Great Gransden Parish Council

Accessibility test report

This test report is based on the template dated May 2018 that was published at: https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/report-template/. The template was cut and pasted into this page, adapted to our needs and the test results incorporated.

Contents

Executive Summary

This report describes the conformance of the Great Gransden Parish Council website with W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines(WCAG). The review process is described in Section 5 below and is based on evaluation described in Accessibility Evaluation Resources.

Based on this evaluation, the Great Gransden Parish Council website is close to meeting WCAG 2.1, Conformance Level AA. Detailed review results are available in Section 6 below. Resources for follow-up study are listed in Section 7 below. Feedback on this evaluation is welcome.

Background about Evaluation

Conformance evaluation of web accessibility requires a combination of semi-automated evaluation tools and manual evaluation by an experienced reviewer. The evaluation results in this report are based on evaluation conducted on the following date(s): 31 December 2019, 26-28 January 2020, and 3 September 2020. The website may have changed since that time.

Scope of Review

- This is a review of the Great Gransden Parish Council ("GGPC") website
  - The purpose of this website is to make available online information about GGPC, including its councillors, the policies for operation that it has adopted, timely announcements about forthcoming meetings, the minutes of past meetings, and other information that GGPC deems of interest to its parishoners.

- The URL of the website is www.greatgransdenpc.org.uk, with ggpc.gransdens.org as an alias; the site is implemented using Goggle Classic Sites technology, with the underlying site being sites.google.com/site/greatgransden.

- The pages reviewed were the home page, http://www.greatgransdenpc.org.uk/home, as it is the main point of entry to the site, plus a selection of other pages chosen to be representative:

  - http://www.greatgransdenpc.org.uk/privacy-policy
  - http://www.greatgransdenpc.org.uk/home/2020-08-17-extra-meeting
  - http://www.greatgransdenpc.org.uk/archive

- URLs excluded from consideration were those containing old posts that had been archived, referenced via http://www.greatgransdenpc.org.uk/archive/old-posts.

- The tests were performed on 31/12/2019, 28/01/2020 and 3/09/2020.

- The website is in UK English

Reviewer(s)

- The review was performed by Nigel Day, a member of GGPC, with input from other members of the Parish Council.

- Contact information for GGPC can be found at www.greatgransdenpc.org.uk/contact, and for the reviewer at www.greatgransdenpc.org.uk/councillors.

- The reviewer has worked as a software developer and systems analyst for 35 years. He has developed and maintained web sites for over 20 years. As he has limited specific experience in website accessibility issues, the review should be considered an (extended) basic accessibility check.

- The reviewer is a native UK English speaker.

Review Process

- Conformance was tested against WCAG 2.1 Level AA.

- The WAVE tool (http://wave.webaim.org/) was used to test the selected web pages.

- Manual tests were performed on a Windows 10 laptop, using both Microsoft Edge and Firefox; on the latter, the Web Developer extension was used to inspect individual elements of web pages.

- NVDA version 2019.2.1 was used to test that the web pages worked with screen reader software.

- Microsoft Edge was used manually to ensure that the text of selected PDF reports (for example, meeting agendas and minutes) could be read aloud.

Results and Recommended Actions

- Interpretative summary of review results

  - Given the limitations of the current site builder/host being used, the site is close to meeting WCAG 2.1 AA.
  - The site has been reorganised with high-visibility themes, and care is being taken to ensure that documents such as meeting minutes and agendas that are posted in PDF format are structured for use with text to speech tools. The elements on the site that damage accessibility are not under our control, given the limitations of the free sitebuilder tool currently being used.
  - As described in the migration plan, moving to another sitebuilder tool would allow us to enhance readability, but would require an effort to convert to the new tool as well as ongoing costs.

- Detailed results

  - Analysis of our home page using the WAVE tool on 3 September 2020 showed 4 errors, 38 alerts and no contrast errors. As described in the report summary in the appendix below, the errors and alerts all related to features over which we have no control:
    - The page did not have a language descriptor (Google Classic Sites does not embed one in the HTML it delivers to the browser).
    - Google Classic Sites did not set a first level heading around the page title, and set the wrong level heading on the title of posts embedded in the page.
    - Google Classic Sites automatically embeds some small graphic elements on the page, but does not provide alternative text for these elements.
    - Google Classic Sites uses tables to control the layout of the page - an effective technique, but one that makes it difficult for visitors using some accessibility tools to navigate around the page. The WCAG standard asks that tables be used for tabular data with heading columns and/or rows, not as a layout assistance tool.

  - Meeting agendas, minutes, and clerk's reports are prepared using Microsoft Word, and the 'save as PDF' facility is used to generate copies for the website. Prior to

them being uploaded to the website, they can be opened using the Windows Edge browser, which has an inbuilt text-to-speech engine that is used to check that the document has a usable structure. The agenda and meeting notes for the September 2020 meeting of the parish council were checked in this way on September 2020 as part of the site accessibility test performed on that date.

- Improvement plan

    o A migration plan is in place, first to investigate affordable alternatives, and then to build a new web site using the selected site builder and host. In the meantime, we will continue to use the existing site building environment, use the WAVE tool to check new pages as they are created to ensure they contain no errrors or alerts other than those relating to page elements not under our control, and check that PDF documents we generate have a suitable structure for use with text-to-speech tools before uploading them.

References

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)Overview
  https://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines2.1
  https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/
- Techniques for WCAG 2.1
  https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG21/Techniques/
- Accessibility Evaluation Resources
  http://www.w3.org/WAI/eval/
- Web Accessibility Evaluation ToolsList
  https://www.w3.org/WAI/ER/tools/
- Using Combined Expertise to Evaluate WebAccessibility
  https://www.w3.org/WAI/eval/reviewteams
- Guidance: Make your website or app accessible and publish an accessibility statement
  https://www.gov.uk/guidance/make-your-website-or-app-accessible-and-publish-an-accessibility-statement
- Guidance: Doing a basic accessibility check if you cannot do a detailed one
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/doing-a-basic-accessibility-check-if-you-cant-do-a-detailed-one

Appendices

WAVE report on the site's home page

The report on the home page produced by WAVE was generated by the following link: wave.webaim.org/report#/http://www.greatgransdenpc.org.uk/. The report is in the form of a web page with clickable elements to allow readers to delve into the details, rather than a static page or file that could be copied and included here.

When run on 3 September 2020, it reported that there were no contrast errors. It also reported one error and one alert that applied to the whole page, neither of which can be corrected using the tools provided by the site builder:

- **"Error: Document language missing**

  The language of the document is not identified.

  Identifying the language of the page allows screen readers to read the content in the appropriate language. It also facilitates automatic translation of content."

- **"Alert: Missing first level heading**

  A page does not have a first level heading.

  Headings facilitate page navigation for users of many assistive technologies. They also provide semantic and visual meaning and structure to the document. A first level heading (<h1>) should be present on nearly all pages. It should contain the most important heading on the page (generally the document title)"

In addition a further 3 errors and 18 alerts were reported, relating to individual items on the page. All 3 errors all related to graphic elements automatically added to the page by the site builder - two icons indicating a linked file was a PDF, and an RSS feed icon next to the link for generating an RSS feed for the page:

- **"Error: Missing alternative text**

  Image alternative text is not present.

  Each image must have an alt attribute. Without alternative text, the content of an image will not be available to screen reader users or when the image is unavailable.

  Add an alt attribute to the image. The attribute value should accurately and succinctly present the content and function of the image. If the content of the image is conveyed in the context or surroundings of the image, or if the image does not convey content or have a function, it should be given empty/null alternative text (alt="")."

3 alerts related to 'skipped heading levels', caused by the way the site builder embedded posts into the page, using a fourth level heading (<h4>) instead of an top level heading for for the title of the post - which gives confusion when the post contains second level headings (<h2>):

- **"Alert: Skipped heading level**

    A heading level is skipped.

    Headings provide document structure and facilitate keyboard navigation by users of assistive technology. These users may be confused or experience difficulty navigating when heading levels are skipped.

    Restructure the document headings to ensure that heading levels are not skipped."

2 alerts related to the presence of PDF files attached to one of the posts:

- **"Alert: Link to PDF document**

    A link to a PDF document is present.

    Unless authored with accessibility in mind, PDF documents often have accessibility issues. Additionally, PDF documents are typically viewed using a separate application or plug-in, and can thus cause confusion and navigation difficulties.

    Ensure the PDF document is natively accessible. Additionally, inform the user that the link will open a PDF document. Because PDF documents may have limitations in accessibility (particularly for complex content) and require a separate program, HTML content should often be used in place of or in addition to the PDF document."

The remaining 13 alerts relate to the site builder's use of HTML table structures to organise the way elements were laid out in the document (as opposed to using tables for presenting tabular data, complete with headings):

- **"Alert: Layout table**

    A layout table is present.

    Layout tables exist merely to position content visually - to create columns, insert spacing, or align content neatly for sighted users. Their content is not at all tabular in nature. Layout tables should not be used in HTML5. They can introduce reading and navigation order issues. Screen readers may interpret them as data tables (i.e., announcing column and row numbers), especially if they contain table header (<th>) cells. This introduces significant overhead on screen reader users.

    In almost every case, layout tables can be replaced with other HTML elements and styled with CSS to achieve the desired visual presentation. If the table contains tabular data, provide appropriate header (<th>) cells. If the layout table remains, verify that the reading

and navigation order of table content (based on underlying source code order) is logical and give it role="presentation" to ensure it is not identified as a table to screen reader users."

WAVE report on http://www.greatgransdenpc.org.uk/privacy-policy

This page was selected as representative of a page with a lot of text. It contians links to other pages on the site and to external pages, and a link to a PDF document in our archive.

When run on 3 September 2020 on the above-mentioned page, WAVE reported 0 contrast errors, 1 error relating to missing information about the document language, 1 alert about a missing first level header, and 3 alerts about layout tables. The notes about this error and alerts were identical to those reported about the home page (see above). As before, none of these can be corrected by users of the site builder.

WAVE report on http://www.greatgransdenpc.org.uk/home/2020-08-17-extra-meeting

This page was chosen as a representative blog post, which also appears encapsulated on the home page. Unlike most of the blog posts, it has some attached PDF files - these were not generated by us, but were attached for the convenience of the parishoners as they were difficult to find on the external sites from which they were taken.

When run on 3 September 2020 on the above-mentioned page, WAVE reported 0 contrast errors, 1 error relating to missing information about the document language, 1 error about missing alternative text for an icon that had been automatically inserted by the site builder, 1 alert about a missing first level header, and 3 alerts about layout tables. The notes about the errors and alerts were identical to those reported about the home page (see above). As before, none of these can be corrected by users of the site builder.

WAVE report on http://www.greatgransdenpc.org.uk/archive

This page contains the archive of PDF documents such as the agenda and minutes of council meetings, financial accounts etc., and uses a special 'file cabinet' template.

When run on 3 September 2020 on the above-mentioned page, WAVE reported 0 contrast errors, 1 error relating to missing information about the document language, 19 errors about missing alternative text for an icon that had been automatically inserted by the site builder, 1 alert about a missing first level header, and 3 alerts about layout tables. The notes about these errors and alerts were identical to those reported about the home page (see above). There were also 21 errors relating to blank table headers, used for layout control:

- **"Error: Empty table header**

   A <th> (table header) contains no text.

   The <th> element helps associate table cells with the correct row/column headers. A <th> that contains no text may result in cells with missing or incorrect header information.

If the table cell is a header, provide text within the cell that describes the column or row. If the cell is not a header or must remain empty (such as the top-left cell in a data table), make the cell a <td> rather than a <th>."

In addition, there was one alert about a suspicious text link, relating to the use of the word 'here' as a link to another page on the site rather than a more descriptive text:

- **"Alert: Suspicious link text**

  Link text contains extraneous text or may not make sense out of context.

  Links, which are often read out of context, should clearly describe the destination or function of the link. Ambiguous text, text that does not make sense out of context, and extraneous text (such as "click here") can cause confusion and should be avoided.

  Where appropriate, reword the link text so that it is more descriptive of its destination when read out of context. Remove any extraneous text (such as "click here")."

This is a genuine accessibility glitch that was addressed shortly after the WAVE test report had been analysed. There were also two alerts about the use of <noscript>, which appear to be related to information lines about very-recently updated documents:

- **"Alert: Noscript element**

  A <noscript> element is present.

  Content within <noscript> is presented if JavaScript is disabled. Because nearly all users (including users of screen readers and other assistive technologies) have JavaScript enabled, <noscript> cannot be used to provide an accessible version of inaccessible scripted content.

  Ensure that scripted content is accessible. The <noscript> content will be presented to very few users, but must be accessible if used."

(The Noscript alerts disappeared when the page was retested on 6th September.) With the exception of the 'suspicious link text' alert, none of the reported errors and alerts can be corrected by users of the site builder.