Parish Online

At last, affordable support for Town and Parish Councils

The challenge

Parish Councils are vitally important as they have direct contact with members of the communities they serve. Councillors usually live and work in the area and care about the day to day issues that often affect people's quality of life.

Parish Councils look after their local communities by representing their interests to government and by managing a myriad of local facilities such as bus shelters, allotments, war memorials, cemeteries and litter bins. Parish Councils also create and maintain a Parish Plan.
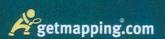
As Parish Councils take over more responsibilities, there is a growing need to communicate more effectively both with citizens and local government but until now most have had to manage without any dedicated support tools. For example Parish Councils do not generally have access to up-to-date digital maps of their parishes, or aerial photography or the means to annotate and publish maps for their Parish Plans or other initiatives. They cannot email maps, plans or photographs to the people who live in the Parish to keep them informed and to seek their advice. As a result it is becoming increasingly important for Parish Councils to be armed with the type of computer-based management tools which are now well established within District and Unitary Councils.
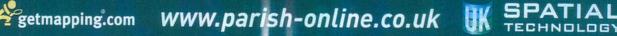
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Parish Online is a new service launched in 2010 which helps Parish Councils to manage their business and communicate with their citizens more effectively through the use of digital maps and aerial photography. As simple to use as Google Maps, Parish Online simply requires a computer with a broadband internet connection. The service is accessed through a web browser so there is nothing to install, it can even be accessed from home.

Parish Online will provide the following functions and benefits:

- On line access to up-to-date Ordnance Survey maps of the Parish: Parish Online always uses the latest maps which are maintained centrally.

- Online access to detailed Aerial Photography of the Parish: Detailed aerial photography enables users to see exactly what is on the ground and can help Parish Councils to formulate and communicate their plans more effectively.

- Facilities to mark-up and store maps with parish information: This could range from the position of litter bins, the extent of proposed developments or temporary traffic arrangements. The ability to annotate maps is a powerful management tool for Parish Councils. These annotations can form the basis of the Parish Plan.

- The ability to access up-to-date address lists from the local District or Unitary Authority. Available for direct, targeted mailing and for any other functions where addresses are required.

- The ability for a District or Unitary Authority to add their information so that all their parishes can access it, items such as TPOs, Conservation Areas, SSSIs etc..

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- Facilities for visually analysing information collected by the Parish such as the frequency and location of trouble spots, fly tipping etc.. Knowing where the problems are helps councillors to manage more effectively.

- Facilities to allow members of the public to view information and comment on the Parish web site. Communicating with Parish members on line helps to keep the community involved in local affairs.

Parish Online is a secure web-based service which is accessed via the internet using a password. Once a council has subscribed there is no need to get maps from any other source.

Additional features are already being planned.

What does it cost?

Parish Online has been designed to be affordable. There is a basic annual fee of £10 per annum per 1,000 head of population (minimum £10) plus an initial set up fee of £20. This gives each Parish access to all the functionality of the Parish Online service for annotated maps.

Most Local Authorities will pay the basic fee for their parishes since Parish Online relieves them from their obligation to provide parishes with OS maps.

To find out more:

Go to **www.parish-online.co.uk**, e-mail **support@parish-online.co.uk** or phone sales support on **+44 (0)1252 849494**

Parish Online is a service hosted by Getmapping plc and powered by ISM MapView from Spatial Technology(UK) Ltd

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