



Your presenter: Mark Tomkins, Creative Director at Aubergine.

Website Accessibility Compliance

What you need to know to get there.

This session will explain what accessibility and WCAG compliance means for websites and their owners, and provide practical help and information about website accessibility (and the Accessibility Statement) now that the 23rd September compliance date has been passed.

What we'll cover

- 1. What is website accessibility?**
- 2. What is WCAG 2.1?**
- 3. Why does it affect our website?**
- 4. Main areas to address: What & when?**
- 5. Typical failure points**
- 6. Checklist of actions, tips & things you can do**
- 7. Ongoing education & maintenance**

So, where is everyone on this journey?

Started?

Done it?

Still in ostrich mode?



What does Website Accessibility mean?

Your website must meet the needs of those users with disabilities that include:

Auditory



Cognitive



Neurological



Physical



Speech



Visual



Just looking good, having nice pictures or publishing the monthly meeting minutes on the page won't cut it any more.

Why does it affect our website?

Historically running a website has been about *'how quick and how easy to set up'* - and was all about the website owner.

Most larger platforms offer a *'quick spin up & easy to edit'* product but with little or no accessibility consideration baked in to the system.

Most UK large-scale platforms (such as WIX, Mr Site, 1&1/Ionos) are unlikely to comply with WCAG without significant alterations, if at all.

You have a responsibility to make your content accessible to all

Not only is it **the law**, it's **the right thing to do!**

Typical failure points

- ✘ **The design** - frames, old fashioned, not mobile friendly.
- ✘ **The platform** - the cheap & quick platform can't be upgraded.
- ✘ **The functions** - mouseover, navigations, forms, Flash...
- ✘ **The content** - missing image tags, descriptions, videos.
- ✘ **The layout** - fonts, sizes, colours, spacing, headings, tabbing...
- ✘ **The document downloads** - formats - PDFs! Text as images!

Checklist of actions, tips & things you can do



Publish an Accessibility Statement – reflecting current website



Audit your website:

- Run a WCAG 2.1 checker on the site - free or paid.
- Understand the failure points (this will form the content of the Accessibility Statement)



Make sure the site is mobile friendly



Review the report and set out an action plan. Be realistic.



Set a review process - how often & what? Be realistic.



Educate others on best practice web accessibility guidelines.

Current problems & wrong advice

- ✘ Still a lack of understand or awareness of what the accessibility requirements are.
- ✘ Many councils are commissioning a new website that may meet communication needs of a council but WCAG 2.1AA hasn't been considered in the brief.
- ✘ Cost & compliance issues – Councils will spend twice and fall behind on compliance dates.
- ✘ All web briefs to website developers MUST set compliance with WCAG 2.1AA as a main part of the RFQ.
- ✘ Domains – your domain suffix (.gov.uk, .org etc) is irrelevant to whether you comply or not – all public bodies must comply.

Village websites

Often Parish Councils share websites with a village website.

The Parish Council must be hosted on a website that is entirely WCAG 2.1AA compliant.

Village websites are not a public body and not bound by law to comply with WCAG 2.1AA

It is not enough just for the files uploaded to be compliant – the entire website, framework, navigation and content must comply.

Ask the village website owner to see if they can update the site to meet the requirements of the council. If they, can – great – improves community interaction. If they cannot –

The parish council must seek a new site of their own that complies.

What the website should have

- ✓ Finance documents – (5 years of AGAR) + associated financial documents, year end accounts, current and previous precept and budget (inc. items of expenditure >£100)
- ✓ A year's worth of minutes and agendas + any supporting meeting documents
- ✓ Councillor profiles, contact details, roles and register of interest
- ✓ Full council contact details
- ✓ Location of public land and asset register
- ✓ Internal Audit Report
- ✓ Annual Governance Statement
- ✓ Policies, procedures and standing orders
- ✓ Accessibility Statement

Tips and things you can do

- ✓ Find out where your website is hosted & your domain registered.
- ✓ If you have a developer - **ask them to perform a WCAG 2.1AA check and report.**
- ✓ **Run a free WCAG 2.1AA check yourself - [See info sheet for links.](#)**
- ✓ Work out what **you can do** and **what you can't.**
- ✓ **Consider** using a **WCAG 2.1AA compliant platform** services.
- ✓ Set some **budget in your next precept to upgrade** the website & checker.
- ✓ Set a **schedule to review new content** & run **new pages through a checker.**
- ✓ PDFs: K.I.S.S - **don't embed images** if you can possibly help it!
- ✓ Images - **ALT TAGs & file names.**
- ✓ Videos - **Captions ON! Title ON!**
- ✓ Downloads - have **alternative versions for requests.** [Plain text files.](#)

Example of checking experience

Example checker:

Google Chrome browser plugin

WAVE by WEBAim

- ✓ **Manual checks with assistive technology should be done – don't rely on automatic checks alone.**
- ✓ **Use a selection of checking tools > different weighting to different aspects of accessibility experience.**
- ✓ **Involve the community – ask for members of the community who use assistive tech to volunteer support.**

The image shows a screenshot of the Beverley Town Council website (beverley.gov.uk) with the WAVE accessibility checker overlay on the left. The checker displays the following summary:

Category	Count
Errors	9
Contrast Errors	47
Alerts	19
Features	10
Structural Elements	25
ARIA	0

The website content includes a header with the Beverley Town Council logo and navigation links, a main content area with a COVID-19 notice, and a footer with a search bar and popular links.

WAVE Summary:

- Errors: 9
- Contrast Errors: 47
- Alerts: 19
- Features: 10
- Structural Elements: 25
- ARIA: 0

Website Content:

- Header: Beverley Town Council, LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME, Telephone: 01482 874096
- Main Content: Coronavirus COVID-19 notice, Your East Riding... notice, A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR
- Footer: Search Keyword, Popular Links (News, Council Meetings), Access to Information, Who are we?

Once compliant

- ✓ Have a process of checking a new web page on a WCAG checker.
- ✓ Have a process for renaming images & adding ALT TAGs when uploading.
- ✓ Make sure PDFs that have have images in have ALT TAGS.
- ✓ Make sure your Accessibility Statement reflects changes in the site and identify areas you know don't comply.
- ✓ Make sure you have the information in another format for those that cannot access the online version upon request.
- ✓ Make sure you pass on your knowledge to your colleagues.
- ✓ When hiring new people, check their web accessibility knowledge.

Reminder of Actions

As a simple guide, to start to comply you need to have the following:

- ✓ A review of all website content to assess what complies & what doesn't
That will then help you with...
- ✓ Create an up-to-date, WCAG compliant Accessibility Statement & Accessible Documents Statement.
- ✓ Run a WCAG 2.1AA report to see what's wrong.
- ✓ A plan to address the website framework issues - set a plan.
A process to regularly monitor & review the website.
- ✓ A process to provide requests for content that is not in a compliant format.
- ✓ And not forgetting... make sure you follow the Transparency Code. This is not about the technical element 'code' of the site – it's about what you publish and how.

Information resource

1. **Free Google Chrome browser extension checker**, WAVE by WEBaim: <https://wave.webaim.org/extension/>
2. **Free Google Chrome browser extension checker**, SiteImprove <https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/siteimprove-accessibility/efcfolpjihicnikpmhnmphjhpiclljc>
3. **Google's Lighthouse WCAG Chrome browser extension checker:**
<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/lighthouse/blipmdconlkpinefehnmjammfjppmpbjk?hl=en>
4. **Free WCAG 2.1AA validator:** <https://www.w3cag.org/WCAG2-AA-validator>
5. **Paid-for WCAG 2.1AA checker:** <https://www.deque.com/tools/worldspace-comply/>
6. **GDAS template for accessibility statement:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sample-accessibility-statement>
4. **GDS template for accessible documents statement:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sample-accessibility-statement/sample-accessibility-statement-for-a-fictional-public-sector-website>
5. **Detailed description of WCAG 2.1AA:** <https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG21/quickref/?versions=2.0>
6. **We provide WCAG compliant website packages:** <https://www.aubergine262.com/wcag-compliant-websites-for-public-bodies/>

All links are provided as guidance. Do your own checking and make sure when you visit a website you don't know you have robust anti virus software on your computer. We cannot accept any responsibility for any issues or data loss as a result of you visiting a 3rd party website. The references to 3rd party services are purely for demonstration purposes only. Following these guidelines is no guarantee of compliance and you must do your own research and checking.

* When you may be exempt from accessibility regulations. All UK service providers have a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 or the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (in Northern Ireland). But the following organisations are exempt from the 2018 regulations: Non-government organisations like charities - unless they are mostly financed by public funding, provide services that are essential to the public or aimed at people with a disability. Schools or nurseries - except for the content people need in order to use their services, for example a form that lets you outline school meal preferences public sector broadcasters and their subsidiaries. Check with your legal adviser (if you have one) if you're not sure whether the new accessibility rules apply to you.