

1. Policy title and purpose

Accessibility Policy for Shobrooke Parish Council Website

Shobrooke Parish Council is committed to ensuring its website is accessible and usable for as many people as possible, including disabled people and those using assistive technologies. This policy sets out how we meet our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018, and how we comply with the Assertion 10 requirement relating to website accessibility and digital governance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- The council's main public website at: www.shobrookeparishcouncil.co.uk
- Any subsites or microsites managed by or on behalf of the council.
- All web content created or published by councillors, officers, contractors or suppliers on these sites (including documents, images, videos and downloadable files).
- Any third-party systems that are embedded in, framed by, or branded as part of the council website where the council has control over procurement or configuration.

3. Accessibility standard and technical approach

- The council aims for full conformity with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2, level AA across its public website and online content.
- Where full conformity is not yet possible, we will work towards achieving WCAG 2.2 AA as a priority and document any non-compliance and exemptions in our public Accessibility Statement, including any assessment of disproportionate burden.
- The website is built and maintained using wordpress semantic HTML, responsive layouts and best practice coding to support assistive technologies such as screen readers, screen magnifiers, speech recognition and alternative input devices.
- Design and development must follow the POUR principles (Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, Robust) and the GOV.UK guidance on accessible websites and accessibility statements.

4. Assertion 10: website and digital governance

To meet the Assertion 10 requirements in relation to website accessibility and digital information:

- The council maintains an up-to-date website that is designed and configured to meet WCAG 2.2 AA.
- The council has a written Accessibility Policy (this document) and publishes a separate, clear Accessibility Statement on the website home page or footer, in line with government guidance.
- The council has appropriate controls in place to ensure that:
 - New content (including PDFs and other documents) is created in an accessible format wherever practical.
 - Inaccessible legacy documents are clearly marked with alternative contact details so users can request accessible formats.
- The council keeps a record of accessibility audits, remediation work and key decisions (including any disproportionate burden assessments) as part of its governance and risk-management arrangements.
- Councillors and staff responsible for the website and digital publishing receive periodic training or guidance on accessibility and data handling.

5. Responsibilities

- The Council (as a corporate body) approves this policy and is responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are available to implement and maintain website accessibility.
- The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is the policy owner and is responsible for:
 - Overseeing implementation of this policy and the Accessibility Statement.
 - Ensuring accessibility is considered in all website-related contracts and procurement.
 - Arranging periodic accessibility reviews and reporting outcomes to council.
- Website administrator (clerk) is responsible for:
 - Implementing and maintaining technical measures needed to achieve WCAG 2.2 AA.
 - Fixing known accessibility issues within agreed timescales.
 - Supporting the council with accessibility testing and configuration.
- Councillors and staff who create or upload content will be responsible for:
 - Following the council's accessibility guidance and ensuring that content is clear, well structured and written in plain English.

6. Content standards

When adding or updating content, the council will:

- Use clear, simple language and meaningful headings.
- Avoid using colour alone to convey information.
- Provide text alternatives (alt text) for all meaningful images and diagrams.
- Ensure sufficient colour contrast between text and background.
- Ensure all interactive elements (links, buttons, forms) are keyboard accessible and have a visible focus state.
- Use descriptive link text (for example, "Read the planning policy" rather than "click here").
- Structure pages with proper heading levels (one H1 per page, followed by H2, H3, etc.).
- Add captions or transcripts to audio and video content where practical.
- Avoid scanned images of text; where PDFs are necessary, create them from accessible source documents and tag them correctly.

7. Documents (minutes, agendas, policies, reports)

For documents published on the website:

- New documents will be created using accessible templates (using heading styles, proper lists and tables with headers).
- Complex tables, charts or diagrams will not be used
- Archived or legacy documents that are not essential to current work will be clearly marked as not fully accessible, with contact details for requesting an alternative format.
- Where it would be a disproportionate burden to fix large volumes of historic documents, the council will prioritise documents that are needed for active consultations or decision making, or required by law for ongoing transparency and accountability.

8. Accessibility statement and feedback

The council will publish and maintain a clear Accessibility Statement which:

- Explains which parts of the website are fully, partially, or not compliant with WCAG 2.2 AA.
- Lists known non-accessible content and describes any content that is exempt or considered a disproportionate burden to fix.
- Provides contact details (email, phone, address) for users to: report accessibility problems, request information in alternative formats, and make general accessibility enquiries.
- Provides a route to escalate a complaint if the user is not satisfied with the council's response (for example, referring to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or Equality and Human Rights Commission, as appropriate).

9. Requesting alternative formats

The council will provide reasonable adjustments and alternative formats, on request, for information published on its website. This may include: Large print, plain-text or accessible PDF versions or Printed copies.

Requests can be made by contacting: the parish clerk

- Email: clerk@shobrookeparishcouncil.co.uk
- Telephone: 07886004919

The council will acknowledge requests promptly and aim to respond with the within an agreed timescale, dependant on the type of document and/or the need to rework it in relation to these requirements.

10. Monitoring, review and continuous improvement

To support ongoing compliance and Assertion 10 requirements, the council will:

- Conduct an internal review of the website at least annually to identify and fix accessibility issues.
- Commission an external accessibility check or use an independent tool at appropriate intervals (for example, every 2–3 years, or when launching a new site or design).
- Keep a log of known issues and track remediation work.
- Review this policy and the Accessibility Statement at least once every two years, or sooner if there are significant changes to law, standards (for example, new WCAG versions) or the council's website.

11. Training and awareness

- New councillors and staff with publishing responsibilities will receive an introduction to this policy and basic web-accessibility good practice.
- The Clerk will periodically circulate updated guidance or resources on accessibility, especially when relevant legislation or standards change.

12. Policy approval and review

- The policy will be reviewed regularly in line with website auditing.