

# **Report on the Accessibility of the Berkswell PC web site to those using “Google Read Aloud”**

## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of the check was to establish whether the web site could be “read” by an automated reader for the benefit of those with impaired vision. Google “read aloud” was used.

## **2. Overall conclusions**

- 2.1. The web site main pages are partially machine readable with odd variations in what is read and what is not.
- 2.2. Many of the PDFs are machine readable
- 2.3. It is clear that the Clerk tries to keep the web site up to date, particularly on key documents. However, some/much of the content is out of date making the web site “cluttered”
- 2.4. It must be noted that our Clerk only works 12 hours per week and maintaining a multi-faceted web site is time consuming. It requires content both to be written, re-written or updated and then up-loaded in an appropriate location.
- 2.5. The documents are often very wordy with key issues lost within a “blizzard” of words, which are easy to skim across for a sighted person but laboriously read by a machine reader.
- 2.6. Over time the structure of web-sites need to be reviewed to ensure they are meeting changing needs. No such review has taken place since the web-site was launched and as part of making the web-site accessible for the visually impaired and sighted.

## **3. Proposed actions**

- 3.1. With immediate effect the Clerk must test new any documents placed on the web site to ensure that they are machine readable. That particularly applies to minutes and agenda.
- 3.2. Minutes of meetings need to be reduced in size to reflect decisions and not discussion. That will enable both fully sighted people and the visually impaired to more easily understand decisions taken. If there are key points that support a decision, then they should be recorded but it is suggested that individual contributions to discussion are no recorded because they do not aid comprehension by the reader whether visually impaired or not. (CF Balsall PC and SMBC minutes)
- 3.3. Tables are very useful for presenting information for sighted people. When machine read, they become very unclear as to what is being “said” because the “machine2 reads box by box without the context of column or row labels. In the short term the Clerk should look at restructuring the minutes away from the use of tables. (CF Balsall PC minutes)
- 3.4. A cleansing of the web site should take place to remove redundant and old documents and the structure then reviewed/adjusted to current priorities.
- 3.5. Web pages which are not fully machine readable should be updated/restructured to allow them to be so read.
  - 3.5.1. Where a hyper link is included it should be preceded by the word “Click hyperlink here” or similar
  - 3.5.2. Once the site has been “optimised” the PC can set about systematically ensuring that each document is machine readable wherever possible (Charts/tables/pictures are problematical)
- 3.6. After taking those actions, the “accessibility” should be reassessed.

## 4. General Observations

4.1. Titles in grey bars do not read. See pictures below



4.2. Abbreviations to not read well. The abbreviation Cllr reads as separate letters C – L – L – R and should not be used going forward.

4.3. It will not read most hyper-link and when it does it is not possible to hear that it is a hyper-link.

## 5. Page Specific observations

### 5.1. Home Page

5.1.1. The latest news, next meeting, current news does not machine read

5.1.2. Parish

5.1.2.1. This section seems to read including the 5 subsections (The parish today, community organisations, parish councillors, parish contacts)

5.1.3. Recommendations on home page;

5.1.3.1. The parish contact section has no content and could be deleted

5.1.3.2. I wonder if the community organisations listing is up to date and how it could be kept up to date. Should we delete it and just cross refer to community web sites)

5.1.3.3. The sub-section called "The parish today" has two headings and the one on the menu reads "The Parish" which is confusing given that is the name for the section.

5.1.3.4. The word "conurbation" is misspelt in the parish today the hamlets and settlements paragraphs line 5. It machine reads very strangely.

### 5.2. Notices and news

5.2.1. Main page

5.2.1.1. It reads all the headings but not the links, so you just get a series of dates

5.2.1.2. Sub headings

5.2.1.2.1. Covid advice – reads page without link

5.2.1.2.2. Notice of Poll dates to 2019

5.2.1.2.3. Visit to Marsh Lane nature reserve – out of date

5.2.1.2.4. West Midlands Trains stakeholder conference – out of date

5.2.2. Recommendation on main notices and news page – why do we have Notices and news page when we cannot keep it up to date. Delete this section.

### 5.3. Council Business

5.3.1. Agenda and meetings – only the first 6 lines read. The rest is links and does not read

5.3.2. Calendar of meetings – won't read links, won't read bit in grey bar

5.3.3. Meetings archive – will not read

5.3.4. Supporting papers – reads the text but not the supporting links.

#### **5.4. Finance and Governance**

5.4.1. Similar to a section called Governance and Finance but with different content

5.4.2. Won't read titles in grey bars

5.4.3. Won't read links to PDF files

5.4.4. But PDF files will read

#### **5.5. Planning and Development**

5.5.1. Reads web page but hyper-links not read

#### **5.6. Current Projects**

5.6.1. Reads first line only

5.6.2. Reads none of the headings in the menu "In this section"

#### **5.7. Governance and Finance – main tab from home page**

5.7.1. It reads the web page except for

5.7.1.1. Subtitles in grey boxes

5.7.1.2. Links to the documents

5.7.2. This is a highly complex web page.

5.7.3. A bit of a dumping ground for "stuff"

#### **5.8. Contacts**

5.8.1. PO Box will not read out

5.8.2. Will read the section on complaints

5.8.3. It does read out the hyper link but it is not clear that that is what it is. Need "click here" in front of it.

5.8.4. Same issue of titles in grey boxes

**Andrew Burrow**

**9<sup>th</sup> October 2020**