



**A Guide**  
**for**  
**New & Current Members**

## Introduction

The Steering Group has produced this guide to make it easy for new members to join the network and for current members to understand how the network is currently organised. It also includes the policies and procedures we have adopted to ensure we work professionally and within the law. This Guide covers the following topics:

1. NGH Statement of Purpose
2. The Steering Group
3. How to Contact Us
4. How to Join Us
5. The Benefits of being a member and the network's Expectations of you
6. Diagram of current organisation of the NGH Hub
7. Data Protection Policy & Procedure
8. Equal Opportunities Statement
9. WhatsApp Etiquette

## 1. NGH - Statement of Purpose

### **The Northumberland Green Hub:**

- Is a collection of community groups and individuals based in and around north Northumberland who are involved in tackling climate, environmental and sustainability issues.
- Is open to as many members of a community group that want to join.
- Is open to individuals who are not a member of a group.
- Will evolve to reflect the needs of its members.

### **NGH's Objectives are to:**

- Provide a space for people to meet, learn and collaborate on issues of shared interest.
- Provide a supportive, welcoming, and enjoyable environment.
- Share information about the activities of member groups and individuals.
- Publicise initiatives, events, opportunities, and funding from organisations working locally and nationally.
- Provide a platform through which to share skills and knowledge.
- Create a stronger voice by speaking and acting together on issues of common interest and concern.

### **Members of NGH should (where appropriate):**

- Act as a link between NGH and the groups to which they belong.
- Be able to represent both their own and the views of their group within NGH.
- Be able to feed back to their group about NGH

### **Decision Making**

- NGH will be run by a Steering Group (consisting of 6 members) all of whom are volunteers.
- Decisions will be taken on a majority basis.
- Steering Group meetings will be quorate with 4 members present.
- All key decisions will be informed by consultation with the wider membership.

## 2. The Steering Group

The current Steering Group meet regularly, either face to face or on Zoom to discuss matters affecting the network and to plan events, funding bids, etc.

Current Steering Group Members are:

- Liz Clark – Swarland and Newtown Action on Climate (SNAC)
- Lesley Long – SNAC & NCC Carbon Literacy Facilitator
- Mike Powell – Alnwick Friends of the Earth
- Julia Chambers - Warkworth Green Matters
- Colin Elliot – Greener Berwick
- Carmel Adamson – Amble WI / Northeast Organic Growers Association

If a member of the Steering Group resigns, then a replacement will be sought from within the NGH Community. This will be communicated via the members Digest and the Community Announcement channel. In the event of more than one person volunteering to become part of the Steering Group, existing members will make a decision based on the best fit between the skills required within the SG at that time.

## 3. How to Contact Us

**By Email:** [northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com](mailto:northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com)

**By WhatsApp** – we are all on as individual members. Please message us rather than call us on our mobiles. We do respond quickly.

## 4. How to Join Us

1. Membership of the network is free and open to individuals or those who are members of a community group involved in tackling climate, environmental and sustainability issues.
2. New members are asked to read the benefits and expectations of NGH before joining. (*See next section*).
3. To join please email [northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com](mailto:northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com) with the following information:
  - Your full name
  - Your mobile phone number – so we can include you in the WhatsApp Community
  - Your email address – so we can add you to the mailing list.
  - The name of any community group(s) to which you belong (*optional*)
4. One of the Steering Group will add you to the WhatsApp Community and send you a Welcome message. They will also ask you to write a short paragraph about yourself in the Introduce Yourself Group. They will add your email to the Google Groups mailing list and to the Members Database (*See Diagram on page 5 for more information*).
5. You can ask to join as many of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) as you wish. Just select the group and ask to join. One of the Admins will then approve your request. Please note – there may be a small delay if they are not currently online.
6. Each SIG has a description stating the focus of its discussion. The current Special Interest Groups are:

- Water Quality
- Community Food
- Live Well with Less
- Climate Crisis Resources
- Warmer Homes
- Water Quality
- Biodiversity & Wildlife
- Transport & Active Travel
- Coquetdale Green Network

Members are invited to suggest other special interest groups.

7. Once you are in a Special Interest Group you can chat with other members just as you would in a normal WhatsApp Group.
8. All members receive a copy of the WhatsApp Etiquette (*see Section 9*) to ensure that group discussions are positive, constructive, useful and respectful places to chat with each other.
9. From time to time the Steering Group will use the Announcement feature in the WhatsApp Community to send everyone a general message. For example, it might be about an upcoming event, some technical advice, or some funding that has suddenly become available, etc.
10. The Steering Group sends out a Bi-Monthly Digest of relevant news to Members via Google Groups. Contributions from members about upcoming events, funding opportunities, calls for volunteers, current projects, etc. are warmly welcomed. Please limit your copy to 100 words, include hyperlinks where helpful, and send your item with any photos as an attachment to [northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com](mailto:northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com)
11. Your name, phone number and email address are stored in the NGH database and stored in accordance with the NGH Data Protection Policy and Procedure. If you decide to leave the network, we will delete your data unless you specifically ask us to keep it for future mailing purposes. (*See Section 7 Data Protection Policy and Procedure*).

## 5. Benefits and Expectations

### Benefits of Being a Member

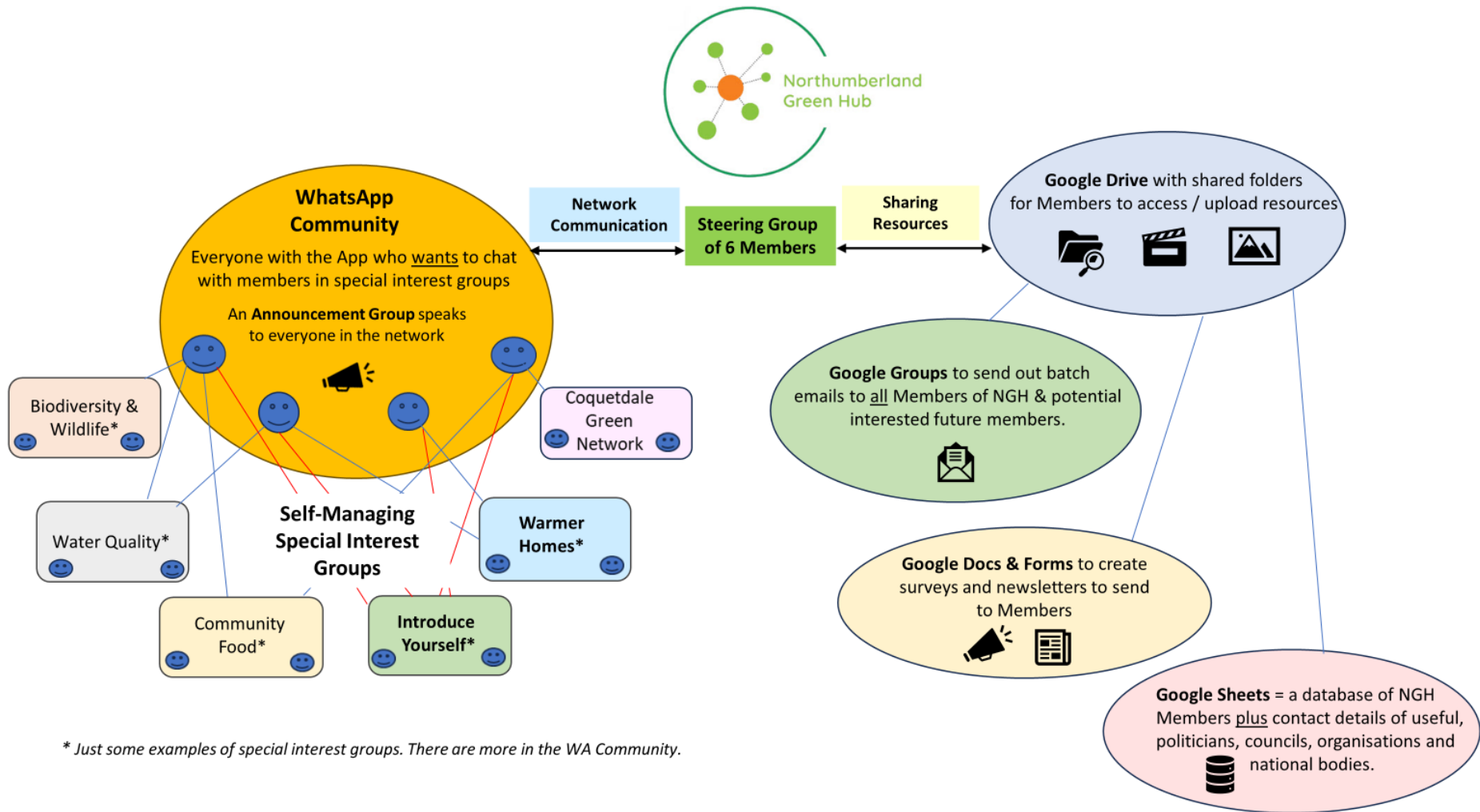
- Free to join.
- Opportunity to connect with others who are involved in climate, environmental and sustainability issues.
- Join a topic group and link up with others across the area.
- Share knowledge, experience and skills.
- Be part of a structured WhatsApp Community to avoid a blizzard of email messages.
- Workshop / events held 3 - 4 times a year.
- Access to online shared resource area.
- Regular Digest with details of events, funding and other key local topics.
- WhatsApp Etiquette, Data Protection Policy and Equal Opportunities Statement in place.

### Expectations of Members

- A positive attitude and willingness to get involved.

- Share information from NGH with local groups and vice-versa.
- Sign up to our Data Protection Policy, Equal Opportunities Statement and WhatsApp Etiquette Guidance.
- Help to publicise NGH.

## 6. Diagram of the Organisation of the Hub as of November 2023



## 7. Data Protection Policy & Procedures

# Data Protection Policy

### 1) Definitions

- 1) Personal data is information about a person which is identifiable as being about them. It can be stored electronically or on paper; it can include images and audio recordings as well as written information.
- 2) Data protection is about how we, as an organisation, ensure we protect the rights and privacy of individuals, and comply with the law, when collecting, storing, using, amending, sharing, destroying, or deleting personal data.

### 2) Responsibility

Overall and final responsibility for data protection lies with the Northumberland Green Hub (NGH) Steering Group, who are responsible for overseeing activities and ensuring this policy is upheld.

- 1) All members are responsible for observing this policy, and related procedures, in all areas of their involvement with NGH.

### 3) Overall policy statement

- 1) NGH needs to keep personal data about its members to carry out its activities.
- 2) We will collect, store, use, amend, share, destroy or delete personal data only in ways which protect people's privacy and comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other relevant legislation.
- 3) We will only collect, store, and use the minimum amount of data that we need for clear purposes, and will not collect, store, or use data we do not need.
- 4) We will only collect, store, and use data for:
  - purposes for which the individual has given explicit consent, or
  - purposes that are in our group's legitimate interests, or
  - contracts with the individual whose data it is, or
  - to comply with legal obligations, or
  - to protect someone's life, or
  - to perform public tasks.
- 5) We will provide individuals with details of the data we have about them when requested by the relevant individual.
- 6) We will delete data if requested by the relevant individual unless we need to keep it for legal reasons.
- 7) We will endeavour to keep personal data up-to-date and accurate.
- 8) We will store personal data securely.
- 9) We will keep clear records of the purposes of collecting and holding specific data, to ensure it is only used for these purposes.
- 10) We will not share personal data with third parties without the explicit consent of the relevant individual(s), unless legally required to do so.

- 11) We will endeavour not to have data breaches. In the event of a data breach, we will endeavour to rectify the breach by getting any lost or shared data back. We will evaluate our processes and understand how to avoid it happening again. Serious data breaches which may risk someone's personal rights or freedoms will be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office within 72 hours, and to the individual concerned.
- 12) To uphold this policy, we will maintain a set of data protection procedures for our committee and volunteers to follow.

#### **4) Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years.



# Data Protection Procedures

## 1) Introduction

- 1) Northumberland Green Hub (NGH) has a data protection policy which is reviewed regularly. To help us uphold the policy, we have created the following procedures which outline ways in which we collect, store, use, amend, share, destroy and delete personal data.
- 2) These procedures cover the main, regular ways we collect and use personal data. We may from time to time collect and use data in ways not covered here. In these cases, we will ensure our Data Protection Policy is upheld.

## 2) General procedures

- 1) Personal data will be stored securely. When it is stored online in a third-party website (e.g. Google Drive) we will ensure the third party comply with the UK GDPR.
- 2) When we no longer need data, or when someone has asked for their data to be deleted, it will be deleted securely. We will ensure that data is permanently deleted from computers, and that paper data is shredded.
- 3) We will keep records of consent given for us to collect, use and store data. These records will be stored securely.

## 3) Membership list

- 1) We will maintain a membership list which will include the name, email address, mobile phone number and group membership of people who have joined the network.
- 2) This membership list will be used to establish and administer a WhatsApp Community and a number of WhatsApp groups.
- 3) When people sign up to the NGH we will explain how their details will be used, how they will be stored, and that they may ask to be removed from the list at any time. We will only send them messages which they have expressly consented to receive.
- 4) Specifically, name, contact details and group membership will be stored in Google Drive which is only accessible by two members of the Steering Group.
- 5) The membership list will be shared from time to time with other members of NGH in order to facilitate communication, networking and information sharing amongst members.
- 6) NGH members should not share information from the membership list with people outside of NGH, without the explicit permission of the individual(s) concerned.
- 7) NGH members should not initiate contact with other members by phone without first making prior contact by WA or email.
- 8) We will not use the contact list in any way that the individuals on it have not explicitly consented to.
- 9) We will provide information about how to be removed from the contact list.

These procedures will be reviewed every two years.

## 8. Equal Opportunities Statement

- 1) We aim to create a safe and welcoming atmosphere for everyone. We want to challenge all forms of oppression including those based on race, ethnicity, nationality, creed, gender, sex, class, sexuality, gender reassignment, learning ability, physical impairment, mental illness, HIV status, age, occupation, income, wealth, and unrelated criminal conviction.
- 2) We aim to design our activities and decision-making processes to encourage and support participation from people who face disadvantage in society, including women, BME people, disabled people, LGBTQ people, and people on low incomes.
- 3) We will hold our meeting wherever possible in venues which are accessible to wheelchair users and, where necessary, have a hearing loop available.
- 4) If any member of NGH feels they have been discriminated against they should raise this with the Steering Group. The Steering Group will investigate the complaint, listening to all members involved with the aim to seek and agree a mutually agreeable resolution. (If the complaint is against a member of the Steering Group, that member will not be part of the group conducting the investigation).

## 9. WhatsApp 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:

- a. Is this relevant and on topic?
- b. Is this information necessary for the members in the group chat right now?
- c. 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. Do share relevant and helpful links, photos, and resources with other group members - once you've fact checked them.
8. Take two-way conversations out of the group chat and continue them in personal chats.
9. 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.
10. It is preferable to send a longer message over lots of separate ones; people then have the chance to opt in to read more.
11. 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.
12. 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 Prepared by the Steering Group – November 2023**