



# A 5-Minute Masterclass In Web Accessibility

**For parish & town clerks and those who administer websites for councils.**



# What is web accessibility?

It's a way of **presenting web pages** and the **information** on them in a way that works for **people with disabilities** and for those who use 'assistive technology'.

**Assistive technology** is **software & hardware on a user's computer that helps** them interact with a website - such as a screen reader for those with sight loss or low vision.



# Why does it matter?

**1 in 5 people in every community has a disability or situation that makes it difficult for them to access or interact with websites.**

**This includes those with physical, learning or age-related challenges as well as colour blindness, dyslexia, physical disabilities and blindness.**



# Websites aren't accessible by default

**Websites need to be made in a special way for them to work for those with disabilities. Just because the website is new does not mean it's accessible or compliant.**



# Websites aren't accessible by default

If your website **wasn't built with WCAG 2.1AA as part of the brief, it won't be accessible** and you are creating barriers for your parishioners.



# Public information for everyone

**Councils publish public information - every member of the public has a legal right to access the information without any barriers.**



# It's the right thing to do and the law

**It's law for all UK public bodies' websites (councils of all levels except parish meetings) to meet the international standard called WCAG 2.1AA - that means it works to a set measurement of testing.**



**Here are some basic principles  
to make the experience for  
those with disabilities better...**





# Images & graphics need descriptions

**Always use ALT Text descriptions for every image** and avoid embedding words into images, even if you add ALT Text. Access to information in an image must not be exclusive to those with sight.



# Make link text descriptive

**Make sure link text is descriptive.** Stop using 'click here' or 'here' or 'download' as your link text and make it descriptive **e.g 'A Parish Council Minutes September 2022.pdf'** then the user will know what they are going to open.

The same goes for links to websites.



# Clear text

**Use a good, clear open typeface. Not small, faintly coloured or too fancy.**



# “Not at the table, Carlos”

**Avoid tables for anything other than financial information** - they have no navigation and screen readers do not know what order to read the rows and columns.



# Add structure to the page

**Use sequential headings on the web page to section content (use them in your Word docs, too!) – it's how those with sight loss navigate a page**  
**H1, H2, H3 etc... and not chosen by how they look!**



# Colours & contrast

**Keep colours to a strict high contrast - avoid pastels and light colours and don't use coloured text on coloured backgrounds.**



# Accessible documents

**Ensure the documents you upload to your website are in an accessible format.**

PDFs created using MS Word are fine as long as they are checked but you may want to **actually put the content on the web page** rather than a document for **better accessibility**. Word documents create a socio-economic barrier because they require the user to have a Microsoft Office subscription.



# Write for people who aren't clerks

**Write the content for normal people** - try and think that the person reading your page or document **won't have your knowledge or experience** so write in **plain English**, avoid jargon and keep acronyms to a minimum (screen readers announce them slowly, one letter at a time!)





# Measure twice, cut once

**Have a checking process for when you update a web page - use a free web browser tool called WAVE by webaim - it'll give you a good snapshot of any accessibility issues.**



# Make a statement

**Update your accessibility statement - there are good model documents**

**available but understand what it means – it's a living document.** It's a reflection of your council's position on managing its accessibility requirements.

**Don't forget – Council need to ratify and adopt it. It's a policy.**



# Change your mindset

**This is an opportunity, not an inconvenience as it means you can talk to and get the council's message across to the 20% of your community that, thus far, have struggled to access the information to which they are entitled.**



# Ask for help

It can be daunting to start so **seek some guidance and ask Aubergine** to set you off on the right foot!