Accessibility Statement for Horndean Parish Council Website

This accessibility statement applies to the Horndean Parish Council website at https://horndeanpc-hants.gov.uk/.

This website is managed by Horndean 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:

- A 'skip to content' link is provided on every page, allowing keyboard users to bypass the navigation
- The viewport allows user scaling and zooming
- Keyboard navigation works logically with no keyboard traps detected
- 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 35 pages of the website. Of the 54 WCAG 2.2 Level AA success criteria, the website fully meets 27 criteria (50%), partially meets 5 (9%), fails 9 (17%), 12 are not applicable (22%), 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 Links (no accessible text)	2.4.4	Critical	TBD
Links opening new windows without warning	3.2.5	High	TBD
PDF links missing format indicator	2.4.4	High	TBD

Heading hierarchy violations	1.3.1	High	TBD
Generic/missing page titles	2.4.2	High	TBD
Colour contrast failures on homepage sections	1.4.3	High	TBD
Empty or missing alt text on informative images	1.1.1	Critical	TBD
Missing autocomplete attributes on contact form	1.3.5	High	TBD
Multiple CSS rules removing focus outlines	2.4.7	Medium	TBD
Multiple form labels on some inputs	1.3.1	Medium	TBD

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

Perceivable

- **Empty alt text on informative images:** Multiple pages have empty alt text (alt="") on images that are clearly informative content, not decorative. Screen readers skip these images entirely, so users have no indication of what the images show. The worst affected pages are: Photo Gallery (14 of 45 images have empty alt text), Green Trail & Heritage Network (9 of 14 images), and Latest News and Events (8 of 12 images). Some additional images have alt text derived from filenames rather than meaningful descriptions. This fails WCAG 1.1.1 (Non-text Content).
- **Heading structure:** Heading levels are skipped on approximately 16 of the 35 pages (for example, jumping from h1 to h4, or h2 to h5). This can make it harder for screen reader users to understand the page structure and navigate between sections. Affected pages include: Homepage, Planning & Public Services Committee, Finance & General Purposes Committee, Policies, Housing Development Engagement, Halls for Hire, Open Spaces, Conservation Areas, Planning, Green Trail & Heritage Network, Staff Committee, Grounds Committee, Annual Parish Meeting, Staff, Local Government Reorganisation, and Proposed Developments. This fails WCAG 1.3.1 (Info and Relationships).
- **Autocomplete attributes:** The contact form fields for Name, Email, and Phone do not have autocomplete attributes. This prevents browser autofill from working, which is particularly important for users with cognitive or motor disabilities. This fails WCAG 1.3.5 (Identify Input Purpose).
- **Colour contrast:** Some text on the homepage and contact page does not have sufficient colour contrast against its background. On the homepage, headings in the feature sections have contrast ratios as low as 1.52:1 (the minimum required is 3:1 for large text and 4.5:1 for normal text). On the contact page, form labels and the page heading have contrast ratios as low as 1.03:1. Contrast was confirmed as passing on three additional pages tested (Meetings & Minutes, Councillors, Policies), indicating the issue is localised to specific template sections. This fails WCAG 1.4.3 (Contrast Minimum).
- **Form labels:** On the contact page, some form inputs have missing, empty, or duplicate labels. The WAVE accessibility tool detected 1 missing form label, 1 empty form label, and 2 inputs with multiple form labels. The homepage also has 2 inputs with multiple form labels. This makes forms harder to use with assistive technology. This fails WCAG 1.3.1 (Info and Relationships) and WCAG 3.3.2 (Labels or Instructions).

Operable

- **Empty links:** Many links across the site have no accessible text. This means screen reader users cannot determine where the link will take them — they hear only 'link' with no description. This affects every page on the site, with between 5 and 46 empty links per page. The Photo Gallery page is the worst affected with 46 empty links. Most of these appear to be social media icons and image-based links in the header and footer areas. This fails WCAG 2.4.4 (Link Purpose in Context).

- **PDF link indicators:** Approximately 471 links to PDF documents across the site do not indicate the file format. Users are not warned that clicking a link will download or open a PDF rather than navigate to a web page. This is particularly significant on document-heavy pages such as Parish Council Meetings (396 PDF links), Finance & General Purposes Committee, and Policies. This fails WCAG 2.4.4 (Link Purpose in Context).
- **Page titles:** Six pages have generic page titles showing only 'Horndean Parish Council' rather than describing the specific page content. The affected pages are: Housing Development Engagement, Horndean Neighbourhood Improvement Plan, Local Government Reorganisation, Speedwatch, Proposed Developments, and Report a Problem. This makes it harder for users to identify pages in browser tabs, bookmarks, or search results. This fails WCAG 2.4.2 (Page Titled).

Understandable

- **Form error messages:** When the contact form is submitted with errors, the error messages are generic ('This field is required') rather than specifying what information is needed in each field. For example, the email field should say 'Please enter a valid email address' rather than simply 'This field is required'. The page does scroll to the first error and errors appear under the relevant fields, which is positive. This fails WCAG 3.3.3 (Error Suggestion).

Robust

- **Untitled iframes:** Embedded content (iframes) on three pages lacks title attributes, meaning screen reader users cannot identify what the embedded content contains. The affected pages are: Halls for Hire (3 untitled iframes), Contact Us (2 untitled iframes, likely embedded maps), and Maps & Cycle Routes (1 untitled iframe). This fails 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:

- **Focus indicators:** 14 CSS rules in the site's stylesheet remove focus outlines (outline:none or outline:0) on interactive elements. Manual testing confirmed that keyboard focus is currently visible via browser default styles, but these CSS rules could cause problems in some browsers or future browser updates. We recommend replacing these rules with visible custom focus indicators.
- **Alt text quality:** While all images across the site have alt text attributes (which is positive), some alt text values appear to be derived from filenames rather than meaningful descriptions (e.g., 'Christmas-Closure-Heading-image-WEBSITE'). We recommend reviewing alt text across the site to ensure descriptions are meaningful and useful to screen reader users.
- **Links opening in new windows:** Links on every page open in new browser windows or tabs without informing the user beforehand. Between 5 and 11 links per page behave this way. 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. We recommend adding '(opens in new window)' warnings as part of the Phase 2 improvements.
- **Broken page:** The Grant Funding page (https://horndeanpc-hants.gov.uk/grant-funding/) returns a 404 error but remains in the site navigation. This should either be restored or the link removed from the menu.

What Works Well

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

- A 'skip to content' link is provided on every page, allowing keyboard users to bypass the navigation
- Most images have alt text attributes, though some informative images have empty alt text which is being addressed as a priority
- Proper landmark regions (navigation, main, footer, header, search) are used throughout the site
- The HTML language attribute is correctly set to English
- The viewport allows user scaling and zooming
- Keyboard navigation works logically with no keyboard traps detected
- No auto-playing media or animations were found
- Content reflows correctly at narrow viewport widths without requiring horizontal scrolling (WCAG 1.4.10 Reflow)
- Form errors display under the relevant fields and the page scrolls to the first error

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: March 2026)

- Add accessible text to all empty links — this affects every page and makes the site very difficult to navigate with a screen reader. Most empty links appear to be social media icons and image links in the header/footer. Adding aria-label attributes is the quickest fix.
- Add meaningful alt text to all informative images — multiple pages have empty alt text (alt="") on content images that are clearly not decorative. Worst affected: Photo Gallery (14 of 45 images), Green Trail & Heritage Network (9 of 14), Latest News (8 of 12). Screen readers skip these images entirely.
- Fix colour contrast failures on the homepage and contact page — headings and form labels are essentially invisible against their backgrounds with ratios as low as 1:1. Contrast was confirmed as passing on three additional pages (Meetings & Minutes, Councillors, Policies), so this is localised to specific template sections. Use white text on dark backgrounds or substantially lighten the background.
- Fix form labelling issues — the contact form has missing, empty, and duplicate labels. Each input must have exactly one clear, associated label.

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

- Add '(PDF)' format indicators to all PDF links — approximately 471 PDF links across the site lack format indication. This is particularly important on document-heavy pages like Parish Council Meetings (396 links).
- Fix heading hierarchy on 16 pages — headings skip levels (e.g., h1 to h4), breaking the document structure for screen reader users. Restructure to use sequential levels. This is primarily a Beaver Builder template fix.
- Create unique page titles for 6 pages currently showing only 'Horndean Parish Council'. Each page should have a descriptive title describing its content.
- Add new window warnings to links with target='_blank' — affects 5-11 links on every page. Use visible text or aria-label to indicate opening in new window.
- Add autocomplete attributes to the contact form — the Name, Email, and Phone fields lack autocomplete attributes, preventing browser autofill for users with cognitive or motor disabilities. Add autocomplete='name', autocomplete='email', and autocomplete='tel'.

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

- Replace CSS outline:none rules with visible focus indicators — 14 CSS rules detected removing focus outlines on various interactive elements. While manual testing confirmed focus is currently visible via browser defaults, these rules could cause problems in certain browsers.

- Add title attributes to untitled iframes on Halls for Hire (3 iframes), Contact Us (2), and Maps & Cycle Routes (1). Estimated effort: content updates, 30 minutes.
- Improve form error messages — currently generic ('This field is required'). Change to specific messages such as 'Please enter your name' or 'Please enter a valid email address'.

Ongoing

- Remove or restore the Grant Funding page — currently returns a 404 error but remains in the navigation menu. Either restore the page or remove the navigation link.

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, Horndean 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: contact@horndeanpc-hants.gov.uk**
- **Phone: 02392 597766**
- **Post: Horndean Parish Council, Jubilee Hall, Crouch Lane, Horndean PO8 9SU**

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: contact@horndeanpc-hants.gov.uk**
- **Phone: 02392 597766**
- **Post: Horndean Parish Council, Jubilee Hall, Crouch Lane, Horndean PO8 9SU**

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: contact@horndeanpc-hants.gov.uk**
- **Phone: 02392 597766**
- **Post: Horndean Parish Council, Jubilee Hall, Crouch Lane, Horndean PO8 9SU**

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

Horndean 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 6.9.1 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 2.10.0.7) with Beaver Themer (version 1.5.2.1). 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

- A 'skip to content' link is provided on every page, allowing keyboard users to bypass the navigation
- Most images have alt text attributes, though some informative images have empty alt text which is being addressed as a priority
- Proper landmark regions (navigation, main, footer, header, search) are used throughout the site
- The HTML language attribute is correctly set to English
- The viewport allows user scaling and zooming
- Keyboard navigation works logically with no keyboard traps detected
- No auto-playing media or animations were found
- Content reflows correctly at narrow viewport widths without requiring horizontal scrolling (WCAG 1.4.10 Reflow)
- Form errors display under the relevant fields and the page scrolls to the first error

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 35 pages simultaneously.

How This Statement Was Prepared

This statement was prepared on 20 February 2026.

It was prepared based on findings from an accessibility audit conducted by Smart Marketing in February 2026. The audit examined all 35 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 Horndean 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.