

Brendan Blake

From: Brendan Blake <brendan@erwwen.co.uk>
Sent: 06 December 2024 09:14
To: 'secretary@siophavards.cymru'
Cc: 'Clive Hooper'; 'treasurer@siophavards.cymru'; 'Jane Thomas'
Subject: RE: Response to Brendan Blake re the appointment of a commercial web developer and email hosting.

Chris,

This is an attempt to intimidate and bully. You should be ashamed. It is full of lies. As I said before, I never refused to participate in the process of improving the website.

Yes – the existing website has needed updating for some time, but it has always been kept up to date as newsletters were issued etc. Maybe the banner didn't change – but some say that's good practice, others disagree. Yes – it, uses HTML, CSS, PHP and javascript – the languages of the web. Whats wrong about that? It is far faster than a wordpress site. The design was thrown together in about 10 minutes, several years ago, so of course that can be brought up to date. The site is fully responsive. And it was good enough to raise about £450,000 in shares from investors, which was the objective.

You have always had a down on the current server because you don't have the skills to diagnose problems, and put them down to the server. I repeat, all problems we have been able to diagnose have proved to be either user or network problems. You wrote an extremely officious note to our support person when you sent a file which could contain a virus and which was therefore rejected – please do not write again in this way.

You have further demonstrated your lack of internet skill in ways I go into in the document I sent out yesterday which I suspect that you haven't read, as I make some of the points you have made about the existing site.

I shall be phoning Clive.

Best wishes,
Brendan

From: secretary@siophavards.cymru <secretary@siophavards.cymru>
Sent: 06 December 2024 02:31
To: Brendan Blake <brendan@erwwen.co.uk>
Cc: Clive Hooper <chair@siophavards.cymru>; treasurer@siophavards.cymru; Jane Thomas <janewt123@icloud.com>
Subject: Response to Brendan Blake re the appointment of a commercial web developer and email hosting.

Hi Brendan,

You're right, you weren't part of the process of selection of the new developer given your original participation of the first design group and your feedback which resulted in the group disbanding plus your desire to withdrawal from the project on the basis it wasn't the way you'd prefer the work to be done nor prepared to allow hosting to be moved.

Whilst the SiopHavards.cymru website has proved to be a marvellous tool for shareholder attraction, data capture and shareholder processing, the feedback of those who have looked at it from a design and e-commerce tool perspective (potential candidates for the Click&Collect development work) were politely critical as to its outmoded design, dated and traditional look and presentation, which given the high reliance on html and scripting makes change both time consuming and costly. The

front screen has had the same images for the past 3 years and content was seen as both excessively verbose and difficult to consume quickly.

As you had withdrawn from the Website project you were therefore not aware of the diligent selection process that was made before selection of the new website developer, which will stand the scrutiny of responsible spend, which started with the unanimous agreement of the directors to proceed.

Domain Traffic and web presence:

Web traffic that has previously been attracted to SiopHavards will, via a simple front-page link, whisking customers seamlessly to Havards.wales to browse the products and place orders, hence no loss of traffic that was traditionally using the SiopHavards domain. This was detailed in my earlier note to you.

Fix IP address:

We needed this given our neighbours on the London hosting service had a poor reputation which tarnished the Havards email traffic, the poor neighbour reputation proven when we did eventually acquire a fixed IP, email transmissions to a recipient inbox and not into spam improved. Modern Print have worked to ensure the service we'll be on has "good neighbours" with excellent reputations. The risk of this problem of reputation and its associated challenges is therefore mitigated by their plan.

Betty's machine:

No, I don't recall making changes to that machine other than putting MS Outlook on which at the time I discussed with you as to the best way to do that. Nor have I ever seen Simon's PC or laptop. I do recall my suggestion to you to start afresh and rebuild the office PCs from scratch when you were available to start the diagnosis of the outages and problems at the local level, but that advice was ignored and rather than argue the point, since you were in charge of a complex problem, I stood back and gave you space.

Rota:

It's a shame regarding the rota your time spent arguing about the website development would have seen the rota operational, but I respect your allocation of your time to other projects and will find an alternative way forward. Our thanks for pointing us to a potential solution.

Costs: Your original work to establish a web presence has already been acknowledged, what we ask of you is to recognise the following:

- We're now a commercial company, responsible to shareholders and corporate standards of operation.
- IT and social media are critical to our daily operations, profitability and viability.
- Volunteers and staff are the most precious resource we have.

With these in mind we have implemented a policy of non-dependence on any single person and where inhouse 2nd person cover isn't available then the use of professional resources ideally volunteered or paid for if necessary.

Your continued campaign of shouts of wasted money is unfounded and is based primarily on you developing or leading the site development and/or retaining the hosting services centred in London.

So why not your way?

- The experience of depending on your availability and in your absence, attempting to work with a distant support group when the email, domain access, orders and commerce stopped and

has been intermittent for months, has demonstrated the need for local, responsive, and immediate help when problems occur.

- Development with a design house is contracted, with defined deliverables and timelines set. We need IT tools that are reliable and delivered on time.
 - The volunteer/staff rota, which might only take a couple of hours for you, the delay in its use is causing at times the shop to close due to lack of cover.
 - Producing the Clover analysis report, requested weeks ago of income by product is delaying the inventory teamwork and their design/layout of the shop.
 - These are examples of work asked of you and why we're now recognising that it's unreasonable to expect more from you when you are a volunteer with calls outside Havards for your time, hence the need to turn to commercial resources or other volunteer help and not be dependent on a single individual's availability.
- The cost to the business of the email and domain access failure has cost the business hundreds if not more this year alone, with reputational and resulting credit damage with major suppliers, not to mention the hours lost and stress to staff and volunteers working around the lack of IT tools. GDPR rules have been flexed to allow the use of personal email for critical correspondence during outage, which stop as soon as systems are restore, till the next time they fail.

When you count the costs, hours and stress of the IT problems experience this year, your approach of saving a few hundred pounds here or there, pales into insignificance. This is why we have chosen the route to delivering secure, reliable and locally supported email and the Click & Collect website development on-time, and why if questioned by a shareholder we can answer based on experience, it's commercially responsible to take this approach and financially prudent.

In all of this email we do not wish to under value the huge and significant contribution you have made to Havards, and indeed continue to do so. We're trying to respectfully answer the challenges you've made and help you understand why we have the need to place the key IT tools of email and development on a commercial footing, that is compatible with running a small yet vibrant community owned business in Newport.

Kind regards,

Chris Morgan

Secretary, Director.

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