

# BLTC WHATSAPP ETIQUETTE & GUIDELINES

## 1. BACKGROUND

- a. Group chats are now the norm and can be a powerful method of communication and social cohesion. At BLTC we recognise the benefits that these chat groups can have on a tennis community and actively encourage its proper use.
- b. Chat groups can also have negative consequences if a clear remit and guidance/rules are not shared, implemented, monitored and compliance measures not taken if required.
- c. We will presume that different people want different things from different WhatsApp groups i.e. some may want to use Mixed Tennis All just to organise tennis and some may wish to use that forum for non-tennis organising communications; we have taken this into account when devising this policy. We have also asked the membership what they want from the groups.

## 2. PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

- a. To identify etiquette and other guidelines that help WhatsApp be used as effectively as possible and to minimise its misuse.

## 3. TRAINING/LEARNING

- a. We strongly encourage users to learn how to use this powerful tool in the most effective ways possible.
- b. BLTC don't provide training on WhatsApp; feel free to Google or YouTube "WhatsApp Tutorial" or something similar or ask anyone who is WhatsApp/IT literate to show you how to use it effectively.
- c. This document won't include information on how to use WhatsApp as the features change regularly and that information is freely available elsewhere.

## 4. WHICH WHATSAPP GROUPS ARE THERE AT BLTC?

### Main Groups

- a. BLTC Mixed Tennis All <https://chat.whatsapp.com/KThBxVRLUuYE7VMN9s0p1z>
- b. BLTC Ladies Tennis All <https://chat.whatsapp.com/H05PbaNLBfKBj4Nbx50JbH>
- c. BLTC Men Tennis All <https://chat.whatsapp.com/CXdNkNqUgs42U5IpEEWvbO>
- d. BLTC Juniors (contact Phil Spencer to join)
- e. Bowdon Tennis Community (this group was set up with the intention that it would include Bowdon Bowling and could be used for non-tennis-organising discussions) <https://chat.whatsapp.com/5opVvE0UQ4b95QmFukmrU2>
- f. BLTC Voice Pay it Forward. This was set up in October 2020 to allow for BLTC discussions to keep the other groups for tennis organising discussions. <https://chat.whatsapp.com/GlbcCMoj99h9pLdlIGIngr>
- g. If the above links stop working you can contact one of those below to request to be added:
- h. Head of Tennis: Phil Spencer 07773 738 981
- i. Club Development: Trevor Bailey 07875 773 384
- j. Performance Tennis: Dr Jonathan Khan 07977 076 887

### Speciality Groups

- a. There are also many other smaller groups e.g. (but not limited to) Ladies 1st Team, Coaches or even WL2Sun15Dec10.30HmBrklands (for a winter league 2nd team match on Sunday 15th December 10.30am at Home v Brooklands)

## 5. ETIQUETTE & GUIDELINES

**Q. Should the conversation be in a chat group or in a private message?**

- a. If the latter, consider messaging that person individually. This spares the rest of the group getting notifications of a personal matter not relevant to them.

#### **Q. If you can/can't make an event consider whether the group needs to know**

- b. If someone posts to ask who can make an event, replying yes can be helpful and encourages others to attend, especially in relation to socials where people are not sure if enough others will turn up.
- c. If you can't make it to an event, balance up whether it's beneficial for the group to know if you can't make it (sometimes it'll be useful and sometimes it'll be spam; use your own judgement).

#### **6. NON-TENNIS RELATED GROUPS**

- a. *'BLTC Voice Pay it Forward'* WhatsApp group was set up in October 2020 to allow for BLTC discussions to keep the other groups for tennis organising discussions.
- b. *'Bowdon Tennis Community'* WhatsApp group was set up to include Bowdon Lawn & Bowdon Bowling and to allow conversations not relating to organising tennis. What this is used for is fluid and is up to the members. The general rules relating to etiquette still apply to this WhatsApp group.  
Please don't post non-tennis related items to the other groups; sharing of good news relating to the club can help with community cohesion and feelings of belonging and wellness so this is encouraged in this group  
So, if something significant or interesting is happening that you'd like to share with the community, you are encouraged to do so in this group in preference to other more 'tennis organising related' groups.
- c. Caveat. The BLTC committee may publish 'announcements' in some tennis-organising groups from time to time if this is deemed appropriate and if other communication channels are not deemed to be sufficient in themselves. This practice will be kept to a minimum.

#### **7. AVOID 'SPAMMING'**

- a. Spam might be defined as unsolicited posts unrelated to the stated use of each group. Please do not spam the group with off-topic general chat (use 'Bowdon Tennis Community' for non-tennis items). However, occasional 'hijacking' of groups might be appropriate at times; once again, use your own judgement.

#### **8. MISC**

- a. Be mindful of material which might be considered as defamation, harassment, abuse, sexually explicit or otherwise obscene, racist or discriminatory etc. There will be some grey areas and common sense should be applied.
- b. Group members must consider GDPR and child protection guidelines when posting photographs/videos on their groups.

#### **9. AGE CONSIDERATIONS**

- a. Children under the age of 16 years should only be included in groups if permission has been given by their parent/guardian and by the Head of Tennis (Phil Spencer) (in a documented format)

#### **10. WHATSAPP MODERATORS**

- a. The above rules might/should be considered as 'common sense' and it would be helpful if we could help each other by policing sensible use of WhatsApp. Over time there may be posts which are considered 'inappropriate'; please feel free, as members, to give advice/suggestions for the conversations to be carried out out-with the main groups. Members are asked to accept/consider advice/suggestions on WhatsApp use by moderators and fellow members which will be given for the benefit of the wider community.

#### **11. WHEN TO POST**

- a. Please respect the time you post. Early in the morning or late at night posts are discouraged.

## 12. ACCEPTANCE OF ETIQUETTE & GUIDELINES

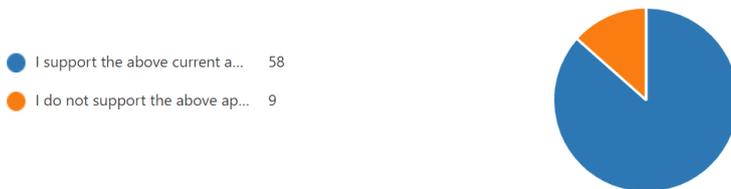
- a. By being in a club-linked WhatsApp group (you always have an option to remove yourself from a group if it doesn't suit you), participants agree to these guidelines.
- b. Please also note that by being in a group you are sharing your phone number & full name with the other members of the group.

## 13. MODERATORS / WHATSAPP SUBCOMMITTEE & COMPLIANCE

- a. Moderators hold the right to remove people from the groups if they perceive that the guidelines are not being adhered to.
- b. Notice or a 'warning' may or may not be given as is deemed appropriate.
- c. Removal may be temporary or permanent at the discretion of the Moderators
- d. Anyone removed will have the right to appeal at the next committee meeting following your appeal application (please direct your appeal to [committee@bowdonltc.com](mailto:committee@bowdonltc.com))

## 14. RESEARCH

- a. An MS Forms survey was sent out to a number of WhatsApp groups on 25 Oct 2020 to ask the question below. The results are also below. Summary: 87% supported the approach referred to above and 13% did not. This survey is one of many factors that contributed to the basis of this policy.



## Remit of WhatsApp Groups at Bowdon Lawn

When set up, the remit of the Mens, Ladies & Mixed WhatsApp Groups was to organise tennis games. People joined on that expectation.

When set up, the remit of The Voice & Bowdon Community WhatsApp groups was to discuss non-tennis organising matters. People joined on that expectation.

There is also a caveat where, on rare occasions, it might be appropriate to post messages in all groups; but the guidance is to keep this to a minimum, especially if other avenues of communication are available (other WhatsApp groups or email etc)

This consultation is to ask the membership if they support the above approach or wish to choose an alternative pathway (e.g. but not limited to posting in any group on any topic)

1. Please enter your name \*

2. Do you have a view on the above approach? \*

I support the above current approach - i.e. to stick to remits

I do not support the above approach

Other

3. Do you have any comments you wish to make on this topic?

## 15. UPDATES

05 Jan 2020. Written by Jonathan Khan

26 Oct 2020. Updated by Jonathan Khan