

WORKSHOP FOR PARISH & TOWN COUNCIL CLERKS

The Digital Clerk

Master your council's website for compliance, clarity and community

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Breakthrough Communications

What we'll cover

Topic	Mins
Welcome: noticeboard or community hub?	2
The compliance checklist: WCAG 2.2 AA in plain English	9
Publish once, reach many	6
Beyond agendas and minutes	5
Inclusive content design	5
Dan Purchase: comms, PR, GDPR and council messaging	12
Your toolkit and questions	6

Noticeboard or community hub?

What the law asks of your website

- The 2018 public sector accessibility regulations apply to parish & town councils
- The standard is **WCAG 2.2 level AA** – monitored since October 2024
- Publish an accessibility statement, and keep it current and honest
- Offer accessible alternatives on request, and a way to report problems
- **AGAR Assertion 10:** digital and data compliance is now tested at audit
- Plus the essentials: AGAR documents, notice of public rights, Transparency Code

NEXT TIME YOU LOG IN

Open your accessibility statement and check its review date. Over a year old? Update it.

What's new in WCAG 2.2

- **Focus not hidden** – keyboard users can always see where they are
- **Bigger targets** – buttons and links at least 24 × 24 pixels
- **No drag-only actions** – always offer a simple click alternative
- **Consistent help** – contact details in the same place on every page
- **Don't ask twice** – no re-entering the same information in a form

NEXT TIME YOU LOG IN

Use the free WAVE browser tool by WebAIM on your website for an instant check.

Where councils usually slip up

- **Scanned PDFs** – to a screen reader, just a blank picture
- **Uploading inaccessible documents** – untagged PDFs and unstructured Word files
- **Missing alt text** – or alt text that says "IMG_4021.jpg"
- **"Click here" links** – meaningless when read out of context
- **Pale text**, or text laid over busy photos
- **Wrong heading levels** – not using Heading 1, 2, 3 to structure the page
- **Videos without captions**, and tables used for layout

NEXT TIME YOU LOG IN

Find your three most-downloaded documents. Could each one be a web page instead?

Publish once, reach many

- Put the full content on your website first – one source of truth
- Then share the link: social media, newsletter, email alerts, noticeboard
- Write it once in plain English; trim it to suit each channel
- Use templates for agendas, minutes, news and notices
- Let your website do the work: email subscriptions, scheduled publishing, auto-archiving
- **Don't automate social posting** – spend 5 extra minutes writing for each platform, and link back to the site

NEXT TIME YOU LOG IN

Publish your next notice as a web page, then share that one link everywhere else.

Less time, more impact

- **A publishing calendar** – meetings, deadlines, seasonal news
- **One naming rule** – e.g. "2026-10-07 Full Council Minutes"
- **Batch your updates** – one fixed slot each week
- **Archive, don't delete** – a current site and an intact record
- **Use AI for first drafts** – plain-English summaries, then check them

NEXT TIME YOU LOG IN

Book a recurring 30-minute "website hour" in your diary – and protect it.

Beyond agendas and minutes

- **Show the vision** – projects, plans and progress in plain words
- **"You said, we did"** – close the loop on every consultation
- **Faces and names** – who your councillors are and what they do
- **Reasons to return** – news, events and local photos
- **Make it easy to act** – report it, book it, apply, have your say
- **Shout about the good work** – it's golden news and social content; link back to the news post or page

NEXT TIME YOU LOG IN

Add one "You said, we did" story to your home page this month.

Inclusive by design, not by accident

- **Accessible online forms**, not files to download – PDFs and Word forms are barriers
- **Gather feedback on the website** – and drive traffic to it from social
- **Post about the same thing more than once** – different days and times reach different people
- **Check your signposting** – quick links for the most common contact themes
- **Link to principal authority services** – bins, roads, planning, council tax

NEXT TIME YOU LOG IN

List the five things residents contact you about most, and add a clear link for each.

PART 5 · COMMUNICATIONS

Over to Dan

Dan Purchase

Breakthrough Communications

Managing good comms · Good and bad PR · Where GDPR comes in · Council messaging on the website, social media and beyond

Five things for your next login

1. Check your accessibility statement is current and honest
2. Tab through your home page and note anywhere you get lost
3. Turn one popular PDF into a proper web page
4. Rewrite one page in plain English, with real headings
5. Add one story that shows what the council has achieved

Audit-ready = a current statement, a known standard, a simple review routine, and evidence you follow it.

THANK YOU

Questions?

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