

# **Project case study**

## **Lands Village Hall website development**

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# 1.

# Project details

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## Summary

Lands Village Hall Trust is a small community charity managing a village hall and local green spaces. The trust asked us to provide a web presence for their organisation. The trust had no web site for community use and desperately needed to provide a digital communication channel to show that it was modernising.

## Scope

Lands Village Hall Trust initially retained us to redesign a tired and old logo that was only available in painted form in the hall's window. Following this redesign, the trust intended to build a web presence for the first time. It also aspired to develop a social media profile. It was new territory for the organisation, having avoided all forays into the online world previously.

The trust asked us to build and publish its web presence, which included creating the platform, design, hosting, domain registration and publication of a web site. Included in this was the need to create a Facebook™ page to start their social media channels.



## Story

Having already redesigned the trust's logo, the next step was to build their web presence. The trust needed a website that allowed them to easily update content and use the site because any of the current trustees, or other members of the community, could be responsible for maintaining the content on the website at any time; (all the trustees could change at an AGM). So, it was essential that the website could be adopted by anyone in the community with the minimum of "training" and the least technical knowledge.

The biggest constraint was that the village hall was closed throughout the project. It was closed two years previously and was in a state of some disrepair. So, the initial compass of the website would be limited to donations for refurbishment works and building a community around the venue. Later, it was envisaged, that the website could include a hall hire facility, and news about upcoming community events and detailed stories about past events.

# 2.

## Solution

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### What we did

Considering the technical experience, including the lack of a web presence, we concluded that a Content Management System (CMS) was the best option. A CMS would enable members of the trust to update content and publish stories regularly about community events. We decided that the CMS should be well-established, popular and update-driven. We found the best solution was WordPress, with a modified theme that reflected the trust's new branding.

WordPress provided a sufficiently user-focussed approach to suit the majority of probable users. It is an easy-to-use CMS and relatively adaptable to the needs of the trust. It was also convenient for fast deployment and was versatile enough to align with the trust's brand.

# 3.

## Conclusions

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### Successes

Within a few weeks, the project published the trust's web site, which adapted the WordPress theme to the trust's brand in a clean and friendly design.

The project gave the trust a web presence for the first time in its 100-year history and introduced it to Facebook.

The objective of the project was to give the community a focal point to bring it together. Community engagement with the web site has not met expectations yet, chiefly because of the COVID-19 lockdown and the hall's continued closure. Once events start at the venue again, community uptake will increase.

Requested by the trust, we hosted the site on our servers, registered the domain name and prepared the server before publishing the site.

### Challenges

We completed the project during the first UK COVID-19 lockdown, which made communication and collaboration on the project complex. We solved this challenge through online meetings and WhatsApp communications.

Content for the web site was also troublesome because the hall is closed, there are no events, and therefore fresh copy is not readily available. We decided to include some background information about the venue, and the trust, to support the main aim of advertising a hire space. This outline gave the web site sufficient interesting content for publication while providing a hook for potential donations to the charity.

## Impacts

For the first time in its more than 100 years of history, Lands Village Hall as a web presence, which it can maintain and update as required. Although the hall is closed, its web site has received a steady flow of visitors and interest. Once the hall reopens and begins running events and hires again, we expect the traffic to the web site to increase in line with an expanding list of content.

The web site provides the trust with a focal point for interest. It is modern, current, and well branded for Lands Village Hall.



Figure 1: Lands Village Hall website for desktop, tablet and smartphone.