

THORPE MALSOR PARISH COUNCIL

WHATSAPP USE POLICY

Signed: Crispin Holborow (Chair)

Date: 26th January 2026

Date of next review: January 2028

Date	Revisions
29/01/2026	Date adopted

1. Purpose

This policy governs the use of WhatsApp for informal communication among councillors and staff. It is designed to uphold transparency, professionalism, and ensure compliance with all legal obligations, including the Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection legislation.

2. Scope

- It applies to all councillors and staff who are a member of a council WhatsApp group.
- It covers any WhatsApp group or message used for council-related communication.
- It does not replace formal communication channels such as email, meetings, or official documentation.

3. Principles of Use

- WhatsApp is for informal communication only (e.g. reminders, updates, urgent notices).
- Decisions must not be made via WhatsApp – all decisions must be taken at duly convened meetings.
- It must not be used for:
 - Discussions on confidential HR, legal, or financial matters
 - Debates on council policy or strategy
 - Sharing personal or sensitive data
- WhatsApp messages may be subject to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.
- WhatsApp is not a substitute for the Clerk's formal communications, agendas or papers.

4. Administration

- The Clerk (or nominated officer) will be the group administrator.
- Membership is limited to councillors and staff.
- Members may leave the group at any time.
- Former members must be removed from the group promptly upon leaving the council.

5. Conduct

All messages must adhere to the standards outlined in the Council's Code of Conduct, posts must be respectful, relevant and concise.

6. Data Protection & Security

- Members must use password-protected devices.
- WhatsApp is a third-party platform: sensitive/personal data must not be shared.