

Cllr Harris Report/Action Plan – September 2020

Communications

1. Website [Agenda Item 9.2]

❖ Background:

- Legislation set out in the 'Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018' requires Local Councils to ensure their website meets standards set out in the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1](#)
- Furthermore, conformity needs to be met by **September 23rd 2020**.
- There are three levels of WCAG 2.1 conformity: Level A, Level AA, and Level AAA – our website is partially conformant with Level AA; fortunately, most of the non-conforming elements relate to the inherent set-up of the hosting platform (**e-voice**), which the Council is unable to affect.
- As part of the legislation compliance, an **Accessibility Statement** has to be published on the website, explaining how accessible it is and what and why parts do not conform to the WCAG standards – exceptions are allowed if it can be shown that the work required to achieve it would impose a [disproportionate burden](#) on the Council within the meaning of the guidelines.
- After studying the guidelines and what other Councils using the **e-voice** platform have done, I am confident that these exceptions also apply in our situation.

❖ Action to date:

- The draft **Accessibility Statement** has been circulated for information.

❖ Further Actions:

- The Council needs to approve the statement in order for the legally-required information to be added to the website before **23rd September 2020**.

2. E-newsletter (Maplestead Magna Carta) [Agenda Item 13]

❖ Action Plan:

- **Issue 33** is scheduled for publication on **w/c 28th September 2020** (tbc).
- Editorial content for this issue is suggested to include:
 - Playing Field security update
 - Bee Bomb donations
 - Recap on decisions since last issue
 - Road Safety scheme update
 - Footpath repairs update
 - County Broadband update
 - Planning updates
 - Forthcoming events/cancellations

Footpaths

❖ Report:

- Two footpath defects were reported to Essex CC via their website in April:



A broken riser on the steps at the bottom of Church Field



A broken plank on the footbridge from the water meadow to Reyes Hill

- The response to both reports was that inspections would be carried out within 56 days. Subsequent to those inspections it was decided (typically) that neither defect was sufficiently serious to require immediate repair.

- Over the course of the summer however:



The step riser collapsed completely.



The defective plank on the bridge partially collapsed and the support beam (underneath the yellow line shown above) appears to have broken.

❖ **Action to date:**



In the absence of any likely action by Essex CC, the step riser has been replaced and secured and the step infilled.

- The bridge defects were re-reported to Essex CC on 31st August, along with above photos to show the extent of the deterioration since April. The response, on the 3rd September, was to install a completely new bridge and railings:



❖ **Action Plan:**

- An autumn cut of specified paths is due to be carried out by Mortimers shortly.
- Interim assessment and maintenance will continue to be carried out on an *ad hoc* basis to monitor path conditions/rectify problems.