Monthly maintenance checklist

A one-page monthly routine for a WordPress site: backups tested, updates in a safe order, renewals, uptime, Search Console, forms and security checks.

Check off each item as you go. Keep a printed copy somewhere other than your computer.

BACKUPS FIRST

- [ ] Last night's backup finished and is stored off the server. Note date and size.
- [ ] Download a recent backup: the archive opens and the SQL file is complete.
- [ ] Quarterly: restore a backup to staging and test key pages and forms.
- [ ] Take an on-demand backup right before this session's updates.

UPDATES, IN ORDER

- [ ] List pending updates in Dashboard, Updates.
- [ ] Read changelogs for builders, WooCommerce, gateways and major versions first.
- [ ] Update core, then risky plugins one by one, then the rest, then the theme.
- [ ] Clear page cache, server cache, CDN and builder CSS after updating.
- [ ] Check PHP version in Site Health. Plan an upgrade if it is near end of life.

TEST WHAT EARNS MONEY

- [ ] Load the home page and two key pages privately, on phone and desktop.
- [ ] Submit every main form. Confirm the email arrives and the entry is stored.
- [ ] Shop: add to cart, reach checkout, place a test order in test mode if possible.
- [ ] Check the browser console and the PHP error log for new errors.

HEALTH AND VISIBILITY

- [ ] Uptime monitor: review downtime and confirm alerts reach a real person.
- [ ] Search Console: Pages, Security Issues, Manual Actions and unknown new owners.
- [ ] Site Health: fix new critical items (loopback, REST API, scheduled events).

SECURITY AND RENEWALS

- [ ] Review admins: remove ex-staff, contractors and unexplained accounts.
- [ ] 2FA is on for every admin, and the security plugin or firewall is updating.
- [ ] Run a malware scan and wp core verify-checksums.
- [ ] Renewals register: what renews in the next 60 days, with reminders 60 and 14 days before.
- [ ] Auto-renew is on and the card on file is valid for anything due soon.
- [ ] Log what you did, versions changed and anything that broke, with the date.