

ACTON TURVILLE PARISH COUNCIL WEB SITE ACCESSIBILITY

Background

The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations of 2018 aim to ensure that all websites and mobile applications provided by public bodies can be used by as many people as possible.

This includes those with:

- impaired vision
- motor difficulties
- cognitive impairments or learning disabilities
- deafness or impaired hearing

Maximising accessibility involves making the design and layout of websites clear and simple so that most people can use them without the use of specialist equipment. For those people who rely on specialist equipment such as a screen reader (software that lets a user navigate a website and ‘read out’ the content), braille display or screen magnifier, websites should provide an interface which allows these to be used without significant adaptation.

The 2018 Accessibility Regulations require all Public Bodies to firstly review their existing websites and mobile applications to establish whether they satisfy the new standards for accessibility. Where they do not comply, options for achieving compliance must be considered. In some cases this may be as simple as making minor changes to existing websites. At the other extreme it may involve replacing the entire website with one designed in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (known as WCAG 2.1), which are an internationally recognised set of recommendations for improving web accessibility.

As a Public Body which publishes information on a website, the Acton Turville Parish Council comes under the 2018 Accessibility Regulations. It is therefore required to take the following action:

- Undertake a detailed audit to assess whether its current website satisfies accessibility standards.
- Where accessibility standards are not met, take corrective action.
- Publish an accessibility statement which describes the outcome of its assessment.

Assessment Process

The current Acton Turville Parish Council website was developed in 2018 using an open-source website builder called Webs. The website receives less than 200 page views per month on average. Development of the website was undertaken in-house. The website provides the residents of Acton Turville (around 300 on the Electoral Roll in 2019) with a

range of information including reports on Parish Council activities (calling notices, agendas and minutes of meetings), contact details of Parish Councillors, links to local services and a Community Area where events and activities can be announced. Consequently the cost of developing and maintaining the website is minimal.

To carry out a detailed audit to establish the current website's level of compliance with the 2018 Accessibility Regulations would require considerable expertise in both building web sites and the accessibility regulations. As this expertise does not exist within the Parish Council, such work would need to be completed by a third party and would thus incur significant cost. The Parish Council has therefore elected to perform the 49 step 'basic' check in accordance with Government guidance. This simplified check has indicated areas where the Acton Turville Parish Council web site is not compliant with the accessibility regulations, and action has already been taken to address those issues which can be readily resolved. Action will continue to introduce further improvements in the coming months. However, it is clear that full or near compliance is not possible with the current software used.

Whilst software packages are available which will deliver a fully compliant solution, the costs (both initial procurement and development, plus annual maintenance fees) are beyond the means of the Parish Council. Adopting a fully-compliant solution could only be achieved by making cuts elsewhere which is not considered to be a viable proposition.

Accessibility statement

The Acton Turville Parish Council understand their responsibilities under the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 to provide a website which meets defined standards for accessibility. In order to discharge those responsibilities, it has undertaken a simple check to assess its website's level of compliance, and made changes to the website within the constraints imposed by the limitations inherent in the software and the Parish Council's financial considerations. The Parish Council has considered undertaking a more detailed audit of the current website to guarantee identifying all issues, and transferring the website to a platform capable of achieving full compliance with the regulations. Both these options have been discounted on the basis that, given the nature and size of the organisation and the number of website users, the associated costs represent a disproportionate burden and could not be absorbed within current funds without making cuts elsewhere. Government guidelines on disproportionate burden are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/helping-people-to-use-your-service/understanding-wcag>

Parishioners retain the option of using the Parish Council notice board to access key information or by contacting the Parish Clerk. Accessibility problems can also be reported via the Parish Clerk.

Action Plan

The Acton Turville Parish Council is undertaking a 'basic' check, in accordance with Government guidance and, based upon the outcome of these checks, the Parish Council will consider making changes to the website where these are both feasible and practicable, to improve the level of compliance.

The details of this guidance, which forms our plan, can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/doing-a-basic-accessibility-check-if-you-cant-do-a-detailed-one/doing-a-basic-accessibility-check-if-you-cant-do-a-detailed-one>

Progress against the Action Plan will be reviewed regularly by the Acton Turville Parish Council.