

Accessibility Statement for Hamble Parish Council Website

This accessibility statement applies to the Hamble Parish Council website at <https://hambleparishcouncil.gov.uk/>.

This website is managed by Hamble Parish Council. We want as many people as possible to be able to use this website.

How Accessible This Website Is

We understand accessibility is important to our users. Here's what works well and what doesn't on this website:

What you can do:

- Keyboard navigation works logically throughout the site
- No keyboard traps detected
- UserWay accessibility widget receives focus and activates with keyboard
- Zoom in up to 400% without the text spilling off the screen (content reflows correctly at narrow viewport widths)
- Navigate most of the website using just a keyboard

What you cannot do:

- Access some images and visual content without text alternatives
- Navigate some interactive elements using keyboard alone
- Easily understand some complex instructions or form labels
- Use assistive technology with some advanced features

Compliance Status

This website is partially conformant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.2 Level AA. Partially conformant means that some parts of the content do not fully conform to the accessibility standard.

An accessibility audit was conducted in February 2026 by Smart Marketing using a combination of automated testing tools and manual verification. The audit examined all 61 pages of the website. Of the 54 WCAG 2.2 Level AA success criteria, the website fully meets 26 criteria (48%), partially meets 5 (9%), fails 7 (13%), 15 are not applicable (28%), and 1 advisory criterion is included as a best practice recommendation (2%). The non-conformances are listed below.

Non-accessible Content

The content listed below is non-accessible for the following reasons.

Non-compliance with the Accessibility Regulations

Issue	WCAG Criterion	Priority	Target Date
Empty alt text on linked images		P1 Critical	
Colour contrast below minimum ratios		P1 Critical	
Empty links with no accessible text		P1 Critical	
Multiple H1 headings per page		P2 High	

Phone number marked as H2 heading		P2 High	
Missing autocomplete on form fields		P2 High	
PDF links without format indicator		P2 High	
HTML lang set to en-US not en-GB		P2 High	
Generic form error messages		P2 High	
Focus indicator intermittently visible		P3 Medium	
Empty href links in template		P3 Medium	

The full details of each issue, including affected pages and specific recommendations, are provided below.

Perceivable

- **Empty alt text on linked images:** On the homepage, 3 of 15 images have empty alt text (alt="") while inside links. These are news post thumbnails — informative images that should have descriptive alt text to convey their meaning to screen reader users. WCAG 1.1.1 (Non-text Content).
- **Multiple heading levels on each page:** Every page has 2-4 H1 headings instead of a single H1. The phone number appears as an H2 heading in the header template. This breaks the document structure for assistive technology users who rely on heading hierarchy to navigate pages. The News page is unique in having no H1 at all. WCAG 1.3.1 (Info and Relationships).
- **Missing autocomplete on contact forms:** The Name and Email fields on the Contact, Report a Problem, and similar WPForms lack autocomplete attributes, preventing browser autofill from working. This is particularly important for users with motor or cognitive disabilities. WCAG 1.3.5 (Identify Input Purpose).
- **Colour contrast below required ratios:** On the homepage, 47 contrast errors were identified by WAVE. Computed contrast ratios include 1.00:1 on the 'Latest News' section heading (same colour as background), white text on teal (#33BAD1) at 2.31:1, grey text (#999999) on white at 2.85:1, and white on grey (#B2B2B2) at 2.12:1. The Contact page H1 'Contact Us' has a contrast ratio of 2.05:1. Minimum required: 4.5:1 for normal text and 3:1 for large text. WCAG 1.4.3 (Contrast Minimum).
- **Focus indicator not consistently visible:** The black box focus indicator is present on most interactive elements but is intermittently invisible on some elements, particularly those on dark backgrounds. This can cause keyboard users to lose track of their position on the page. WCAG 1.4.11 (Non-text Contrast).

Operable

- **Empty links without accessible text:** Many links across the site have no accessible text. This means screen reader users cannot determine where the link will take them. 4-13 empty links appear on every audited page from template elements such as UABB creative buttons, Events Manager calendar navigation arrows (em-calnav), and modal close buttons (em-close-modal). WCAG 2.4.4 (Link Purpose in Context).
- **Empty href links:** 22-114 links per page have empty or '#' href attributes. Many come from template navigation elements and the events calendar. These placeholder links should be removed or replaced with functional URLs. WCAG 2.4.4 (Link Purpose in Context).
- **PDF links without format indicator:** Approximately 470+ PDF links across the site do not indicate they link to PDF documents. The Newsletter page has 86 PDFs from 2017-2026 archives with no format labels. The Finance & Audits page has 90 PDFs without indicators. The Planning Committee page has 148 PDFs without format labels. Recent committee pages have started adding '(pdf, opens in new window)' labels, indicating an improving trend, but the majority of older links lack this information. Users are not warned that clicking will download or open a PDF. WCAG 2.4.4 (Link Purpose in Context).
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Understandable

- **HTML language set to en-US:** The HTML lang attribute is set to 'en-US' instead of 'en-GB', which may cause screen readers to use American English pronunciation for a UK parish council website. This should be corrected to en-GB. WCAG 3.1.1 (Language of Page).
- **Generic form error messages:** When forms are submitted with empty fields, the error message 'This field is required' appears on all fields without specifying what information is needed. For example, the Name field should show 'Please enter your name' rather than a generic message. WCAG 3.3.3 (Error Suggestion).

Robust

- **Empty links lack programmatic name:** Some template links lack both visible text and aria-label attributes, meaning they have no programmatically determinable name for assistive technology. WCAG 4.1.2 (Name, Role, Value).

Additional Observations

The following observations do not represent formal WCAG failures but are noted as areas for improvement:

- **Links opening in new windows:** Links on every page open in new browser windows or tabs without informing the user beforehand. Between 5 and 147 links per page behave this way depending on page content (document-heavy pages have more). This can disorient users, particularly those using screen readers. This relates to WCAG 3.2.5 (Change on Request) which is a Level AAA criterion — not required at AA level, but considered best practice. Consider adding '(opens in new window)' warnings as part of Phase 2 improvements.
- **UserWay accessibility overlay widget:** The site uses the UserWay accessibility overlay widget which is present on every page. While it provides some user-facing controls and receives keyboard focus, accessibility overlays are widely considered insufficient as a sole remediation strategy. The underlying HTML issues (heading hierarchy, empty links, colour contrast) should still be fixed to provide genuine accessibility rather than relying solely on widget-based solutions.
- **Inconsistent PDF labelling trend:** Recent PDF links on Full Council and similar pages have started including '(pdf, opens in new window)' format indicators, showing an improving trend. However, the majority of older PDFs lack these labels. A site-wide fix to automatically append '(PDF)' or similar text to all PDF links would be more efficient than manually updating each document.
- **News page missing H1:** The News page (/news/) is unique among all audited pages in lacking any H1 heading. This violates the expectation that every page should have at least one H1 heading. News items appear as both H4 (in sidebar widget) and H3 (in main listing), creating duplicated heading levels. An H1 should be added for the page title.

What Works Well

The audit also identified several areas where the website performs well for accessibility:

- Proper landmark regions (main, nav x2, header, footer, search) on all pages
- All images have alt attributes; no completely missing alt attributes
- Most images have meaningful alt text (11 of 15 on homepage with useful descriptions)
- Keyboard navigation works logically throughout the site
- No keyboard traps detected
- UserWay accessibility widget receives focus and activates with keyboard
- Both iframes have titles ('UserWay Accessibility Menu', 'Map showing location of Hamble Parish Council')

- Viewport meta allows user scaling and responsive design present
- Mobile menu and responsive CSS functioning correctly
- WPForms fields all have proper labels with label-for associations
- Recent PDF links have format indicators '(pdf, opens in new window)' — inconsistent but improving trend
- No auto-playing media or animations detected
- Page titles are unique and descriptive on most pages
- Cookie consent banner present
- Content reflows correctly at narrow viewport widths

What We Are Doing to Improve Accessibility

We are committed to making this website accessible to all users. Following the accessibility audit conducted in February 2026, we have developed the following improvement plan:

Phase 1 — Critical fixes (target: April 2026)

- Fix colour contrast failures on homepage — 47 WAVE contrast errors with ratios as low as 1.00:1 on 'Latest News' section heading. White text on teal backgrounds (2.31:1), grey on white (2.85:1) all fail minimum 4.5:1 requirement. Quick fix: use white text on dark backgrounds.
- Add accessible text to all empty links — 4-13 per page from template elements (UABB buttons, calendar navigation, modal close buttons). Screen readers cannot determine link purpose. Add aria-label attributes to each.
- Add alt text to news thumbnail images — 3 linked images on homepage have empty alt text (news post thumbnails). Add descriptive alt or ensure surrounding link text provides context.

Phase 2 — High-priority fixes (target: June 2026)

- Fix heading hierarchy — every page has 2-4 H1 headings instead of single H1. Phone number appears as H2 in header. News page uniquely lacks any H1. Template + content fix required. Use sequential heading levels without skipping.
- Add autocomplete to form fields — Name and Email fields on Contact, Report a Problem, and similar forms lack autocomplete attributes. Add autocomplete='name' and autocomplete='email' to enable browser autofill.
- Add PDF format indicators — ~470 PDF links lack format labels. Newsletter page: 86 PDFs (2017-2026 archives with NO labels). Finance: 90 PDFs. Planning Committee: 148 PDFs. Full Council: ~362 older PDFs. Recent PDFs starting to include '(pdf, opens in new window)' — extend to all.
- Change HTML lang from en-US to en-GB — UK parish council should use en-GB for correct screen reader pronunciation. Template fix.
- Remove phone number H2 from header — change to paragraph or span tag. Template fix.
- Improve form error messages — all fields show generic 'This field is required' instead of specific guidance. Change to 'Please enter your name', 'Please enter a valid email', etc.

Phase 3 — Medium-priority fixes (target: August 2026)

- Remove empty href links (#, empty) from template — 22-114 per page. Placeholder links should be removed or replaced with functional URLs. Template fix.
- Ensure focus indicator consistently visible — black box focus outline exists but not always visible on all elements, particularly on dark backgrounds. Use CSS to guarantee visible focus on all interactive elements.
- Add scope attributes to cookie consent table headers — table has headers but no scope='col' or scope='row' attributes.

Ongoing

- Add '(opens in new window)' warnings to external links — WCAG 3.2.5 Advisory (AAA level). 5-147 links per page open new windows without warning. Use visible text or aria-label.

Disproportionate Burden

We are not currently claiming that any accessibility issues present a disproportionate burden to fix. We believe all identified issues can be reasonably addressed within the timescales outlined above.

Content That Is Not Within the Scope of the Accessibility Regulations

The following content is exempt from the accessibility regulations:

- PDF documents published before 23 September 2018, unless they are essential to the services we provide
- Third-party content that is not funded by, or under the control of, Hamble Parish Council (for example, embedded Google Maps or social media feeds)

What to Do If You Cannot Access Parts of This Website

If you need information from this website in a different format, you can request it from us. We will consider your request and aim to provide the information to you within 10 working days. Alternative formats may include:

- Large print
- Easy read format
- Audio recording
- Accessible PDF
- Braille

To request information in an alternative format, please contact us:

- Email: operations@hambleparishcouncil.gov.uk
- Phone: 023 8045 3422
- Post: Hamble Parish Council, Hamble Village Memorial Hall, 2 High Street, Hamble-Le-Rice, SO31 4JE

If you have difficulty accessing this website, you can also get help and advice from AbilityNet at <https://mcmw.abilitynet.org.uk/>

Reporting Accessibility Problems with This Website

We are committed to making this website accessible. If you find any accessibility issues that are not listed on this page, or if you believe we are not meeting our accessibility obligations, please let us know by reporting the problem to us.

How to report an accessibility problem

- Email: operations@hambleparishcouncil.gov.uk
- Phone: 023 8045 3422
- Post: Hamble Parish Council, Hamble Village Memorial Hall, 2 High Street, Hamble-Le-Rice, SO31 4JE

We aim to respond to all accessibility reports within 5 working days. If you are not satisfied with our response, you can contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS) at <https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/>

Feedback and Contact Information

We welcome feedback on the accessibility of this website. If you have any suggestions for improvements or general feedback, please contact us:

- Email: operations@hambleparishcouncil.gov.uk
- Phone: 023 8045 3422
- Post: Hamble Parish Council, Hamble Village Memorial Hall, 2 High Street, Hamble-Le-Rice, SO31 4JE

Enforcement Procedure

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is responsible for enforcing the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (the 'accessibility regulations').

If you are not happy with how we respond to your complaint, contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS): <https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/>

Technical Information About This Website's Accessibility

Hamble Parish Council is committed to making its website accessible, in accordance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. This website is required to be accessible under these regulations.

Platform and Technology

This website is built using WordPress 6.x as the content management system, with the Beaver Builder theme (bb-theme) and a child theme for customisation. Page layouts are built using Beaver Builder page builder (version 2.9.4.2) with Beaver Themer (version 1.7.19.1). Forms are managed using the WPForms plugin. The website uses HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript, and PHP, and is designed to be compatible with modern web browsers including Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Apple Safari, and Microsoft Edge.

Accessibility Features Implemented

- Proper landmark regions (main, nav ×2, header, footer, search) on all pages
- All images have alt attributes; no completely missing alt attributes
- Most images have meaningful alt text (11 of 15 on homepage with useful descriptions)
- Keyboard navigation works logically throughout the site
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- Both iframes have titles ('UserWay Accessibility Menu', 'Map showing location of Hamble Parish Council')
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- Page titles are unique and descriptive on most pages
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Known Limitations

- Some third-party content and embedded widgets may not be fully accessible
- PDF documents published before 23 September 2018 may not be fully accessible
- Some Beaver Builder template components require remediation to improve accessibility

Template-Level Improvements

Many of the identified accessibility issues are related to the Beaver Builder theme templates and layout modules, meaning they can be addressed through theme-level updates rather than page-by-page changes. This is significant because it means a relatively small number of template changes will benefit all 61 pages simultaneously.

How This Statement Was Prepared

This statement was prepared on 20 February 2027.

It was prepared based on findings from an accessibility audit conducted by Smart Marketing in February 2026. The audit examined all 61 pages of the website using:

- Automated browser testing using custom JavaScript analysis scripts to check page structure, heading hierarchy, link text, image alt text, form labels, ARIA attributes, colour contrast, and embedded content
- Manual testing using the WAVE accessibility evaluation tool on key pages
- Manual keyboard navigation testing to verify focus visibility and tab order
- Visual inspection for images of text, colour-only information, and auto-playing content

The full audit report is available from Hamble Parish Council on request.

This statement will be reviewed and updated by 20 February 2027, or sooner if significant changes are made to the website.