



Saxilby with Ingleby Parish Council

Media and Social Media Policy Supplement: WhatsApp

1. WhatsApp is considered a communication tool for councillors and employees. As such, any messages sent or received via WhatsApp within groups created by Saxilby with Ingleby Parish Council are subject to Subject Access Requests (SARs) and Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.
2. It is essential that councillors and employees ensure all WhatsApp exchanges are professional, appropriate, and in-line with organisational policies. Please refer to the full Media and Social Media Policy for detailed guidance.
3. The below guidelines, agreed at FC25-03, will be regularly posted and pinned in the applicable WhatsApp group chats.

📌 Parish Council Groups – Guidelines for Respectful and Effective Communication 📌

Welcome to this parish council group. It is intended to be used as a communication tool for council related business. We ask all members to follow these guidelines to ensure a respectful, professional, and constructive environment. Participation in the group is subject to applicable council policies including the social media policy and civility and respect pledge.

✅ Be Civil and Respectful

- Treat all members with courtesy and respect.
- Disagreements are natural, but personal attacks, offensive language, and inappropriate comments/content will not be tolerated.

✅ Stay on Topic

- Keep discussions relevant to the group's purpose.
- If a conversation becomes off-topic, please take it to private messages.
- The group is not a forum for complaints—please direct concerns and complaints through the proper council channels.

✅ Messaging Etiquette

- Be mindful of the time when sending messages—avoid late-night, very early, and weekend messages unless urgent.
- There is no expectation of an immediate response, as members may not always be available.
- If a matter requires more detailed discussion, consider arranging a meeting rather than using the group chat.

✅ Use Professional and Clear Communication

- Messages can be subject to public record, Freedom of Information Requests (FOI) and Subject Access Requests (SARS).
- Do not share confidential information.
- Avoid excessive use of emojis, GIFs, or informal language in formal groups.

✅ Moderation and Compliance

- The council has signed up to the civility and respect pledge; It agrees to treat everyone with courtesy and respect and asks for the same in return. As an employer the council has a duty of care to protect staff.

To protect users and the council, messages or members who breach these guidelines may be removed from the group and reported.

Note: Further complementary information about the use of social media is available in the Social Media Civility and Respect Guide and Policy Supplement, Civility and Respect Project.