

— FREE GUIDE FOR JERSEY BUSINESSES

How to get your website and .je domain back from an old web designer

Designers retire, move on or stop answering. If they hold your domain and logins, you can still get them back: the steps in order, and how the .je registry handles disputes.

DOMAINS & OWNERSHIP

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By Josh, Jersey Web · Updated 10 October 2026 · Read it online: jerseyweb.je/guides/get-your-website-and-je-domain-back/

It happens more than people admit. A designer built the site years ago, registered the domain for you, kept the passwords, and now does not reply. The site still runs, until the day the domain expires or something breaks and nobody can get in. We checked the steps below against the .je registry's own rules in September 2026.

If your website or email has already stopped working, start with our [checklist of what to check first](#).

This is practical guidance, not legal advice. If a dispute gets serious, a lawyer is worth the fee.

1. Find out who holds the domain

.je and .gg domains are run by the [Channel Isles registry](#), and you can look any domain up with its [WHOIS search](#). The record shows the registrar (the company it was bought through) and the registrant organisation, if one was entered. Personal details are redacted.

Two things to check. First, the **registrar**: that is who you contact. If it says "Direct", the domain is held with the registry itself. Second, the **registrant**: if it shows your designer's business rather than yours, that is the real problem to fix, because the registrant is the legal holder.

2. Know what the rules say

The registry's [registration agreement](#) says an agent registering a domain for a customer should normally do it in the customer's name. Its [good-practice rules](#) add that registrars register in the customer's name except in exceptional cases with the customer's informed consent, and must never change the registrant without the registrant's explicit instruction. If your designer registered your business name to themselves, that cuts against how the registry expects things to work, and it helps to know that before the conversation.

3. Ask, in writing, for three things

- ✓ **The registrant changed to your business**, through the registrar's own process.
- ✓ **The authorisation code** for the domain, so you can move it to a registrar of your choice.
- ✓ **Every login**: hosting, DNS, email, the website's admin, and any paid plugins or themes.

Most handovers end here. Keep it friendly and specific, give a date, and keep a copy of what you sent.

4. Moving the domain to a new registrar

The [transfer](#) is started by the registrar you are moving to, using the authorisation code. If the domain is held direct with the registry, the code is in the my.channelisles.net account. If a registrar blocks a move for an unreasonable time and you have been through its complaints process, the registry will make the transfer itself for a **£10** admin fee.

5. If they will not answer or will not hand it over

- ✓ The registry can ask for proof of identity or authority, such as a signed letter, ID or company records, when control of a domain is in question. Gather yours before you contact them.
- ✓ You can ask the registry for the registrant's details under its disclosure policy, if the WHOIS record does not show them.
- ✓ The registry's [dispute resolution service](#) starts with **free mediation** by registry staff. If that fails, a formal complaint costs **£900** and goes to an independent adjudicator, who looks at whether you have rights in the name and whether the holder has a legitimate interest or acted in bad faith. Whether your case fits is for them to decide, but mediation costs nothing to try.

6. Get the rest of the website back

The domain is the key, but a website is several things held in several places. Once you have access, work through this list before you change anything:

- ✓ Hosting control panel login, in your name.
- ✓ The DNS records, exported, so nothing is lost if you move.
- ✓ Email: who controls the mail records and the mailboxes.
- ✓ An admin account on the website in your name, not a shared one.
- ✓ A full backup of the files and the database, kept somewhere you control.
- ✓ Licence keys for paid plugins or themes, and who renews the security certificate.
- ✓ Then change every password and turn on two-factor sign-in.

How to stop it happening again

Keep the domain registered to your business, in a registrar account you can log into yourself. A .je costs £49 a year direct from the registry, so there is no saving in letting someone else hold it. Ask any designer, including us, to confirm in writing that the domain and content are yours. We register domains in our clients' names as standard, and our [.je or .co.uk guide](#) covers choosing one.

Moving your site somewhere you control?

We build Jersey business websites with the domain registered in your name, hosting from £20 a month and no long contract.

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