



Hawstead Parish Council
Website Accessibility Report
15-01-2026

Introduction

Providing digital services is now the cornerstone of how local authorities (county, district, parish and town councils) interact with residents. Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No 2) Regulations 2020, any organisation that holds a *.gov.uk* domain is legally obliged to meet at least the AA level of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1). These rules apply equally to large county councils and to the smallest parish or town council, regardless of budget size. Compliance ensures that people with visual, auditory, motor or cognitive impairments can perceive, understand, navigate and interact with the site on an equal footing, thereby avoiding legal risk, reducing support costs and demonstrating a genuine commitment to inclusive public service.



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For many parish and town councils, limited resources make the prospect of a full-scale accessibility overhaul feel daunting. Yet the regulations are clear: every *.gov.uk* website must be WCAG 2.1 AA compliant, and the upcoming shift to WCAG 2.2 AA will raise the bar even further. Failure to meet these standards can lead to enforcement actions, reputational damage, and, most importantly, the exclusion of constituents who rely on accessible digital experiences. Even modest improvements—such as ensuring sufficient colour contrast, providing keyboard-only navigation, and delivering clear error messages—can dramatically increase usability for all users while keeping costs manageable.

Suffolk Cloud is a leading solutions provider for local government digital services. Leveraging a seasoned in-house development team with decades of experience building council websites, we deliver a full suite of web solutions, from bespoke, WCAG compliant templates to robust back-office integrations, all backed by a 24/7 help desk. As one of the largest registrars of *.gov.uk* domains and an official *.gov.uk* Domain Helper Service registrar, we give councils maximum peace of mind: you benefit from streamlined domain management, guaranteed compliance with government-mandated standards, and rapid support whenever issues arise, as well as wrap around support on the rest of your IT and technology requirements. Our end-to-end approach means councils can achieve WCAG 2.2 AA compliance quickly, affordably, and sustainably, without diverting scarce internal resources.

Beyond meeting the legal mandate, Suffolk Cloud can also provide ongoing monitoring and maintenance to keep your *.gov.uk* site compliant as standards evolve. We supply clear documentation, regular accessibility testing and a responsive help desk that can address emerging issues swiftly. This partnership not only safeguards the council against regulatory risk but also delivers a more welcoming digital environment for every resident, reinforcing trust in local government services.

Report Summary

After a thorough scan of the main top level pages of your council's current website, we've identified the key areas that need attention. You can read more details about each identified area further on in this report.



The audit uncovered an average of **1.07 errors** per page – issues that prevent the site from meeting the required accessibility standards and will need to be resolved.



In addition, there are an average of **20.43 warnings** per page, which are less critical but still represent valuable opportunities to improve usability.



Taken together, the site achieves an overall accessibility score of **9.6 / 10** indicating a very good level of accessibility with some room for improvement. This high-level snapshot sets the stage for the recommendations that follow, helping the council create a smoother, more inclusive online experience for all users.

Managed Cyber Security

Our fully managed cyber-security service protects council devices around the clock. We install and continuously update industry leading anti-virus and anti-malware software, monitor email traffic for malicious links or attachments, and provide unified threat detection that flags suspicious behaviour across all your devices.

With proactive threat hunting, rapid incident response and regular security-health reports, you'll have confidence that staff can work safely whether they're in the office, at a community centre, or working from home. Let us handle the security so you can focus on delivering essential services to the public.

From
£10/user/month





Errors

The following are errors detected on your site that until resolved prevent your site from meeting accessibility requirements.

Empty Links

There are links on the website that contain no text, and so the function of the link will not be presented to users using some assistive technology. This can sometimes be the case where a link is an image or icon such as for social media or search buttons. It can also occur when an old link is removed but the code is left behind by accident.

Recommendation

Add text to all links, where this isn't required for most users it can be set hidden so it's only used by assistive technology. If a link isn't required such as there being no email address for a contact then the link tag (<a>) should be removed entirely to avoid confusion to users.

Empty Headings

Headings are used to help user navigate between content. Some users, especially keyboard and screen reader users navigate by heading elements. An empty heading that has code such as <h1> but no text within that heading will not provide any information to that user and may be confusing.

Recommendation

Review the site and ensure that there are no empty heading tags in the website HTML.

Linked Images Missing Alternative Text

Some images on the website are also links which are missing alternative text. Where an image is a link it must have descriptive alternative text, or the link must have descriptive alternative text. When neither is present screen readers have no context to present to the user to describe what the link is and where it goes.

Recommendation

Add alternative text to all links and images where appropriate to ensure screen readers have adequate context and information about graphical content of the website.

Cloud Backup

Council laptops contain large amounts of crucial information such as meeting agendas and minutes, financial information, and a wealth of other critical government data. Loosing this data could be disastrous for the smooth functioning of a parish or town.

Often with parish and town councils this critical data is stored on just one or two key devices such as a laptop which can easily be lost, stolen, or simply suffer a catastrophic hardware failure.

Cloud backup ensures that this critical data is backed up constantly to the cloud and can be restored in minutes should disaster strike.

From
£30/user/month





Warnings

The following are a list of warnings discovered on your site, these are not necessarily non-conformant with accessibility standards but may cause accessibility issues with your website and where possible should be address. In some cases these warnings can be safely ignored as an automated scan can pickup issues that in reality are acceptable.

Redundant Title Text

Your website includes title attributes that are the same or near identical to the text itself. Title elements should be used to provide advisory information that appears when a user hovers the mouse over an element such as a link.

Recommendation: In most cases the title attribute can be removed as the link or element itself already provides sufficient information. Otherwise it should be updated to provide advisory and not redundant information.

Select Element Missing Label

There are select elements (drop downs) on your site that do not have a label. This is not always a problem though, if a drop down has a default value that adequately explains it's purpose such as a month name in a date selector, then a label isn't always necessary.

Recommendation: Ensure that the default option in a select element presents the purpose of the menu. If there is visible label text present then associate this with the menu.

Redundant Links

Some of the links on your page are adjacent to each other yet go to the same location. This can sometimes happen by accident when pages are built and a link tag gets split between sentences or paragraphs.

Recommendation: Combine adjacent identical links into a single `<a>` link.

Skipped Heading Levels

Your website has skipped some heading levels. Headings are level 1 to 6, but in your website some levels have been missed for example you might have H1 headings and H3 headings, but no H2 headings. This can be confusing to assistive technology users as it can lead them to think content has been missed.

Recommendation: Restructure the document to ensure headings are not skipped.

Possible Headings

Some of the text on your site appears to be a heading, for example is in bold or underlined, but is not within a heading tag (<h1> for example). Using heading elements <h1> to <h6> will help provide important document structure to those using assistive technology. If a heading that appears to visually be a heading is not a true heading in code then it won't be available to screen readers and other technology.

Recommendation: Where headings are true headings use appropriate <h1-6> tags.

Possible List

There is content on the website presented as a list but not using or HTML. When text is presented visually as a list but without the code to define it as such this can cause assistive technology to not present the content in the most appropriate way to the user.

Recommendation: Ensure that lists are created as actual lists rather than simple typed out manually with numbers for each item.

Underlined Text

There is text on the website which is underlined but not a link. Underlined text almost universally indicates that text is a link, consider removing underlined text from non-linked text and use other styling instead to differentiate such as bold or italic.

Recommendation: Unless there is a specific need for underlined text then remove it.

Suspicious Links

Links should clearly describe the destination or function of the link. Ambiguous text such as "click here" can cause confusion and should be avoided.

Recommendation: Reword links to ensure that the actual link is descriptive of the contents of the link for example "[May Meeting Minutes](#)" rather than a sentence "For the May Meeting Minutes [click here](#)"

Links to documents

Unless specifically authored with accessibility in mind, PDF and Word documents are rarely accessible. Additionally, they often require downloading or other plugins to view which can be confusing for some users and difficult to navigate.

Recommendation: Ensure that any PDFs and other documents linked from the website are accessible, and make sure users are informed that the link will open a PDF or other file format. Where possible documents should be published in HTML within the website, or a download provided in a more accessible format such as TXT or ODF.

Tab Order

Elements of your website should be accessible by “tabbing” through them with the tab order. It is important to make sure that elements are in the correct order so when using the tab key to navigate entirely by keyboard you can successfully and logically navigate the website.

Recommendation: Manually verify that elements of the website such as navigation and links can be tabbed through in a logical order.

Next Steps

With the above report you now have a high-level overview of the areas that your site that are either non-compliant or potentially non-compliant and preventing equal access to your website.

The next step is to address the errors which are making the site non-compliant with WCAG 2.2 AA. Once the errors are addressed a thorough review of the warnings should be carried out and as many resolved as possible.



There are a couple possible options for you to consider in terms of how best to go about bringing your site in-line with regulations.

1. Once you've had a chance to review the report, come back to us and we can discuss what work is required to fix as much of the report as you desire. Some councils want to fix every single error and warning, whilst others pick the highest impact ones. At a minimum, you must fix all the errors to be compliant with regulations, but don't worry, we will make it quick, easy, and affordable.
2. If you prefer, you can work through this report and update the content within your website CMS to resolve the identified issues. In many cases it is a simple quick fix in the page content, and if you're not sure you can always get in touch with us for advice. Once you're happy come back to us to have a report re-run to see if the errors have been addressed fully and warnings reduced or completely removed.

We completely appreciate that some of the terms in this report might be quite technical, and whilst we've done our best to make this report as easy to understand as possible there are always going to be some questions. Don't hesitate to get back in touch to discuss elements of the report that you're not sure about and the best method to rectify those issues. We're here to help you on this journey to making your site fully accessible and that also means making sure the technology and understanding is accessible to you.

Accessibility Monitoring

Websites are constantly changing and evolving as new content is uploaded and new features are added. With each edit your website can become non-compliant and inaccessible to some users. Our continuous monitoring means we'll monitor your site constantly and alert you if it becomes inaccessible and non-compliant at any point so you never have to worry about accessibility again.

From
£750/year