



WA Community Etiquette

WhatsApp Community and groups are invaluable enabling us to stay in touch and build relationships. But there are a few unspoken rules your fellow members will thank you for observing. Remember, every chat or emoji you post is yet another 'ding' on someone's phone. Not everyone wants to receive constant notifications so, before posting, ask yourself these three questions:

1. Is this relevant and on topic?
2. Is this information necessary for the members in the group chat right now?
3. Is this a good time to post?

Ground Rules

1. Welcome newcomers to the group!
2. Answer questions and make sure people feel heard.
3. Conduct a chat as considerately as if you were face to face.
4. Think before you post and avoid responding hastily – especially if the topic or a previous comment provokes a strong emotional reaction in you. If in doubt sleep on it.
5. Before sending a message, check your facts and make sure they're accurate to avoid undue stress and anxiety. Only share information from reliable and dispassionate sources Online news items are written in such a way as to produce emotive headlines: even if the information is accurate, be mindful that these stories can produce anxiety. Remember other people in the group may be going through difficulties you are not aware of, so kindness and compassion is key.
6. Restrict communication to chats - don't use personal mobile numbers to make unsolicited contact with other members. Only call on a personal telephone number if you have express permission to do so from the network member.
7. However upset you feel about the climate and biodiversity stories we see every day 'out there', please you think twice about the language you use in the SIG chat groups when expressing your views. Some members may find swear words offensive. As a network

with a diverse membership, we'd like to avoid leaving NGH open to any criticism, or for the use of such language to undermine the positive and important messages you share. How you choose to communicate in your personal WhatsApp chats – is of course entirely up to you.

8. The aim of the SIG groups is to provide a safe space for members to share and discuss topics of mutual interest and benefit. They are not the place to post items which promote activities or events for commercial or business gain. Such posts will be removed by the SIG Administrator and the member will be informed of the reason.
9. WhatsApp Community Administrators may agree to the posting of paid-for events or activities in Community Announcements where the event is relevant and appropriate. Any member who would like to post any Announcement should contact the Administrator by email **[to northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com](mailto:to.northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com)**
10. Do share relevant and helpful links, photos and resources with other group members - once you've fact checked them.
11. Take two-way conversations out of the group chat and continue them in personal chats.
12. If people leave the chat in response to a post, this could be a sign of overheating - slow down, pause and reflect before posting again.
13. It is preferable to send a longer message over lots of separate ones; people then have the chance to opt in to read more.
14. Avoid encouraging anyone to vote or not vote for a political party or activist group. Those are personal choices and best left outside the WA Community.
15. Don't attribute information from the group chat elsewhere, such as quoting from it publicly and naming the originator without express permission.

NGH Guide for Members Updated by the Steering Group – November 2024