Meeting of the General Purposes Committee

Monday 10 June 2024

Agenda Item 5.7

TO CONSIDER THE RE-ALLOCATION OF EARMARKED RESERVES FOR THE PURPOSE OF CREATING AN ONLINE EVENT TICKETING SYSTEM FOR THE CIVIC CENTRE EVENTS PROGRAMME

1.0   Background

1.1   A new initiative identified within the budget setting process for 2019/20 was affected by a number of factors, including the financial element of the build (i.e. access to the finance company to discuss the payment gateway by telephone!), the pandemic, staffing issues, and then funding.

1.2   With other more pressing priorities during the past two years to address within our buildings and grounds team, we had to place this project on hold. We're now ready to take this project forward but due to increasing costs, and the issues above, we were unable to set aside funding within the budget setting process for 2024/25.

1.3   The Marketing & Community Engagement Officer has set up Eventbrite for upcoming shows this year – Take That and ELO, as an interim online measure, but we wish to create a more robust online ticketing system on our Civic Centre website that can be used for a variety of events in the Civic Centre, moving forward – and adapts to various seating plans and designs.

1.4   The Civic Centre website is a wordpress site, and we have been liaising with web developers that assisted us with the Town Council website to carry out a piece of work to improve speeds on both sites, and price to install the event ticketing system. They can utilise software called Tickera (a word press event ticketing system) to establish this facility for us.

1.5   Understandably the option chosen will affect how much web development/design is required and this will affect the cost. The cost will depend ultimately on the payment gateway chosen as that is where the work is required. One of the obstacles in the past, was the fact that we wished to use the same payment gateway as our existing card payment machines (Worldpay) or Sage Pay, to assist the Assistant Town Clerk and RFO with the reconciliations of payments each month, with the bank statements. With Worldpay being so difficult to contact, we were unable to continue.

1.6   We have just changed from Worldpay to a new card payment machine, due to the increasing credit charges being received each month.

1.7   We have asked the Assistant Town Clerk & RFO to investigate the proposed payment gateway for this system – Stripe, which has been recommended by the web developers, as it is one of the recommended gateways with Tickera, and they have other customers using this.

2.0   Options for an online event ticketing system

2.1   The web developers have set out three options for us to consider:

Option A:

OPTION A			
Site	Requirement	Note	Cost
Uckfieldtc.gov.uk	Site Speed Improvements	make tweaks as per report suggestions	
civiccentreuckfield.com	Create dev site from the current site (requires SFTP or archive file)	-	
civiccentreuckfield.com	Install Tickera and configure	agreed Tickera is the best solution	
civiccentreuckfield.com	Install Barcode Reader and Seating Charts add-ons and configure both	agreed as still required	
civiccentreuckfield.com	Install Mailchimp Newsletter add-on and configure	agreed as still required	£3,230.00
civiccentreuckfield.com	Tickera email customisation - as per Tickera capabilities and limitations as set out in link (client to manage)	https://tickera.com/tickera-documentation/settings/e-mail/	
civiccentreuckfield.com	Testing on all the above	-	
civiccentreuckfield.com	OPTION A - payment gateway using Stripe or any of the already built in payment solutions (as per link)	https://tickera.com/tickera-documentation/settings/payment-gateways/	

Option B:

OPTION B			
Site	**Requirement**	**Note**	**Cost**
Uckfieldtc.gov.uk	Site Speed Improvements	make tweaks as per report suggestions	£9,215.00
civiccentreuckfield.com	Create dev site from the current site (requires SFTP or archive file)	-	
civiccentreuckfield.com	Install Tickera and configure	agreed Tickera is the best solution	
civiccentreuckfield.com	Install Barcode Reader and Seating Charts add-ons and configure both	agreed as still required	
civiccentreuckfield.com	Install Mailchimp Newsletter add-on and configure	agreed as still required	
civiccentreuckfield.com	Tickera email customisation - as per Tickera capabilities and limitations as set out in link (client to manage)	https://tickera.com/tickera-documentation/settings/e-mail/	
civiccentreuckfield.com	Testing on all the above	-	
civiccentreuckfield.com	OPTION B - bespoke development/programming work using API into clients SagePay (roughly 80+ hours!)	Timely & expensive but a bespoke hyper-focused payment gateway	

And they have thrown an Option C into the mix too, falling back onto the originally discussed WooCommerce.

The web developers don't really recommend using WooCommerce due to the storage and speed impact it may have on the site, but it does offer a somewhat happy medium in terms of price, so worth including for consideration.

Option C:

OPTION C			
Site	**Requirement**	**Note**	**Cost**
Uckfieldtc.gov.uk	Site Speed Improvements	make tweaks as per report suggestions	£5,510.00
civiccentreuckfield.com	Create dev site from the current site (requires SFTP or archive file)	-	
civiccentreuckfield.com	Install Tickera and configure	agreed Tickera is the best solution	
civiccentreuckfield.com	Install Barcode Reader and Seating Charts add-ons and configure both	agreed as still required	
civiccentreuckfield.com	Install Mailchimp Newsletter add-on and configure	agreed as still required	
civiccentreuckfield.com	Tickera email customisation - as per Tickera capabilities and limitations as set out in link (client to manage)	https://tickera.com/tickera-documentation/settings/e-mail/	
civiccentreuckfield.com	Testing on all the above	-	
civiccentreuckfield.com	OPTION C - payment gateway using WooCommerce plug in, Woocommerce integrates into SagePay	Stops the need for programming a bespoke gateway, but as advised Woo will use huge storage and bandwidth as a result, to the sites detriment.	

3.0   Re-allocation of earmarked reserves

3.1   In earmarked reserves, there are three pots of funding that we could re-allocate for this purpose:
£3,191.50 is remaining after financial year end within the existing 'booking system' earmarked reserve;
£1,507.00 is remaining after financial year end within the existing 'professional fees' earmarked reserve, and;
£1,625.00 is remaining after financial year end within the existing 'data protection' earmarked reserve.

4.0   Recommendations

4.1   Members are asked to consider the options available, and the potential earmarked reserves that could be utilised and re-allocated for the purpose of creating an online event ticketing system for the Civic Centre's events programme on the Civic Centre website.

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