



**Loughton Town Council  
Willingale Road Allotments  
WhatsApp Group Policy**

**Allotment Site WhatsApp Group Policy**

**1 Purpose**

Many tenants use WhatsApp groups to share information and support one another. This policy sets out expectations for appropriate use of these groups to ensure they remain positive, safe, and inclusive spaces.

**2 General Principle**

Allotment WhatsApp groups are informal community spaces, but all users must communicate responsibly and respectfully. Groups must not cause distress, conflict, or reputational harm to others.

**3 Scope**

This policy applies to all members of the allotment using WhatsApp for group communication.

**4 Role of the Council and Volunteers**

Loughton Town Council does not manage or control WhatsApp groups. However:

- Site volunteers may participate in groups
- Volunteers may help monitor behaviour and reinforce this policy where appropriate

All group members are responsible for their own conduct.

**5 Consent and Privacy**

- Members must give consent before being added to the group, phone numbers are visible to all members – respect each other's privacy
- Do not share personal information (e.g. addresses, photos) without permission
- Chats may be cleared periodically to maintain privacy and reduce clutter

**6 Appropriate Use**

WhatsApp groups should be used for:

- General allotment communication
- Sharing advice, tips, and information
- Reporting non-urgent issues or urgent on-site matters in a constructive manner
- Community updates and events

## **7 Responsible Behaviour**

All members are expected to:

- Communicate respectfully and considerately
- Avoid confrontational, inflammatory, or accusatory language
- Respect differing views and resolve disagreements calmly
- Consider the impact of messages before posting

## **8 Use of Images, Video and Information**

To protect individuals and prevent misuse:

Members must not:

- Share CCTV, wildlife camera footage, or photographs of individuals suspected of wrongdoing
- Circulate images or videos that could identify or accuse another person
- Engage in speculation or accusations
- Encourage others to identify individuals shown in footage or images

Sharing such material can lead to distress, escalation of conflict, and legal issues. Children must not be identifiable in shared images unless written parental consent is obtained. If not obtained, please cover the child's face with an emoji sticker.

## **9 Safeguarding and Children**

Children under 16 should not be added to the group

If children are involved in group-related activities:

- Parental consent is required for communication or image sharing
- Parents should be copied into any messages involving their children.

## **10 Reporting Incidents**

If a tenant has concerns about theft, trespass, or other incidents:

- These must be reported directly to Loughton Town Council
- Where appropriate, matters should be reported to the police

WhatsApp groups must not be used to:

- Investigate incidents
- Identify or accuse individuals
- Organise group responses to suspected wrongdoing

## **11 Prohibited Use**

The following are not permitted within WhatsApp groups:

- Personal attacks, harassment, or threatening behaviour
- Sharing private or sensitive information about others
- Excessive or inappropriate messaging that disrupts the group

## **12 Moderation and Action**

Where misuse occurs:

- Volunteers may remind members of this policy
- Group admins may remove inappropriate content
- Persistent misuse may result in removal from the group

Serious incidents may be referred to Loughton Town Council for further consideration under tenancy agreements.

## **13 Review**

This policy will be reviewed periodically considering site issues and feedback.

**Information**

Any concerns or questions about WhatsApp Groups on site should be referred to the Allotment Officer or Town Clerk by writing to Loughton Town Council, 1 Buckingham Court, Rectory Lane, Loughton, IG10 2QZ or by email to [contact@loughton-tc.gov.uk](mailto:contact@loughton-tc.gov.uk), or telephone 020 8508 4200.

Town Clerk  
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