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YOUR**PROPOSAL**

Kirkby Stephen Town Council

No. 1790

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Restructure and modernise website

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Kirkby Stephen Town Council & Visit Upper Eden

Website restructuring proposal

Introduction

The existing kirkby-stephen.com website has developed over many years to serve several different purposes, combining official Kirkby Stephen Town Council information with community, visitor, business and accommodation content.

Alongside this, visituppereden.org.uk provides further tourism and visitor information covering Kirkby Stephen and the wider Upper Eden area.

We propose restructuring these websites to create two clearly defined online services:

1. A new dedicated Kirkby Stephen Town Council website on an appropriate .gov.uk domain.
2. A consolidated kirkby-stephen.com website, bringing together the non-Council content from the existing site with relevant content from visituppereden.org.uk.

This will provide a much clearer distinction between official Council information and the wider visitor, community and business content, while making best use of the established traffic and search-engine presence of kirkby-stephen.com.

1. New Kirkby Stephen Town Council Website

The Town Council content will be separated from the existing website and moved to a dedicated .gov.uk domain.

The new website will be designed specifically around the requirements of a Town Council rather than attempting to accommodate tourism and commercial content alongside official Council information.

The principal objectives will be to:

- Provide clear access to Council information and services.
- Meet the WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility standard applicable to public-sector websites.
- Support the Council's transparency and publication obligations.

- Make meetings, agendas, minutes and official documents straightforward to find.
- Provide clear information about councillors and Council responsibilities.
- Make it easy for residents to contact the Council.
- Provide a straightforward publishing system for the Clerk and other authorised users.

Council Website Structure

An initial structure could include:

Home

Your Council

- Councillors
- Council Responsibilities
- Meetings
- Agendas & Minutes

Documents & Transparency

- Policies
- Finance
- Annual Accounts
- Governance Documents
- Transparency Information

Council Services

Planning

Council News

Contact the Council

The final structure would be agreed following a review of the Council's current content and statutory publication requirements.

Accessibility

Accessibility will be built into the website from the outset rather than addressed through an additional accessibility toolbar.

The design and development will target WCAG 2.2 Level AA, covering areas such as keyboard navigation, colour contrast, heading structure, accessible forms, meaningful links and appropriate alternative text.

We will also consider the accessibility of published documents. Wherever practical, important information can be presented as accessible HTML content rather than relying unnecessarily on PDFs.

An appropriate Accessibility Statement will be included and the completed website tested before launch.

Transparency and Official Documents

A major focus of the new Council website will be making official information easy to publish and easy for residents to find.

This could include structured areas for:

- Agendas and minutes
- Financial information
- Annual Governance and Accountability Returns
- Policies and procedures
- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
- Councillor information
- Asset information
- Statutory notices
- Other transparency information.

2. A Consolidated kirkby-stephen.com

Once the Town Council information has moved to its new website, kirkby-stephen.com can be

repositioned as the principal website for Kirkby Stephen and the Upper Eden area.

This will combine the useful non-Council content already available through kirkby-stephen.com with relevant content currently published on visituppereden.org.uk.

The resulting website can concentrate on areas such as:

- Visiting Kirkby Stephen and Upper Eden
- Accommodation
- Things to do
- Attractions
- Walking and outdoor activities
- Food and drink
- Shopping
- Local businesses
- Events
- Community information
- Useful local resources

The objective will be to create a single, useful resource rather than continuing to maintain two websites containing overlapping destination information.

Why Retain kirkby-stephen.com?

Although Visit Upper Eden covers the wider destination geographically, we recommend retaining kirkby-stephen.com as the principal domain for the consolidated site.

Kirkby-stephen.com is long established and currently attracts significantly more traffic than visituppereden.org.uk. Moving its content to the less-established domain would therefore risk losing some of the search visibility and recognition that has been built up over many years.

Instead, useful Visit Upper Eden content can be migrated into kirkby-stephen.com and appropriate permanent redirects put in place from visituppereden.org.uk.

The Upper Eden identity can still have a strong presence within the website, particularly within visitor content, without sacrificing the value of the established domain.

Content Simplification

The project should not simply combine all of the pages from the two existing websites.

We recommend carrying out a content review first to identify:

- Useful content to retain.
- Duplicate information across the two sites.
- Outdated or inaccurate content.
- Pages receiving useful search traffic.
- Content that can be combined.
- Low-value material that can be removed.
- Business and accommodation listings that need updating or rationalising.

This should result in a smaller, clearer and more useful website, rather than creating an unnecessarily large site from the combined content of both existing websites.

Protecting Search Visibility

Careful migration will be important for both parts of the project.

For kirkby-stephen.com, existing pages receiving useful search traffic should retain their URLs wherever practical.

When Visit Upper Eden pages are incorporated, permanent redirects can be created from the corresponding visituppereden.org.uk URLs to their new locations on kirkby-stephen.com.

Council pages moving away from kirkby-stephen.com will similarly be redirected to the corresponding pages on the new .gov.uk website.

This provides search engines and existing visitors with a clear route from the old content to its new location and helps preserve the search value accumulated by the existing websites.

Design and Development

Both websites can be developed in WordPress.

The Council website will have a clean, accessible and appropriately civic design, with the emphasis on

clarity and ease of access to information.

Kirkby-stephen.com can have a more destination-focused identity while remaining straightforward, fast and content-led. Existing photography can be used selectively rather than making the website unnecessarily image-heavy.

Both websites will be fully responsive and optimised for mobile, tablet and desktop use.

In order to keep costs low, the new destination-focussed kirkby-stephen.com site could be given a light refresh and rebuild, rather than a full design process with mockups and custom build. This is the option that has been quoted for in this proposal.

Project Approach

The work can be delivered through four principal stages.

Audit & Planning

Review the content, analytics and search performance of kirkby-stephen.com and visituppereden.org.uk, identify Council content for migration and agree the structure of both new websites.

Content Rationalisation

Determine which content should be retained, combined, rewritten, migrated or removed.

Design & Development

Design and develop the dedicated Town Council website and the consolidated kirkby-stephen.com website.

Migration & Launch

Migrate the agreed content, implement redirects between all affected domains, complete accessibility and technical SEO testing and launch the new websites.

Hosting

Hosting can continue as currently. However we would be happy to quote for an upgrade of the current dedicated platform which is shared with other Ibex clients only, to a dedicated solution for kirkby-stephen.com only.

Summary

We recommend replacing the current overlapping website structure with two websites serving two clearly different purposes.

The new .gov.uk Kirkby Stephen Town Council website will provide an authoritative, accessible and transparent source of official Council information, designed specifically around the needs of residents and the Council's publication responsibilities.

Kirkby-stephen.com will then become the consolidated website for the wider destination and community, combining its existing non-Council content with the best material from Visit Upper Eden.

Retaining kirkby-stephen.com for this purpose makes best use of an established and well-trafficked domain, while consolidating Visit Upper Eden content removes duplication and creates a stronger single resource for visitors, businesses and the wider community.

The overall result will be a much clearer online presence: an authoritative Council website for official business and a separate, established website promoting Kirkby Stephen and Upper Eden.

Costs

Website design and build (new town council site)	**Design and Development process** Create mockups for the new .gov.uk website for approval Once approved, build the new website and migrate URLs and SEO data. Stage the website on a temporary URL ready for the manual process of updating and adding content.	***£3150.00***
Refresh kirkby-stephen.com	Light refresh for kirkby-stephen.com - design to suit the new emphasis on business and tourist information.	***£1975.00***
Content migration	Estimated costs for content migration (including up to 5 years of documents)	***£1330.00***
Hosting	New Town Council website Hosting can continue as currently or a dedicated solution could be quoted for if required.	***£240.00 (annual cost)***
	New Kirkby Stephen.com website	***£240.00 (annual cost)***

All prices quoted do not include VAT that will be added at a rate of 20%. Prices valid for 60 days from date on cover sheet.

Timescale

We estimate that the work will take about 3-5 weeks including training.

Payment

The following payment schedule is suggested:

- Invoice 1 (Prior to Design Commencing) - 30%
- Invoice 2 - 30% On Design Approval and Prior to Development Commencing
- Invoice 4 - 40% On Completion and Prior to Live

Invoice 1 is sent on approval of this quote and work will commence on payment of that invoice. All other invoices carry a 7-day payment term to maintain consistent project flow.

Please note that your website will be developed according to the approved design. Amends requested on staging can only be accommodated if they are categorised as minor development.

Example sites from our portfolio

This is a small selection from our portfolio, chosen to present a variety of designs, each a bespoke piece of work for an individual business. We continue to work for our clients, ensuring that their website continues to be a highly effective asset for their business.

- https://www.edenha.org.uk/
  New website for Eden Housing Association. Accessibility is an important factor for this website, as well as compliance and transparency, conforming to the latest regulations in the sector. This new version of the website was put live this week.

  https://www.mickledore.co.uk/
  We have worked with the very successful Mickledore Travel for many years, and this is the third version of their website which we have designed and built. It provides the ability for potential customers to browse in-depth information about each itinerary and go on to book via a seamless process. Search optimisation is very important, and the website performs very well in this regard.

- https://visionone.co.uk/
  Vision One is a leading UK Market Research business. Content is central to the marketing plan of the company, and this website makes excellent use of our branded blocks to make the task of managing content easy and efficient. The site is crafted for fast page loads and a seamless user experience

which feeds into excellent search results.

- https://www.buonvino.co.uk/
  A successful ecommerce site for a specialist supplier of natural and organic wines.

- https://www.thecourtyarddairy.co.uk/
  This is a business with true passion and a real expertise in its area, which is of course cheese. We have applied our own passion and expertise to the quality of the website, to provide a quality user experience to the customers of The Courtyard Dairy, and to help support artisan cheesemakers across the UK and beyond.

- https://www.designerglassesboutique.co.uk
  Another highly successful ecommerce site for designer glasses and sunglasses.

- https://londonclimbingcentres.co.uk/
  London Climbing Centres operates a (growing) number of indoor climbing centres across the capital - this website is designed to quickly answer questions for new users, and provide a seamless booking experience for customers.

- https://brathay.org.uk
  We won an award for best charity website when we designed and built this site for the Brathay Trust in 2023. Since then, with a new CEO at the helm of the Trust, the website has been able to switch focus without redevelopment, highlighting the ease of use and flexibility of the block system we used to build it.

- https://hythe-engineering.com/
  Hythe Engineering is a successful engineering company based in Hampshire, managing large projects for the defence and nuclear industries.

- https://www.nw-ifca.gov.uk/
  This website was designed and built for the North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, and helps them communicate with a range of stakeholders, for example allowing fishermen to submit returns, and managing communications on conservation.