



## **U3ANewarkUkulele.co.uk 2019/20 – Webmaster's Report**

The website was first launched way back in September 2013.

The aim of the site at that early stage was simply to offer consistency with the song sheets we were using. Up to that point we were arriving at our sessions with a range of different song sheets, differing not only in lyrics, but also in key and format. The website was an attempt to get consensus as to what we were actually playing.

Since then it has developed not only as the definitive account of what the group plays, but also as the group's primary means of communication. I can only cite Chris Connell's fulsome account of the website by saying the thing is a Frankenstein, and it now has a brain\* and a will of its own. It's now doing far more than I ever imagined it would, and the amount of use it gets testifies to its utility to the group.

In the last year my priorities have been to ensure the website complies with the relevant legislation with respect to data protection and securing the site against malicious agents. This has led me to remove certain features like automatic registration, username and password changing pages. These are now all processed manually. Fortunately, the group is small, and this is not a pain.

I am grateful as always to Jeff for continually testing the operational boundaries of the website. This is sincerely meant. Jeff, more than most, experiments with features and ideas which test the site to its limits and exposes weaknesses in the coding.

The issues for me are:-

1. I need to say that any ideas for developing the website any further, while I may consider it, will depend on my available time together with my skills.
2. My priority is to future proof the website. At the moment the site is entirely dependent on my management, and although the suite of programs and features has become comprehensive over the last 6 and a half years, there are still times when I have to use file transfer protocols to amend stuff of the website's server directly. My aim over the next year or two is to eliminate the need for that, so if necessary, somebody can take over as webmaster.
3. Following on from this we will need to consider the way the website is funded. At present I am billed for domain name fees and hosting charges, and I invoice U3A Newark to cover these charges (last year it was £61.45). Some time in the next year I would like to arrange

for Freeola (The ISP who hosts our website) to transfer the Domain name and the hosting contract to U3A Newark, and to bill them directly.

Finally, I need to remind the group that most of the songs in our database are in current copyright. The duration of copyright varies dramatically about the planet, but at present it is 70 years in the USA and Fifty years in the UK. I realize as I write that this is a simplistic account of copyright, and that copyright law is far from simple.

We cannot rely on just assume that because everybody else seems to store catalogues of other people's songs, publish them on the Internet and get away with it, we will.

What we do is rely on ***fair dealing***, a technical term which you can more or less paraphrase as: -

*"We are not stealing your intellectual property; we are just borrowing it for our private study. We are not passing it off as our own creation, and we will take care to acknowledge clearly who has written it."*

If we are ever challenged on breach of copyright it is vital that we can establish ***fair dealing***, which is why it is essential that the author's names rather than the performing artist's name is on the song sheet. This is a serious issue. A few years back an agent contacted me with a demand for a three-figure sum for a copyright fee for a cartoon published on the website. I persuaded them to waive this fee on the basis that we are a registered charity. It worked on this occasion, but there is no guarantee that it will again.

As always, it's been fun

Andy

19-1-2020