



Ramsgate Town Council

WhatsApp Guidance for Allotments

Setting up WhatsApp groups

WhatsApp groups are an effective way to communicate quickly, and many people are using this method of communication in their personal lives already; this can make them very useful. **Please note however that WhatsApp is NOT a preferred means of communication within Ramsgate Town Council.**

These guidelines are for Site Representatives / Site Representative Groups and allotment tenants who wish to set up WhatsApp groups to facilitate convenient allotment site communication.

Gaining consent

Only add people to WhatsApp groups once you have obtained their consent. This can be verbal or in writing (eg. email). Explain the purpose of the group and this guidance.

It is important that if an individual does not have access to WhatsApp or does not wish to join the group, you **must** continue to communicate the same information with them via a different method such as email or text.

If an individual no longer wants to be part of the group, please remove them immediately.

Appropriate Use

Content and tone of messages **must** be appropriate and inclusive. There should be no swearing, accusations, argument, gossip, harassment, victimisation, discrimination, bullying or other vexatious or antisocial behaviour.

Complaints

WhatsApp communications are encrypted and cannot easily be shared or forwarded. If a person feels that they have been subjected to inappropriate communication, they will need to screenshot the messages as evidence and raise a complaint via the Allotments Officer. The Allotments Officer will deal with the complaint according to Ramsgate Town Council rules and any relevant current legislation e.g. the Equality Act 2010.

The person conducting inappropriate messaging may be subject to the loss of their allotment tenancy under Rule 6.38 of the Rules.

Removal from WhatsApp groups

If an individual breaches the guidelines, they should be asked to stop the behaviour. If they do not, they may be removed from the group entirely.

Sharing data

We DO NOT advise sending personal or confidential data via WhatsApp.

Remember!

What you post in a WhatsApp group could end up in the public domain.

This may be accidental or deliberate...individuals could use screenshots of messages as part of a complaint process or disclose on social media.

| DO | DO NOT |
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| Remind the members of the group of the behaviours that are unacceptable and the consequences of such behaviour. | Do not send an excessive number of messages. Where possible combine messages to reduce frequency. |
| Limit participants of the group to current allotment tenants only. Those who cease to be allotment tenants should be promptly removed. | Do not allow the content and tone of the messages to become inappropriate (as above in guidance). |
| Keep conversation topics relevant to the purpose of the group chat. | Do not send messages at inappropriate or antisocial times. Be considerate to members of the group. |
| Use the chat for reminders, asking advice, giving encouragement and praise. | Do not share confidential or personal data via WhatsApp. |
| Use WhatsApp as a friendly, convenient, and efficient tool to connect tenants. | |
| Do be mindful of tone and the possibility of miscommunication. | |

Maggie Nash
Allotments Officer
9th July 2025