

## Website Accessibility

An EU directive has brought in new regulations mean that public sector websites and mobile 'apps' will need to be accessible to all users, especially those with disabilities.

The Parish Council is required to publish an accessibility statement on the website. This statement must include:

- a list of any parts of the website or app that are not accessible, an explanation of why, and links to accessible alternatives where appropriate
- a way for users to tell you if any content does not meet the accessibility requirements, and to request information they are excluded from
- details of the official enforcement procedure that people can use if they are dissatisfied with your response

There are two parts to this:

1. Can the website itself be easily navigated and 'read'?
2. Are the documents on the website 'accessible' but which it means, can assistive technologies 'read' them.

## Document accessibility

The Parish Council is only responsible for documents it creates. This would mean Minutes, agendas, policies, accounts etc.

Documents created before September 2018 are excluded.

Anything created by another body or person e.g. audit returns, reports from other councils, anything from the Neighbourhood Plan group are not covered.

All of the Parish Council generated documents are created through Microsoft products which includes an accessibility checker. Minutes and agendas have been created with the accessibility checker running alongside for 18 months.

The accompanying Accessible Document Policy has been adapted from the government recommended template and tailored to the Parish Council's requirements.

## Website accessibility

The Parish Council website is hosted by Spanglefish.com. They appear to have a number of Parish Council as clients and have taken the issue seriously. The text below has been taken directly from their website.

The question is: Is the council satisfied with the level of accessibility on the website and with the accessibility statement given?

As with many things, accessibility will only become an issue in the event that a person has difficulty accessing information and makes a complaint.

## Accessibility

Note: this is a page about Accessibility on the web in general. This website's [Accessibility Statement can be found here](#).

An important responsibility of being a website programmer or owner is to ensure as far as possible that your website is "accessible", meaning it can be understood by people with disabilities.

A decade or more ago webmasters would add a button to their website which made the font size larger and think they'd done their bit, but there is much more to accessibility than that.

Visitors to your site will have a wide range of disabilities which you should try to take into account. If you host audio files on your site you need to consider deaf people for instance. If you are likely to have users with learning disabilities, you need to consider writing your content in as understandable a way as possible.

Making your site accessible is a partnership between a number of different people, not just you and Spanglefish.

For instance, the people who program browsers have (over the years) spent a lot of effort giving disabled users tools to assist them. Nowadays, if you press the Control key (Ctrl) and the + sign on your keyboard the text size in your browser will increase.

Operating system designers like Microsoft and Apple, along with other companies built screen readers which can read the content of pages out to users.

From Spanglefish's point of view, our main responsibility has become making sure that we don't build anything into the code of the site which hampers the tools created by browser manufacturers or people who build screen readers etc. We try to ensure that the code behind your website is clean and conforms to web standards.

***We won't always get this right! Feel free to let us know when we don't and we'll do our best to sort things.***

Your responsibility is to always consider the needs of your users when adding and editing content on your site.

For example:

- Does using lots of different coloured text, different fonts and font sizes in a paragraph of text make it more difficult for some people to read?
- If I add an image to a page, do I need to add an ALT description to it describing the image for blind people using screen readers?
- If I link to an audio file, do I need to provide a written transcript of what is said in the file for deaf people?
- Has the PDF file I'm about to upload to the site been created in an accessible way?

These are just examples, and by no means an exhaustive list. And the truth is there is no way to make any website 'perfectly accessible'. If (for instance) you have a collection of PDF files made 10 years ago with lots and lots of information in them but no way to recreate them in an accessible way, you don't have to remove them from your site. Consider if perhaps you can add summaries of what is in them to the page, or offer an email address that someone who can't read them can make enquiries of instead.

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## **WCAG 2.1**

The current web standard for accessibility is [WCAG 2.1](#). It is a long and dry read. You might have been told that your website must comply with WCAG 2.1 - this is the wrong way to think of it. WCAG itself is a set of guidelines and recommendations, not requirements.

Different countries have different laws with respect to accessibility. You should research those which apply to you and your website. Many will refer to WCAG without making it illegal to not comply.

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## **The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018**

In the UK [new regulations](#) have come into force about accessibility on websites belonging to 'public sector bodies'. Spanglefish hosts a large number of websites which fall under the new rules, especially parish and community council websites.

Note that schools and charities are NOT included under these regulations, although of course you should still try to make your site as accessible as possible.

One of the requirements of the new regulations is that each website affected should have an 'accessibility statement'. We think this is a good idea for all websites, not just UK governmental ones, so we've [added a page](#) at the foot of your websites alongside the privacy policy page. For some sites this may suffice, but if you want you can edit it to suit your own site's needs.

## **Taken from the Parish Council website:**

### **Accessibility Statement - Spanglefish**

This website is built on the Spanglefish content management system. It allows normal browser control over zooming by using the Control or Command keys and plus and minus keys and can be navigated using the tab and enter keys.

The site is created in HTML5, the underlying code is valid and uncomplicated and the website should be fully accessible using screen readers.

However, every website content management system can always be improved - if you wish to make any accessibility suggestions about the underlying site structure contact [access@spanglefish.com](mailto:access@spanglefish.com).

Spanglefish allows site owners to manage almost all aspects of their site. The text content, the use of images, uploaded documents such as PDFs, background and text colours. They can also manage more complex items which may impact on accessibility like javascript and CSS pseudo-elements, embedded video and audio etc. Any issues with accessibility due to such items are the responsibility of the site owner and should be addressed to them directly.

### **Accessibility Statement - Hargrave Parish Council**

The Hargrave Parish Council website should not have any areas which are inaccessible to people with disabilities.

Text should be written in as simple a way as possible whilst still conveying the correct meaning.

Meaningful images in the text should have alternative descriptions which allow screen readers to explain what the image holds.

Uploaded and linked documents on the site, such as PDFs should be created in an accessible way, allowing them to be read by screen readers, with the proviso that this may not be the case with older, archival material which would be prohibitively expensive or difficult to update.

The website administrators should take care when designing the site that good levels of contrast are used between text and background colours and that alternative explanations are provided for embedded video or audio content.

If you have any comments on the accessibility of the website, or would like to request content in a different form, please contact us.

Visit our [Contact Us page](#) to do so.