

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Basic Website Accessibility Check – September 2020

Background

Under the *Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018* the Parish Council is required to assess how accessible its website is, publish an Accessibility Statement and produce a plan to address any accessibility issues. The Parish Council judged that a detailed website accessibility check would be a disproportionate burden due to the lack of technical expertise within in the Council and the disproportionate cost of paying for an external expert to undertake the work, estimated at between £1,500 and £4,000. It therefore authorised the Clerk to undertake a basic accessibility check in line with Government guidelines.

1. Text Content

Headings

Headings should be styled properly, e.g. as “Heading Level 2”, to allow screen readers to skip to relevant content. Page headings are correctly styled but subheadings on the page are just normal text in bold. These need to be styled correctly.

Pages useable when Stylesheets Disabled

This was checked using the WAVE tool (Web Accessibility Evaluation tool) and turning styles off. Content was useable on all sample pages. pdfs were not accessible but this appears to be a limitation of the WAVE tool rather than a website issue.

Instructions are Styled Properly

Instructions should not rely on the ability to see the website, e.g. “click on the red button”. There are occasional references in the website to “click on the icon below” where pdfs are available to download. These may need rewording.

Links make Sense

Screen readers often list links in isolation so the link text should make sense when removed from the surrounding text. Using the title of the page or website linked to is good practice, and the text should not be too short as this causes difficulties for users with restricted movement. Most links on the website confirm with the above – but links to the contact page could be made clearer and longer. Underlining should only be used for links and not in normal text – there are a couple of examples of underlining on the website that should be removed.

Pages have Good Titles

Page titles should appear in the page tab and describe clearly what the page is about while being no more than 65 characters long. Page titles automatically appear in the page tab on the website. Titles could be more descriptive, e.g. “Events in Batcombe” rather than “Events” and should be amended accordingly.

2. Images, Video and Audio Content

Images have a Description

Any non-decorative images should have an accompanying text description so users can still access the information even if they cannot see the image. Currently images on the website do not have a text description and this should be added.

Images containing Text

Avoid images containing text as screen readers cannot read the text. Such images are used as links on the Useful Links page and need accompanying text that can be accessed by screen readers.

Audio and Video Content

There is currently no audio or video content on the website so the tests do not apply. If there were, video content would need captions for dialogue and audio content would need a transcript available.

3. Interactive Tools and Transactions

Form Fields are Marked Up Appropriately

If form fields are marked up appropriately clicking on the field label (the descriptive text next to the form field) should result in your cursor appearing in the corresponding field. The website only has one form – a contact form which does not have this facility. Updating the form may resolve this or it may be a limitation of our website provider.

Making it Clear what Information is Required

Field labels should make it clear what information is required and generally should be specific. Our contact form is clear what is needed – name, e-mail address and message, but could be more descriptive.

Form Elements are Consistent across the Website

Forms labels should be used consistently across the website. As we only have one form this is not an issue.

Users Receive a Warning before being Timed Out

Some websites will time users out after a period of inactivity. If this is the case a warning should be given before the user is timed out. Our website doesn't time users out so this is not required.

Error Messages are Useful

Forms should provide a useful error message if the user makes a mistake, informing them how to correct their mistake. This applies to things like invalid dates or postcodes entered. The form on our website is very basic, doesn't ask for such details and doesn't provide error messages.

Users can Review their Answers before Submitting the Form

Users should be able to review the information they have provided before submitting the form. This is particularly relevant for financial details or entering into a contract. Again our form is very basic, contains not financial or legal information and users can see all the information they have provided before submitting the form.

Form Elements Behave as Expected

Forms should behave as expected and not have unexpected drop down menus or open new pages. Again our form is very basic and behaves exactly as expected.

4. PDFs and other Documents

Pdfs and other Documents

The following requirements do not apply to non-essential documents published before 23rd September 2018, so Minutes and Agendas published before September 2018 do not need to be amended.

Documents have Meaningful Titles

Documents should have descriptive titles that explain what they are for. There are a large number of documents published on the website and the vast majority have clear descriptive titles. A small number with unclear titles can be amended as other issues are addressed.

Headings

Documents should be broken into sections with descriptive headings that have been styled as headings, e.g. as “Heading Level 2”, to allow screen readers to skip to relevant content. Documents on the website are largely broken into sections with descriptive headings. However, headings are not styled as such but are just normal text in bold. Documents published since September 2018 will need to be amended and replaced on the website and this will take considerable time.

Documents Convey Instructions in an Accessible Way

Instructions should not rely on the ability to see the document, e.g. “click on the red button”. There do not appear to be any documents on the website that convey instructions.

Link Text makes Sense

Screen readers often list links in isolation so the link text should make sense when removed from the surrounding text in the document. Using the title of the page or website linked to is good practice, and the text should not be too short as this causes difficulties for users with restricted movement. There are limited texts with documents on the website and most conform with the above. Any links can be checked when the document headings are amended.

Images, Charts and Tables have a Description

Any visual means of conveying data should be described in the surrounding text. There are very few images, charts and tables in the documents on the website and again these can be checked when the headings are amended. It is not clear how this applies to accounts.

5. Technology

Mobile and Tablet Devices

Page orientation should change rather than staying locked in place and users should be able to navigate the website using one finger. I tested this on an i-pad and a Windows phone. On both the tablet and the smartphone the orientation changed with the device. There was no problem navigating with one finger on the tablet. On the smartphone orientation was more complex because of the need to adjust the page size to read the text but this could be done by a double tap of one finger rather than any more complex gesture.

Navigating just using a Keyboard

Some users need to navigate a page without using a mouse. It should be possible to navigate using just a keyboard with the tab, space, enter and esc keys. The tab key allows the user to jump between links and navigation buttons and the enter button allows the user to access the links and buttons. The space bar and arrow keys can be used to move around the page. When using the tab key the button/link you are on is highlighted; the order going through the links/buttons makes sense; nothing unexpected happens and the user does not get stuck – all requirements for an accessible website.

Content is Useable when Zoomed in or Magnified

Increasing the font size should not obscure any information. Increasing font size in the browser had no impact on the website as the font size did not increase. This needs to be investigated. When using the zoom feature the pages should reformat so that it is not necessary to use the horizontal scroll. The pages on the website did not reformat when using zoom meaning the horizontal scroll was required to read the pages.

Colour Contrast

The contrast ratio between the text and the background colour of the website should be at least 4.5:1. This was checked using the WAVE tool (Web Accessibility Evaluation tool) which gave a contrast ratio of 8.59:1 and indicated that there were no contrast errors detected.

Pop-ups and Interactive or Flashing Content

These can be distracting and users should be able to disable such content if present. There is no such content on the website. There should also be an alternative for people who cannot use maps.

Search and Other Forms of Navigation

There should be more than one form of navigation on the website. The website has a navigation side bar and a site map. There is no search function and this should be investigated. Navigation should behave consistently across the website and does. Links should not trigger on the down press of the mouse button - only on the release - and the links on the website meet this requirement.

6. HTML Checks

Table and Bullet Lists are Styled Properly

<td> and <tr> tabs are present for tables and and tabs are present for lists.

Language the Content is Written in

Pages have the tab <html lang="en"> to indicate to screen readers that the page is written in English.

Rob Sage
Clerk to Batcombe Parish Council