

**Council – 24 September 2020**  
**Agenda Item CC2134/20**  
**Website Content Accessibility Guidelines**

## **Introduction**

The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 came into force in September 2018. They say Public Sector Bodies must make their websites more accessible by making it 'perceivable, operable, understandable and robust'. Croxley Green Parish Council must meet these guidelines or show on its website a pathway to future compliance.

## **Discussion**

The following is taken from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps#when-you-need-to-meet-these-regulations>.

"Making a website or mobile app accessible means making sure it 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

At least 1 in 5 people in the UK have a long-term illness, impairment or disability. Many more have a temporary disability.

Accessibility means more than putting things online. It means making your content and design clear and simple enough so that most people can use it without needing to adapt it, while supporting those who do need to adapt things.

For example, someone with impaired vision might use a screen reader (software that lets a user navigate a website and 'read out' the content), braille display or screen magnifier. Or someone with motor difficulties might use a special mouse, speech recognition software or on-screen keyboard emulator.

People may not have a choice when using a public sector website or mobile app, so it is important they work for everyone. The people who need them the most are often the people who find them hardest to use.

Accessible websites usually work better for everyone. They are often faster, easier to use and appear higher in search engine rankings.

Most public sector websites and mobile apps do not currently meet accessibility requirements. For example, a recent study found that 4 in 10 local council homepages failed basic tests for accessibility.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in England, Scotland and Wales and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) in Northern Ireland will enforce the requirement to make public sector websites and mobile apps accessible (making them perceivable, operable, understandable and robust).

Organisations that do not meet the accessibility requirement or fail to provide a satisfactory response to a request to produce information in an accessible format, will be failing to make reasonable adjustments. This means they will be in breach of the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

The EHRC and ECNI can therefore use their legal powers against offending organisations, including investigations, unlawful act notices and court action.”

Croxley Green Parish Council does meet the requirements to be exempt from the regulations. If Council chooses not to make the necessary changes to the website, it must instead publish an Accessibility Statement outlining all areas which are not fully accessible, what section of the guidelines it fails on, along with information on when the Council intends to fix these areas.

The required changes to the website are complicated and cannot be carried out by staff. I have spoken with KVA Digital, the Council’s website developer, about the work that needs to be undertaken. To make the website totally compliant each individual page must be reviewed to find non-compliant issues, which will then need to be fixed. They have estimated that this could take between 3-4 days at a cost of £3825 - £5200.

Included in this cost would be training for the Clerk & Administrative Officer to make sure that all future uploads to the website meet the new guidelines.

More detailed information on how the Council must meet Website Content Accessibility Guidelines can be found at <https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG21/quickref/>.

The initial deadline for compliance is September 23 2020.

## **Recommendations**

- That the Council instructs KVA Digital to carry out the necessary changes to the Parish Council website, to ensure compliance with Website Content Accessibility Guidelines, up to a total cost of £5200.

Ryan Bennett  
Clerk to the Council  
September 2020