**East Chinnock Parish Council Website Assessment**

**Under Regulation 7(2) of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.**

These regulations state that local authority websites must be accessible for users with disabilities.

The current Council website is straightforward to use and it contains the information that is required to be published under the Transparency Code. Due to financial constraints it has been constructed as simply as possible which the council believe will make it more accessible. It has no animation, flashing images or interactive sections which could cause problems for those with epilepsy or confusion in those with learning or cognitive disabilities. All documents are text which are stored on the cloud and accessed by a simple ‘click here’. Modern computers allow the text size to be increased for those with poor vision. However, there is no facility on the website for audio versions of the documents for those without sight but again, most modern computers have the ability to covert text into audio or apps can be downloaded for this.

East Chinnock Parish Council is a small council with 409 electors as of December 2018. There is good broadband coverage in the village and the most of residents are connected. The majority of residents are also mobile and active. The village hall is well used by the residents for such activities as coffee mornings, village lunches, WI, Gardening Club, Knit and Natter Group as well as commercial activities such as exercise classes. The village notice board is outside the village hall and opposite the post box and bus shelter and is consequently seen by a large percentage of the village population. The Agendas, Minutes and Notices are displayed on this noticeboard as well as the website.

Council meetings are held every month except August in the village hall which is in the centre of the village and easily accessible to most residents. In addition the council funds a regular newsletter (The Chinnock Chimes) which is delivered to every home in the village and contains contact information for the clerk and councillors and items of interest from the minutes. All the councillors and the clerk live in the village and are regularly out and about in the village either at events (coffee morning Gardening Club etc), dealing with council matters such as keeping the rights of way clear, inspecting the roads and the play equipment or simply enjoying a stroll.

There is a village website run by a local couple which contains information about the village history, village events and news. However, the council have been informed that this will no longer be maintained once the current software ceases to be supported. The council have tried to find a volunteer to take over the running of this valuable resource but have been unable to find anyone. This leads the councillors to believe that they are unlikely to find someone to further upgrade the council website unless they can come up with a substantial fee.

The council has a precept of less than £10,000 and relies heavily on volunteers to help balance the budget. Volunteers cut the play area grass, plant and maintain the planters, keep the area at the Lookout Point tidy, run community events such as the annual Bonfire Celebration and summer Music Evening, strim sight lines at junctions, run a Speedwatch etc.

Fundraising is currently taking place to enable the purchase of a Speed Indication Device as the village straddles the main A30 and many vehicles exceed the speed limit. Plans are also underway for an upgrade of the children’s play area. This is a well-used facility and some of the equipment is over forty years old. Although it is hoped that the majority of the funding for this will come from grants, the council still needs to find a substantial sum for the renewal of the lease (estimated at £2,500 which is over 25% of the current precept) The council have said that any spare capacity in the budget will be committed to these two items as they will benefit a large percentage of the population.

The council concludes that the vast majority of the residents have easy access to council information either from the current website, the noticeboard, the councillors and clerk or the village newsletter. In a small village most people know each other and look out for those with disabilities, so they consider that it is unlikely that anyone would be disadvantaged by the current set up.

They consider that the cost of upgrading the website to include additional features such as audio would be disproportionate to the number of people who may benefit. In addition they consider that in this village those most likely to benefit from such upgrades are the least likely to use a website and are much more likely to look at the noticeboard or phone the clerk or councillors if they want any information. As councillors they are charged with providing value for money for the village and consider that due to the very small number who are likely to benefit from upgrading the council website, the likely costs would not give a great enough return.

The current content of the site has been considered and the council feel that it is as straightforward as they can make it bearing in mind that due to the limited financial resources available, it was constructed and is maintained by the clerk who has had only limited computer training. The clerk is happy to undergo additional training should any reasonably priced courses be run in the area. The council will continue to monitor the site and make improvements where possible. They will also bear in mind the needs of those with disabilities when adding new documents. However, some documents such as The Annual Return paperwork are issued in a proscribed format and cannot be altered.

In conclusion they feel that the simplicity of the site construction and the ability of disabled users to download assistance apps make it currently as accessible as it can be without substantial investment which would benefit very few, if any, users.

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