

Finding a Home

A number of clubs already on-line seem to be stuck in a corner of a site belonging to somebody else - a member's firm, a friend's site, whatever. They have a web address that may be very long to type in and/or bear no clues that it's anything to do with a locality or Lionism, such as

"<http://freewind.legend.co.uk/~abje1/shiple.html>" or "<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Bluffs/1716/>"

And changing the site content may involve the delay and hassle of going through a middle-man instead of a couple of minutes at your own computer.

Why do it? There are plenty of Internet Service Providers who include some web space in the package, often at no extra cost. So get your own home. Pick a name that will look OK in print, say on your letterhead. Check out how some of the free ISPs would format your site address. Here are a few examples:

Freeserve	http://www.anytown-lions.fsnet.co.uk
Virgin	http://freespace.virginnet.co.uk/anytown.lions
Tesco	http://homepages.tesco.net/anytown.lions
BT	http://www.btinternet.com/~anytown-lions

Then pick up a CD or visit the ISPs web site and register an account. If you or your kids have already got a home account, get another, there's no law against it.

If you really want your own name like www.anytown-lions.co.uk, the cheapest way is to register a domain (*the name you pick*) with somebody like **Easily** or **Free Parking** who will automatically re-direct browsers to your free site with the 'orrible name, and give you an e-mail address such as Secretary@anytown-lions.co.uk. Prices start at around £5 per year, and it's yours for life (*providing you keep up on the rent*) even if you change ISP.

Next stage up is to pay for hosting. Then you're not relying on one member to keep a free site alive by regularly logging on via the account. Any member with the password can look after the site. If the member leaves, someone else can take over without too much trouble. There are several other advantages once you've learned a bit about the programming side, and better statistics about where your visitors are from and which pages they visited. Hosts like **34SP.com** charge a modest £15 per year, and will also handle the registration and upkeep of your chosen domain name.

Read the small print carefully. Check what's included in the price – you need name (*domain*) registration, web forwarding to your own ISP and e-mail forwarding – and what will you pay to renew? Will you have to carry adverts? Is the service fast and reliable? You can find user comments on some newsgroups and forums.

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