

## **ISSUE: WEB SITE ACCESSIBILITY REGULATIONS**

### **AGENDA ITEM: 95/20C**

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Parish Council places a “holding” policy document on the website explaining the regulations and expressing our wish to comply but explaining the problems. Alternative ways of accessing the information should be offered. Once this is in place help should be sort to make easy changes and an alternative web site provider should be explored. Clerk should report on the logistics of making such a change.

**TIMING:** The issue is becoming urgent as the implementation date is 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020. The audit is likely to look at this in May.

**MEMBERS’ INTERESTS:** The husband of Councillor Miles has offered some (free) advice.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:** From the Clerk and from the forwarded information from DALC sent on 5.12.19.

**BACKGROUND:** The legislation Public Bodies (Websites and mobile applications) Accessibility Regulations came into force 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2018. DALC altered us on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019 and has yet to publish any model documentation or detailed advice on how to approach this issue. Larger councils have started to make changes and Bakewell is an example.

**DISCUSSION:** Two residents in Carsington and Hopton, with expertise in this area, have reviewed the Parish Council web site and reported that it is not compliant and that it would be a lot of work to make it compliant. The costs could well be more than the annual precept.

Our web site platform provider, Ionos, has responded to us, via their legal team, to say that “your UK MyWebsite Basic Package does not have inbuilt functionality to be compliant”. They suggest we seek independent advice.

Looking at some of the larger local council sites one can see that they have placed accessibility statements on their web site. This is relatively easy to do and a draft for us is attached in the **Appendix**. This offers users other forms of communication, such as large print documents, which could be provided. This approach is possible as our parishes are so small.

There is a discussion in the legislation about “disproportionate burden” of complying with accessibility regulations. However, it is not clear how one claims this. But it is being pursued. However, some action is, in my opinion, needed as not all the approaches are “disproportionate”, for example, partially sighted people find a good contrast of print and colours is helpful. This should not be difficult to achieve.

In the longer term an alternative provider of a web site should be investigated. Hugofox are offering a free website to parish councils (at bronze level) which will shortly be 100% compliant. If we go for this approach it will be necessary to build a new web site before dismantling the old one. It is suggested that the data be subcontracted, to perhaps a student working on an hourly basis. A plan of the logistics would need to be prepared by the Clerk, for consideration by Members.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:** At the last meeting it was AGREED to put £600 in the budget for this work. As this is 12% of the precept of £4900, it is a reasonable amount to allocate and investigations need to be done to see what can be achieved with this.

**RISK IMPLICATIONS:** If nothing is done we will be non-complaint and this will be recorded in our audit report and may result in a fine.

## **Appendix**

### **Accessibility Standards and this Website.**

We are committed to making our site accessible to all. We are continuously attempting to improve this website to ensure that it meets the Accessibility Guidelines. Rather than claim “disproportionate burden” we will be moving to a compliant website framework provider and in the mean time offer you as users two approaches.

- A. You may be able to change the way the website looks using the tools on your computer. Accessibility settings allow changing of fonts, sizes and colours. The BBC offer MyWebMyWay which gives information on how to do this. Similarly Windows or your web browser can offer help.
- B. Information in another format can be provided by us if you ask. For example, large print copies of documents you are interested to see. Please do contact us about any issues and we will see if we can help you.