

Brendan Blake

From: Brendan Blake <brendan@erwwen.co.uk>
Sent: 10 November 2024 18:14
To: 'secretary@siophavards.cymru'
Cc: 'Clive Hooper'; 'Jane Thomas'; 'sj.reeves38@gmail.com'; Hugh McCormack
Subject: RE: Moving forwards - a summary of decisions

Sorry, Chris, most of what you assert below is a distortion of my position if not untrue.

Even if I hadn't agreed to participate in the "Nextgen" project, that doesn't excuse the discourtesy of you not even thinking of tell me what was going on and seeking my views.

There are some crucial requirements of any new system and server, for example can we integrate the website functions that we already have, including the shareholder management system and the newsletter system?

I was always willing to participate in the project. I never "gave scathing feedback" on the report you describe. It did indeed demonstrate a high level of competence. I do recall thinking it was derived from a study made for a much larger organisation, and was looking at systems far in excess of what would be practical for us. I may have said we need to be careful not to spend a large amount of time discussing huge numbers of options. This was all quite some time ago, as the project was, I was told, put on hold. There were never any meetings.

I did say to you that we should have a step by step approach, and that it was very likely we would conclude that a wordpress website would be the way to go.

So we could just have put up a prototype wordpress website and refined our design / website plan etc, and I recall suggesting that, and got that going in parallel. I've also advised you buy in local support, so I have no objection to using a good local centre. I have also said we need to ensure we are not dependent on any one person. I would just like to be sure the same degree of care was used selecting help as was used with RBS, when we were all involved.

We are a small local business, and I'm afraid to say we've missed the bus to compete with Amazon or other on-line hardware sellers – but we still need a decent website, and we need to do a really excellent job to publicise what we are and what we sell. We did discuss using feeds from Home Hardware, I recall looking at them, and I always agreed that it would be good to use these to populate the product pages.

Stage 2 should therefore be getting the feeds working and linked to the stock database etc. For each stage, only when a carefully monitored set of exit criteria are met should we move to the next stage.

So I'm afraid your note below is not a correct statement of what has happened. It reads to me as an attempt to justify your own position.

I do apologise for upsetting people – but I was the first person to be affected. To cap it all, I have bad toothache, which meant I was in a particularly bad mood yesterday evening, and said more than I should.

I will send out a reminder for the EGM. Chris – ref your other note - don't you recall we don't use Mailchimp now? The complexity of formatting the newsletters was one reason Sam gave up. However the account still exists, and the details are with all the other passwords on the Google drive.

Finally, Betty and indeed the whole shop are working fine, I have spent quite a lot of time on this last week. The culprit (by a process of elimination) was indeed her Chrome browser, but I am still not confident that I know what was causing it to try to login, nor why invalid passwords that had been deleted got restored. She worked yesterday from home, including using Chrome, without any invalid logins appearing on the logs.

Best wishes,
Brendan

From: secretary@siophavards.cymru <secretary@siophavards.cymru>
Sent: 10 November 2024 13:29
To: Brendan Blake <brendan@erwwen.co.uk>
Cc: Clive Hooper <Cliveahooper@hotmail.com>; Jane Thomas <janewt123@icloud.com>; sj.reeves38@gmail.com
Subject: Moving forwards - a summary of decisions
Importance: High

Dear Brendan,

Your recent emails regards IT and the tone of them obviously shows great distress, which is now felt by many.

So I hope that this email provides the answers you seek and the explanation of why, on this occasion you were not consulted with regards to the new click-collect website and email support.

First, I and the board of directors recognise the work that you have done over a number of years and the value and appreciation this work has provided to the initial project when seeking funding, then the fantastic effort in producing a system and processes that has tracked and maintained shareholder records and donations. Not forgetting the ongoing work to secure funds for our VC.

So, the reasons you were not consulted on the new website are as follows and when each is considered as a whole, you'll see that the direction and decisions made are in the best interest of the business and indeed persons supporting the business.

- When a team was first formed to look at a new website which had the capability to take orders over the web, a draft report was put forward outlining how this could be done.
- It was drawn up by a very competent individual who has today's knowledge of e-commerce systems, methods to avoid complex programming of historic sites and the ability to empower non-tech users to maintain the content.
- Your feedback of this report was scathing, you saw no need for this as you could and wished to develop a site, using products such as WordPress, which is desirable and with less programming of the site.
- You stated clearly at that time **if approach wasn't take you wished to have no further part in the discussion.**
- Across the business we have, for daily operational processes instigated the policy of not having a single person only capable of performing a task or process.
- This policy has applied to all aspects of operations from finance to sales and inventory processing.
- The only area where we find a high dependence on a single person is IT and in particular PCs, email and domain access. IT should for any business be a dependable tool of the business enabling tasks to be performed proficiently and with minimal effort.
- Sad to say that email and domain access to business-critical data and information has, over many months, been the business focus with delay, additional cost, disruption to a very busy shop and extreme stress to those affected.
- Availability, location and the ability to respond.
- With the Welsh and local government putting pressure on holiday let owners, we sympathise with the need to maximise the bookings which as limited your ability to be in Newport. Your other interests have, understandable sought your time and focus at other times.

- These circumstances combines into a difficult situation and creates stress for all as you become dependant on information to enable you to remotely help us resolve from persons who, either don't have time, the skill and or bandwidth to respond to your request for information.
- The "slots" you have available to support us are days in some cases, when you've been on holiday a week apart, although you have tried your best whilst in remote parts of the UK or world.
- The resulting delay has meant that the business has significantly struggled whilst fixes are being sought.

In summary the decision not to invite your involvement was the combination of,

1. You stated you didn't want to be part of it; unless you were to asked develop a click-collect website.
2. We have wisely, to protect investor interests, by implementing a policy of non-reliance for business-critical processes on a single individual,
3. and finally the board recognised the need for local and promptly accessible support in time of faults or outage for email, domain accessed data and the click-collect website.

I started this email with a statement of appreciation of the work you have and continue to do for communication to our shareholders and supporters, the work to maintain the accuracy and completeness of the shareholder records is highly valued and a significant contribution to Havards.

Please don't think for a moment that we are questioning your IT credentials, that is not the case. The IT tools that Havards needs for daily operations as it grows places an unreasonable demand for any one person especially when problems occur, and they will.

The board including myself, want and need your continued support, our hope is that on reflection you're able to find it in your heart forgiveness for any insult or question of the past and continue as a valued member of the team.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Morgan

Secretary, Director.

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07770971543



From: **Brendan Blake** <brendan@erwwen.co.uk>

Date: Sat, 9 Nov 2024 at 16:58

Subject: RE: EAGM reminder

To: Chris Morgan <coedcadw@gmail.com>

Cc: Jane Thomas <janevt123@icloud.com>, Clive Alistair Hooper <Cliveahooper@hotmail.com>, Simon Reeves <sj.reeves38@gmail.com>, Hugh McCormack <h.mccormack@ntlworld.com>

Chris,

You are the secretary - you do it! I am not just someone to be ordered about (as you usually do). I get peremptory instructions from you as if I was an employee. I get emails (like the recent one) asking me to fix emails going into spam - as if it were the fault of our server or me - it is actually entirely in the remit of the receiving email provider. You should remember this from the work we've already done, to ensure our email provider meets all the latest requirements - for example the fact I negotiated a unique IP address which has reduced email rejections etc. You continually imply our faults could be fixed by changing email provider when pretty well everything has been a user error.

Yet again, you don't draft an email, you leave me to do it.

I am still furious about you failing to consult me about your plans for the website. How would any one else copied feel if they were in my position? Noone has apologised.

For over three years I have done pretty well everything in the way of IT support for almost everything on the website, the shareholder communications, but you steam ahead without consulting me. There is little point being on an advisory committee that doesn't get to advise.

I have been pondering how to reply to Clive's note, and as I do so I realise I am just getting angrier and angrier. That's not good for me or indeed anyone. At the present time I am minded to withdraw from everything except helping Hugh with the Christmas newsletter and I will handle the shareholder emails and management until such time as you find a replacement.

Can you also please find someone to handle the Enhancing Pembrokeshire grant - see the recent email asking for a report. I have asked many times for action, but nothing has happened. There is about £9,000 at stake.

Best wishes,
Brendan

-----Original Message-----

From: Chris Morgan <coedcadw@gmail.com>

Sent: 09 November 2024 13:21

To: Brendan Blake <brendan@erwwen.co.uk>

Cc: Jane Thomas <janevt123@icloud.com>; Clive Alistair Hooper <Cliveahooper@hotmail.com>; Simon Reeves <sj.reeves38@gmail.com>; Hugh McCormack <h.mccormack@ntlworld.com>

Subject: EAGM reminder

Hi Brendan,

Can you send out a reminder for Tuesday at 7pm urging shareholders to join to make quorum.

Diolch

Chris.

Sent from my iPhone via coedcadw@gmail.com account. =

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Coed Cadw

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