



Charity Website (Re)Design Checklist

**Helping you to fast-track your way to a great,
purposeful new charity website.**



Hello and Welcome!

I've designed this checklist to help guide you towards creating a solid foundation for your new website. If you follow along with this list – and complete the activities as you go – your charity website should be better prepared for spreading your message, connecting with your audience and evolving as your organisation does.

I hope you find this list useful and if you have questions then feel free to get in touch.

Thank you for doing your part to make the world a better place.

- Brett

brett@worthitmedia.co.uk



Getting Set Up The Right Way

In this section we'll cover what you need to get started. These tools and services are the same ones that I use and recommend daily to my clients, all tried and tested.

You may not be used to some of the terminology used but don't worry! I'll explain what each thing is and why it's important.

Most small charity organisation will need -

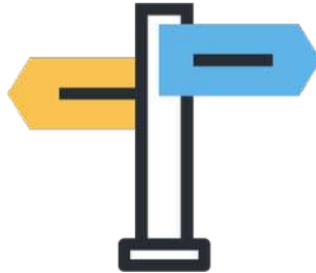
SET UP CHECKLIST

- 1. A domain name
- 2. A hosting provider
- 3. A content management system
- 4. A website framework
- 5. An email provider

Domain Name

What is it?

A domain name is just like a street address, it is a unique identifier that can help people find you.



Why do I need it?

Imagine that you didn't have a house number, street name or anything else to identify your home, how would people find you? Just like properties websites need some way of being found and identified, therefore every website needs to have a unique domain name.

How do I get it?

There are many domain name providers out there who can help you get set up with a domain name and for the most part they all offer the same service. Most .com/.co.uk/.org domain names should cost around £10 (\$15) per year.

Pro tip!

Your domain name should be simple to write and simple to say. Imagine that you are meeting someone for the first time and you get talking about your charities website. At some point they will likely ask for the website address (your domain name) so that they can find out more about your organisation. So ask yourself, is your website easy to say out loud?

Here's an example...

Let's say your charity has a rather long name, something like, The International Teddy Bear Welfare Society. Now you could go ahead and create a domain name for your organisation and it'd look like this -



That's a good start, but it's awfully long, don't you think? When a domain is this long it is easy for people to make mistakes when typing it and they may never reach your website! It'd also be difficult to fit it on a business card so you'd have to use tiny text or put it on two lines. Instead, why not make consider making it shorter and more concise, like this:



Your branding remains in tact, you can say it (and share it) much easier and everyone who sees it knows right away where it will take them.

Alternatively, you could also use the first letter of each word, but again you should consider how easy it is to say and type...



... is much easier to say and remember than...



Easier to say, easier to type and easier to remember. Keep these three things in mind when you are registering your domain name and you'll have taken a great step towards a memorable website address.

Hosting Provider

What is it?

If your domain name is your street address then your hosting provider is the plot of land where your virtual home/shop/office will be built. Essentially, website hosting is a block of space on a server reserved for your website files.



Why do I need it?

Without a plot of land to build on you can't build a house, and without a place for your website files to live then you can't build a website.

How do I get it?

Just like real land how much you need depends on what you want to build on it. Hosting providers offer a variety of options for hosting your website depending on your needs. Generally you're going to want to opt for Managed Wordpress Hosting that is specifically set up for Wordpress sites (if that's the direction you want to go in). Some well-known hosting providers are Go Daddy (user-friendly and on a budget) and Flywheel (full featured).

Go Daddy - <https://uk.godaddy.com/hosting/wordpress-hosting>

Flywheel - <https://getflywheel.com/pricing/>

Content Management System

What is it?

So you've got your street address and your plot of land, what's next? Now's the time to create the foundations. A Content Management System (CMS) lays the groundwork for what will come later. It's software that allows you to create and modify digital content; in our case, a website. One of the most well-known CMS is Wordpress and it powers over 25% of all websites on the internet!



Why do I need it?

It used to be that when you wanted to create a website that you would learn or hire someone to write code from scratch. There would be nothing until there was something and then eventually you'd have a website. With the introduction of CMS like Wordpress websites are now built faster, more robustly and with better support. Your foundations are constantly updated so that they are the best they can be.

How do I get it?

Wordpress is free software available to everyone — how great is that? What's even better though is that many hosting providers offer an easy way to get Wordpress installed and set up for you. However, if you're not technically minded then it can be a little overwhelming. Now is the time that you may need to get some assistance.

Pro tip!

Both Go Daddy Managed Wordpress and Flywheel hosting offer 1 click Wordpress install. The process is user-friendly, simple and takes just a few minutes.

Website Framework

What is it?

The Foundations are set, Wordpress is installed and you're excited to get your website built. The final step in the build process is to choose a website framework. A website framework (often called a Wordpress Theme) can fast-track your way to a great looking website. Instead of building your home brick by brick instead you get to choose a pre-fabricated building to start from. This is essentially what a Wordpress Theme is: a pre-built website that you can modify to suit your needs.



Why do I need it?

Out of the box Wordpress comes with many great features, but it looks identical to every other default Wordpress website. A Wordpress theme allows you to modify your site, give it character and give it a voice — the voice of you or your organisation. But, not all Wordpress themes are created equal...

The Divi premium Wordpress theme acts as more of a framework and allows you to heavily customise the look and feel of your website. What's more, Divi comes with hundreds of clever, thoughtful features such as simple editing, a drag-and-drop page builder and more. I exclusively build websites with Divi because my clients love how easy and intuitive it is.

How do I get it?

Divi is a premium theme from Elegant Themes and costs 89USD per year or 248USD for lifetime access.



Website Design For Charities & Non-Profits

Every charity website that I build uses the Divi premium theme. You'll get all of the benefits of the world's most popular Wordpress theme without having to purchase your own license.

Custom Divi websites start from just £699.

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You're Almost There!

If you are anything like me by this point you are positively pumped-up and ready to create the world's best charity website... but not so fast!

So far we've discussed 4 of the 5 important steps of setting up your website but there is one last step before we can start the next section: setting up an email address.

So, without further delay, let's get to it...

Email Provider

What is it?

I'm sure email needs no introduction so let's talk specifically about email for your charity.

[And by the way, continuing the house analogy: your email address is — as you may have guessed — your post box]



Why do I need it?

Your charity email can help keep your important correspondence separate from your personal email whilst making your organisation look more professional. If you are lucky enough to have a not-so-embarrassing personal email address (unlike me!) then this may seem less of an issue, but it's more reassuring to have an email address coming from your domain name. Here's an example:

brett@tbw.org or xXskaterPunk666Xx@yahoo.com

One of these email addresses looks professional, the other, well... not so much.

How do I get it?

One of the easiest ways to get set up with an email address is through Google. Do a quick search for 'G Suite' and you'll be able to set up a new, custom email address with your own domain name for just a few pounds per month. I personally recommend G Suite because getting your email address set up on different devices and apps (like your iPhone or Outlook) is really simple.

Of course there are many more email providers out there but some of them may not be so easy to set up. As always it helps to have a personal tech guy you can rely on to provide assistance if you need it.

Pro tip!

Where possible you'll want to get an IMAP email account and not a POP account. The difference? IMAP will stay updated on all devices, so if you want to delete a message on your phone it'll also be deleted on your desktop mail app too. With POP you'd have to delete it from every app separately because the changes do not sync.



Getting Started The Right Way

In this section our checklist becomes a series of questions to be answered.

The purpose of these questions are to ensure that you get all of the important features and functions right from the start. By thinking about them now before your website (re)design you can be sure that you won't miss anything later on.

Answer the following questions -

- 1. Who are the most important audiences for your site?
(public, government, corporates, etc)**

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- 2. What do you want people to think, feel and do when
visiting your website?**

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**3. How will the success of your new website be judged?
(More donations, awareness, email signups, etc)**

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**4. Who is responsible for signing off and accepting the
website design?**

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**5. How will content be added to the site and by who?
(Blog posts, Facebook updates, campaign info, etc)**

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6. What is the technical knowledge of these users?

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7. Who will be the main person in charge of maintaining the site?

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8. Do you have an ongoing budget for maintenance/marketing?

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9. What keywords and phrases would you like to rank highly on Google for?

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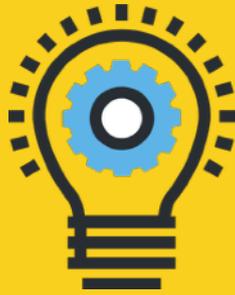
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Need A Hand To Manage Your Website?

My Website Care Plan service helps you keep your content updated, your website secure and provides a helping hand when you need it. I take care of your website so you can focus on your cause.

**Website Care Plans
start from just £30 per month.**

LEARN MORE

10. Do you have a presence on Facebook/Twitter that you would like to feature on your website?

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11. Which 3 other websites do you like the look or functionality of? Why do you like them?

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12. Do you have copy (text) written for your website already? If not, who will do it and when?

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**13. What pages would you ideally like on your website?
How would the navigation menu look?**

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14. What do you like or think works well on your current website? (If you have one)

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15. What are the limitations or things you don't like about your current site? (If you have one)

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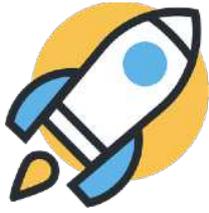
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Getting Ready The Right Way

The setup is done, the questions are answered, and – with any luck – you should be feeling more organised & aware of how to create a strong foundation for your charity website.

Before you get to designing your new website theres just a couple more things for us to cover. Consider this the icing on our fast-track website cake or our final pre-flight checklist.

Here are the essentials you will need before (re)designing your charity website -

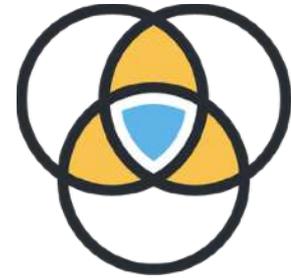
PRE-DESIGN CHECKLIST

- 1. Charity website branding.
- 2. Strong, relevant imagery.
- 3. A donation system (JustGiving, Paypal, etc).
- 4. A email newsletter service.
- 5. Social media profiles.

Charity Website Branding

What is it?

Branding is what makes your charity recognisable. The most common form of branding is a logo but other forms include specific colours, images, slogans, mascots and even your style of writing (are you chatty and fun or direct and serious?)



Why do I need it?

Branding unifies all of your organisations elements together and makes you look professional, it also helps to build trust. If your website, Facebook page and Twitter profile all have different logos and colours it doesn't look good, but even worse: it makes you look unprofessional and untrustworthy. Appearances matter, which is why many companies will spend huge sums of money to get their branding right.

The right brand cannot only build trust but can also help rally people behind your cause. Think about a household name like Nike, what's their slogan?

I bet you knew it right away, am I right?

'Just do it' is an incredible piece of branding. It tells you something about Nike as a company but also the people who associate themselves with the brand. They are fearless, active and they 'just do it'. Now think about the Nike logo... it's instantly recognisable. Now think about your own organisation and what your branding says about you. At the very least you should have a logo that is professional and high quality (blurry/fuzzy logos are a great way to look unprofessional).

How do I get it?

While branding can cost a lot of money it doesn't have to. The best branding is usually simple but effective — again, think about the Nike logo. Aim to have a simple logo professionally designed and have 2-3 brand colours. Typically you should also have a document that outlines your brand guidelines and details how you should and should not use all of the elements that make up your brand.

Your brand guidelines will tell you the exact shade of colours to use and may even include things like logo variations for social media or fonts that you should be using.

As part of my charity website design service I provide a simple brand guidelines document for you, but if you are shopping around then you may find a suitable freelancer online.

Pro tip!

Creating an iconic brand doesn't happen overnight so don't worry if nobody recognises your logo right away. As your organisation grows and becomes more well known so will your branding. As long as your branding looks professional you should be able to set-it-and-forget-it. Just be sure that whenever new marketing materials are made that you follow your brand guidelines.

Strong, Relevant Imagery

What is it?

Having the right images on your website can make all the difference.



Why do I need it?

High quality, professional photography can transform your website and make it look much more professional (and thereby increase trust). As a charity you want to take every opportunity to build trust with your community because more trust means more support and, in turn, more donations. There are two kinds of images that you will want:

- 1. Action Shots** - These are shots of you and your organisation doing things for your cause. If you are donating clothing to the homeless then there should be photos of the clothing bagged up and perhaps the team handing the clothes over to a shelter, etc.
- 2. Success Stories** - Photos of success stories are some of the strongest imagery you will find. Not only will they compel your community to get involved but they will also show supporters how they have made a difference. Whether it is smiling faces after a funded operation or a before/after photo of a house struck by a natural disaster these are important.

In addition to these images you will also want to collect images that will help reinforce your brand. These images can be purchased from a stock

library if they are a better quality and should be used for things like showing medical equipment or showing locations.

How do I get it?

These days most modern smartphones can take brilliant photos and this may be enough for your website. However, there's no replacement for a professional photographer to help take your images to another level. Try reaching out to local photographers in your area to see if they work with charities. Many photographers have special rates for non-profits and some may even provide pro-bono work for a worthy cause.

Pro tip!

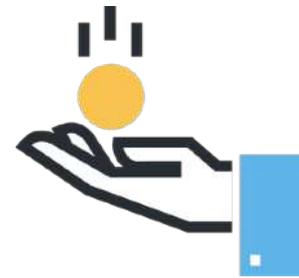
Use genuine images! Using stock images for certain aspects of your website is fine, but be sure that you are being genuine. For example, a charity that provides free medical care could use stock images of medical equipment in an appeal but shouldn't use a stock image to show the equipment bought with donation money. Show proof that your supporters are helping with real imagery even if it isn't as good as stock photos.

Try to use only great quality photos on your website, but if your photos aren't great quality there are still other ways to use them. Social media and email newsletters are an ideal place to share photos which show important events even if they aren't professional quality. People will be much more forgiving to see images taken with a smartphone in a Facebook post that shows your team working for the cause. If the quality isn't great but the story behind the images is then put them out there!

A Donation System

What is it?

A donation system can help charities create appeals and collect money from supporters quickly and easily, but there are many to choose from depending on your needs.



Why do I need it?

Many charities are made possible by the kindness of people who donate to the cause. Collecting donations is a great way for people to get involved with the charity and for the charity to continue supporting those in need. An online donation system aims to make it easy, fast and convenient for people to give charities money. Many donation systems can be integrated directly into your website whereas others may be separate from your site.

How do I get it?

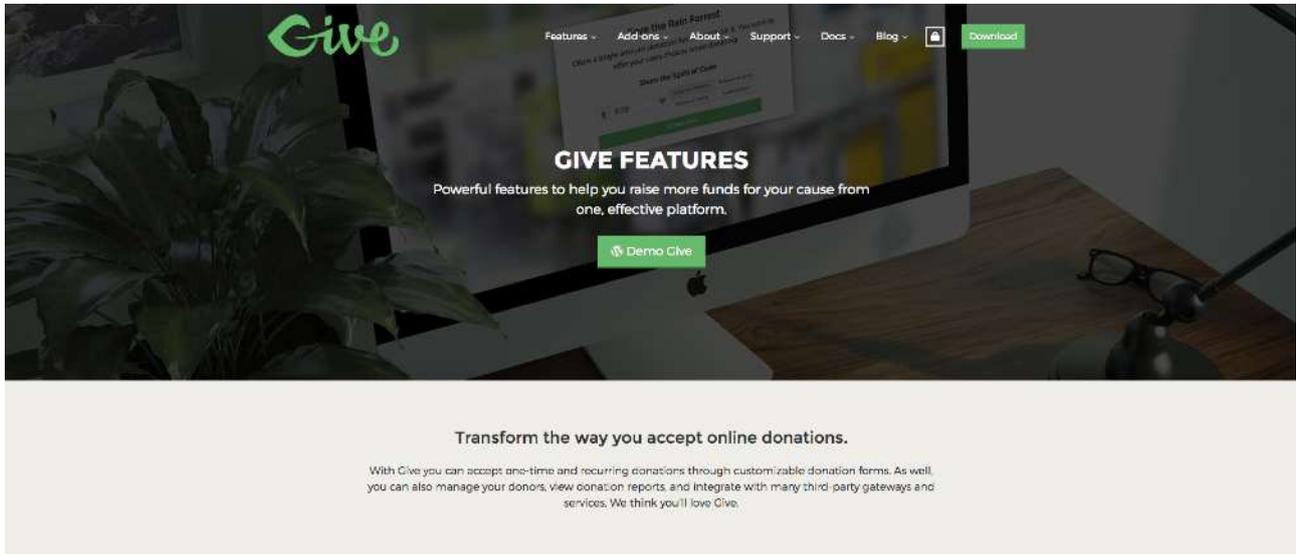
There are many different donation systems available and the right one for your charity depends on your needs. You'll have to do a little bit of research to find the one that suits you best but here is a short list to help you get started -

Online Fundraising (Off-Site Options) -

- [justgiving.com](https://www.justgiving.com)
- [gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com)
- [youcaring.com](https://www.youcaring.com)
- [virginmoneygiving.com](https://www.virginmoneygiving.com)
- [givey.com](https://www.givey.com)
- [crowdrise.com](https://www.crowdrise.com)

Donation Plugins (Built In To Your Wordpress Website) -

- givewp.com
- wpcharitable.com
- <http://zatzlabs.com/project/seamless-donations/>



Slick Donation Forms

Build custom donation forms inside WordPress



Pro tip!

A good website designer should be able to help you integrate or link your donation system with your website. A great website designer however will go a step further and ensure your donation system is located in the best possible place on your website to encourage people to offer support.

An Email Newsletter Service

What is it?

Newsletter mailing lists are now part of our everyday lives and we each sign up to a variety of newsletters based on our interests. Signing up takes seconds so it is a quick and convenient way to stay in the loop, whether it's to be first to know about a flash sale or to stay up to date with the latest news.



Why do I need it?

An email newsletter isn't just for online stores, it can be an incredible asset for your charity too. Use your email list to quickly raise awareness of new issues, fundraising, latest news and sharing success stories. However you decide to use it, building your email list should be a priority.

How do I get it?

There are many newsletter services available but one that I recommend for ease of use is Mailchimp. It has a very generous free version which could offer all you need to get started and comes with loads of great features.



Pro tip!

Email newsletters can sometimes feel intrusive or annoying so make sure that you are considerate about when you send them, how many you are sending and what information you are sharing. New appeals and fundraisers should be a priority as should success stories and important news. Ask yourself if the content of your newsletter will inspire someone to take action, provide a reason for them to celebrate or be informative.

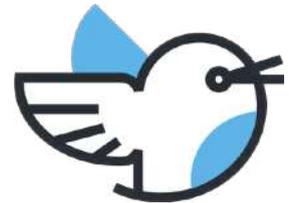


Email addresses are a form of currency and people are often protective of them. With so much spam and mail coming into our inbox each day you will need to entice people with a reason to sign up. The usual 'sign up to receive the latest news' call to action won't always work and it is better if you can offer something in exchange. Maybe you have an insightful research paper or a free fund-raising pack? Whatever it is you choose to offer make sure that your target audience is interested in it and that it is relevant to your mission.

Social Media Profiles

What is it?

The final piece of your pre-launch puzzle is your social media profiles. These are places where people can find out more and engage with you away from your website. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest are all social media platforms where you can create a profile for free.



Why do I need it?

Websites are a wonderful way to get discovered, share your mission, attract supporters and generate donations... but they require people to take action to access them. On the other hand, each day millions of people are using social media and you can use this attention to your advantage. By sharing your own stories, photos and videos you can keep your charity in their mind and develop stronger relationships with your supporters.

How do I get it?

All of the main social media platforms are free to join and which ones you are active on depends on the kinds of content you'd like to create (and the audience it is created for). Your charity should at least have its own Facebook Page (not profile) and you can experiment with others such as Instagram or Snapchat.

Pro tip!

Many social media platforms are now 'pay to play' meaning that your content will only be seen by a small number of people unless you pay to extend the reach. Regardless, it's still worth investing some time to build up your social networks as people do check them from time to time.



Website Design For Charities & Non-Profits

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About Brett

Brett is an independent web designer that aims to provide affordable website design and care plans to charitable organisations.

Find out more at:

worthitmedia.co.uk/about