

Why a good website is essential.

Your club website is effectively your shop window.

Your primary target audience is therefore potential members. This is very important to remember, as it's easy to fall into the trap of wanting to show stuff that members will be interested in, such as handover photos, the president's picnic etc. Yes, you can show these things, but material to attract potential new member always comes first.

Staying with the analogy of a shop window, if a potential customer is looking in the shop window, he/she will want to see things that interest them straight away, and hopefully be drawn into the shop. They don't want to have to strain their eyes to see stuff at the back of the shop through the window, they want to see it right in their face. Therefore, the landing page (the main page) should have things of interest that makes them want to browse.

Hopefully they'll be sufficiently interested to go into the shop to browse further. That's where they'll be able to see charities you support, events you've participated in such as Technology Tournament, KidsOut etc, and the type of members you have – so they may browse a charter dinner for example, or a club outing.

Let's assume, the potential new member has been wowed by the shop window display and enjoyed their browse round the shop, and wants to find out more or come to a meeting to see you in action. They'll look at where and when you meet, things happening soon and then the future meetings and events to see if there is a guest speaker that especially interests them or a club social that appeals. It is therefore **extremely important** that the calendar is kept fully up to date. If they see no events, they'll be disappointed, walk out of the shop and go elsewhere, for example Lions Club, The Masons, Soroptimists, U3A etc. You have just lost a customer.

The key things to remember are:

1. Websites target audience is potential members.
2. It should be structured in a way to create interest.
3. The diary of events should be kept up to date.

There is a standard Rotary template that you can use for an annual fee of £50, however if you are not tech-savvy, it can be difficult to set up. You can also create your own, and I find Wix is the most intuitive. You can buy in expertise, either from a web developer or perhaps a student at a local college looking for a project.