

Bristol Parks Volunteering

Guidance on using WhatsApp



Using WhatsApp to grow and promote your park group

WhatsApp is a free messaging app, useful for quick communication and staying connected in between face to face meet ups in your park

WhatsApp can be used to build a connected community of interest park users and active members.

You can use the app for:

- group chat for coordination
- broadcasts for one-way updates
- voice and video calls
- sharing documents, photos, and website links

Best Practice for Community Groups

1. Set Clear Boundaries

- define group hours (for example, Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm) and pause chats outside those times.
- use broadcast lists for announcements. This avoids message clutter and reduces pressure to respond.

2. Respect Privacy

- use invite links asking people to join groups instead of adding people manually - this gives members control over joining.
- avoid sharing personal data or contacting members outside the group without consent.

3. Create a group Code of Conduct

Include rules like:

- be kind and respectful
- no offensive or misleading content
- only share reliable links
- avoid posting photos of people without permission

Admins should be empowered to:

- delete inappropriate messages
- remind members of the code
- remove members if necessary

4. Use WhatsApp Features Wisely

- **broadcasts:** Send updates to many without starting a group chat
- **voice messages:** Great for accessibility
- **status updates:** Share campaign progress or event reminders

Data Protection Tips

- don't download chat content to shared computers
- store any downloaded files in secure, password-protected folders
- delete sensitive data when no longer needed

Alternatives to Consider

If privacy is a concern **Signal** offers more control over personal data and allows users to hide their phone numbers.

Choosing between WhatsApp and Signal largely depends on your priorities.

If **privacy and security** are your main concerns, Signal is the better choice due to its minimal data collection and enhanced privacy features.

If you value **convenience** and want to connect with a larger number of contacts WhatsApp may be more suitable due to its extensive user base and feature set.