

Ptarmigan Mountaineering Club - AGM 2020 Webmaster's report

As members will be aware, we have fully revised our website, using WordPress software which is used by 80% of the world's websites. We had excellent unpaid expert help from Angus Miller, who handles the websites for his own business, Geowalks (www.geowalks.co.uk) and for the Edinburgh Geological Society, of which our former secretary Christine Thompson is a past president. Our website and domain host continues to be Easyspace. Our package now includes secure hosting, as the absence of this would mark us down in Google rankings and lead to warnings before opening.

The benefits are

- adaptation to being viewed on smartphones, tablets or desktops
- much easier editing
- easier notification of newsletters to members (if we learn how)
- simpler, faster access to information

Following the website change from February, John Townshend handed over the webmaster role to Tim Featherstone, whose first task was to add the note about the Covid-19 pandemic stopping our activities. He has subsequently had a couple of newsletters to add, plus the documents for this year's online AGM.

Our Google ranking for search terms "Edinburgh" and "hillwalking" has improved from seventh to third. We inadvertently lost the verification code enabling Google to monitor search statistics. This has now been reinstated and the Google Search Console has been set up to report these statistics.

These stats show that there has been a marked 'Covid effect' on the website traffic over the last year. In the 3 months prior to lockdown we were getting an average 90 clicks through to our site from a Google search per month. In the 2 months after lockdown this reduced to about 21 clicks/month. Since then it gradually built up to 85 clicks/month in September but has fallen back to less than 60 clicks/month in the last 2 months.

Over the last year searches to our site from mobiles have overtaken searches from desktops (mobiles 48%, desktops 46%, tablets 6%). This could in part be a result of the improved mobile-friendliness of the new website.

John Townshend
Tim Featherstone
November 2020