, or to all councillors and the clerk – we could decide.

Each councillor would then have their own address. We could choose the form of this, with alternatives such as:

- jon@goodnestone-pc.gov.uk
- jon.aldington@goodnestone-pc.gov.uk
- cllr.aldington@goodnestone-pc.gov.uk

I would suggest that whatever form we choose, we should be consistent across the council.

Costs

To register a .gov.uk domain name costs £150+VAT every 2 years or £75+VAT each year. A .co.uk or .org.uk domain name is lower in cost at around £12 per year.

It is also necessary to pay for 'hosting' on top of this for the email and/or website. A suitable package could be had for around £3.50 + VAT per month or £42 + VAT per year. This may need to be upgraded in due course to a slightly more expensive package to increase capacity, but should be adequate for at least a couple of years.

The total costs would therefore be:

- Using a goodnestone-pc.gov.uk address: £117 + VAT per year
- Using a goodnestone-pc.org.uk address: £56 + VAT per year

Document Store for Parish Council

In an attempt to streamline e-mail attachments, multiple versions of document and to reduce information security risk of having parish council information stored on each councillor and clerks personal drives, it has been suggested that the Goodnestone Parish Council subscribe to a market leading document repository, which is owned and managed by the Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council, where everyone can enter, audit trails and accesses are tracked, and links to meeting documents can be shared. This would ensure the Parish Council filing system is more robust, reduces key man dependency and reduces paper filing.

I would recommend using a solution such as Dropbox which is industry standard and used by many businesses and that we should subscribe to Professional. [Compare all Dropbox plans – Dropbox](#). This would cost £199 per year.