# Gardens Trust Training Handout: Introduction to Online Communications

The internet now offers us access to a huge range of options for groups who want to communicate online, either by instant messaging, voice, or video. It can be a bit confusing to know where to begin. We'll look at some of the most popular discussion groups, all of which can be used on a mobile or computer, and tell you how to sign up and get started.

**Why use online communication?**
The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of online communication, at a time when there are restrictions on meeting up with others for meetings, training and events. But perhaps this could turn out to be quite a useful nudge for us to explore the world of digital communication, after all, there are other advantages, including:
- cutting down the time, costs (both financial and environmental) and inconvenience of travel;
- making collaborative working much easier; and
- making it easier to check in 'little and often' with your group, rather than needing to put aside large chunks of time for meetings.

In this handout, we'll look at five of the most popular apps: Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger and Live.


## 1. Skype

Millions of individuals and businesses use Skype to make free video and voice one-to-one and group calls (for up to 50 participants), send instant messages and share files with other people on Skype. You can use Skype on your desktop computer, laptop, tablet or phone.
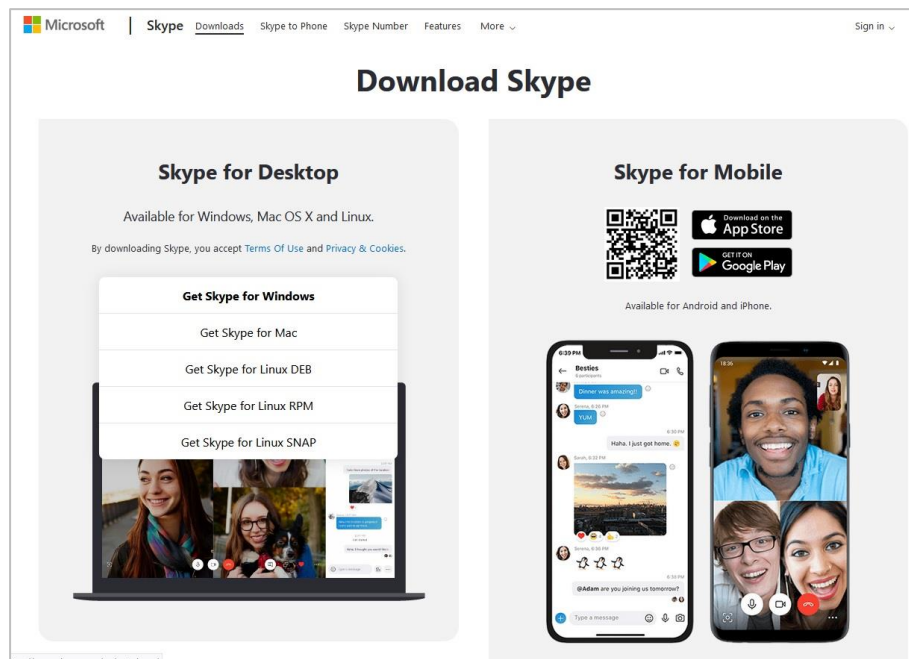
To use Skype for desktop you will need a webcam and microphone. Most webcams have inbuilt microphones but the audio quality may vary depending on your distance from the camera.

To download Skype, go to https://www.skype.com/en/get-skype/, where you'll see this screen:



**To use Skype for android phones**, download via the Google Play Store or click the link below (if opening via your android mobile device) https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.skype.raider&referrer=utm_source%3Dscomphonedownload

**To use Skype for Apple**, download via the Apple app Store or click the link below (if opening via your iOS mobile device) https://apps.apple.com/us/app/skype-for-iphone/id304878510

Once downloaded you will need to create a skype account, using either a phone number or your existing email address. You will then be prompted to be requested to verify your email address, and you'll need to check your email inbox for the verification code.

You can now start to invite your friends/colleagues by searching for their log-in names. If you can't find them by searching for their email address, you'll need to ask them if they have another user name.
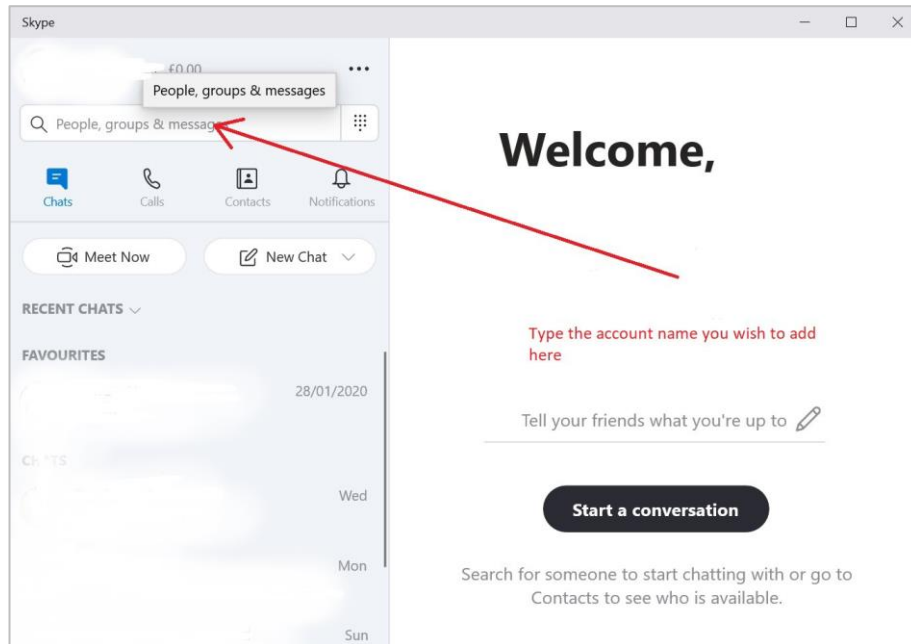
Select the appropriate symbol in the top right to start a voice or video call. To start a group call, you can add people to the conversation at any point, or make a group of contacts, who will all be called simultaneously.
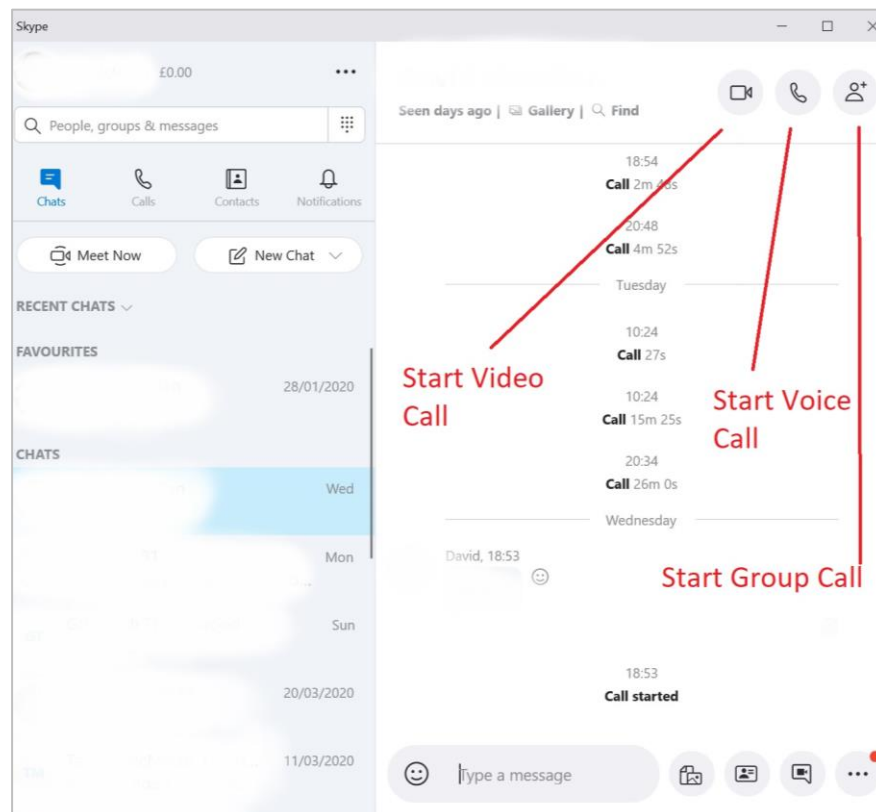


**Meet Now** allows you to set up a group for both Skype contacts and contacts who are *not* on Skype, enabling participants to join a conversation, whether they have an account or not. You can create a meeting like this by selecting

the 'Meet Now' button ⏹️. You'll get a call link and a 'Share Invite' button, to invite others. Once ready, click 'Start call'. If you receive a Meet Now invitation, simply click it to open Skype on whichever device you are on. If you don't have Skype installed on your desktop, Skype for Web will automatically open instead.

For any problems, there's a good support page here:
https://support.skype.com/en/skype/all/

## 2. Zoom 🔵

Zoom https://zoom.us/ is a cloud-based video conferencing platform. Like Skype, it can be used for live chat and video and audio conferencing on your phone or computer (so if using the latter you will need a webcam and microphone), but there are a few extras, the most significant of which are the ability to include large numbers of people in a conference call; and the option to record meetings.



Image: https://d22dvihj4pfop3.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/106/2020/02/24150007/hpc-team-on-zoom.jpeg

Zoom has quickly become one of the leading communication applications during the coronavirus pandemic. However, it has had a well-publicised problem with security issues. Zoom has acknowledged this and is working to improve security: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-52133349

**Basic Zoom** provides free video conferencing for up to 100 participants, but with a 40 minute time limit. One-to-one meetings have no time limits but group meetings with multiple participants are capped at 40 minutes, and meetings can't be recorded.
**Paid subscriptions**, from £11.99 to £15.99 a month, allow more participants (up to 1000), increase the time limit, and obtain more advanced features, such as recording meetings. You can view all the options here https://zoom.us/pricing. For groups who have one main person who usually convenes meetings, the Basic (free) or Pro (£11.99/month) levels should be enough.

Once you've chosen your Zoom plan, you can sign up here
https://zoom.us/signup and download Zoom onto your computer or phone.
Zoom can be downloaded for Android phones, via the Play Store, iOS via the
Appstore or via desktop by signing up on https://zoom.us/signup.

**On mobile devices:** download the app, enter your details (name and date of
birth) and you will be sent an email via which you can activate your account.
You'll then be given a user ID. From there you can start a new meeting or
join one (if you know the meeting's URL). You can also schedule a meeting
with a specific group and give this a private password.

**On Desktop:** Once logged in you will see a similar layout. In the top right-
hand corner, you will see Schedule a meeting / Join a meeting / Host a
meeting. You can also choose to do this with video on or off.
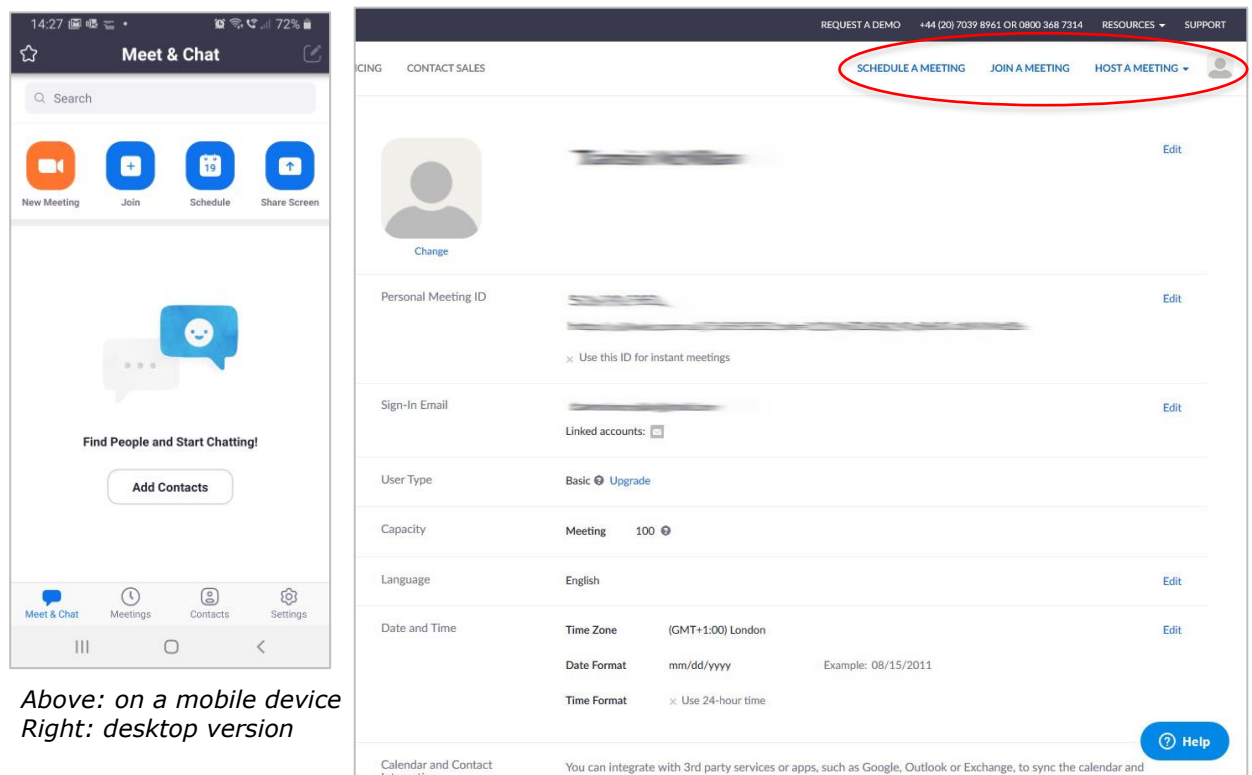


*Above: on a mobile device*
*Right: desktop version*

There are various ways to can invite participants to a scheduled meeting and
you can read more about the options here:
https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362183-Inviting-others-to-
join-a-meeting

Due to the huge increase in Zoom users during the Coronavirus pandemic,
Zoom has stated: "Due to increased demand, dial-in by phone audio
conferencing capabilities may be temporarily removed from your free Basic
account. During this time, we strongly recommend using our computer audio
capabilities. If you require dial-in by phone audio conferencing, please see
our other package options." It's still worth trying to use the free package on

your phone, but please bear in mind that you might be limited to using the desktop version instead, at least while demand is so high.

You can find plenty of video tutorials on YouTube, including this introduction to Zoom: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsy2Ph6kSf8

### 3. Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams allows communities, groups, or teams to meet through a specific URL (web address) or invitation sent by a team administrator or owner. Within a team, members can set up channels, which are topics of conversation that allow team members to communicate without the use of email or group SMS (texting).
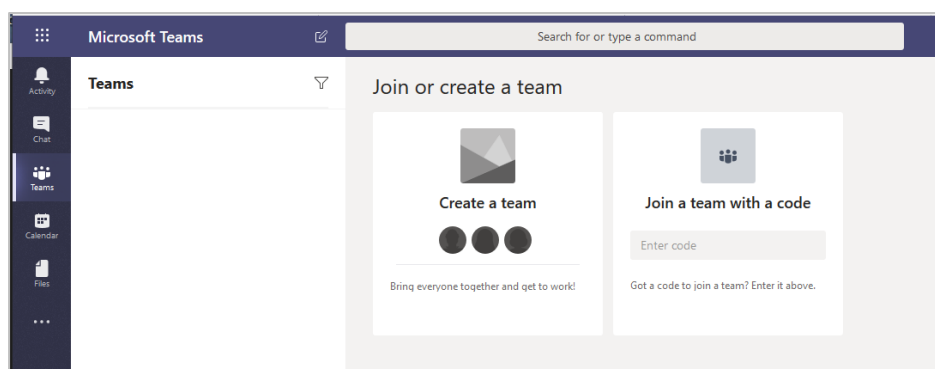


There are two options for using Microsoft Teams to communicate with your group:

**If you have an Office 365 subscription:**
If you have set up a volunteer group with a shared workspace on the cloud-based Office 365 (to be renamed Microsoft 365 from 21st April 2020 https://products.office.com/en-gb/compare-all-microsoft-office-products?activetab=tab%3aprimaryr1), then you will be able to use Microsoft Teams, which is included in this package.

Microsoft Teams allows you to set up groups of up to 250 people which can then work and communicate together, sharing and storing files, using instant group or direct (one-to-one) messaging and having video and audio meetings. If you need to get a bigger group together, you can use **Teams Live Events**. With Teams live events, users in your organisation can broadcast video and meeting content to large online audiences.

You will need a Teams account (and will therefore have had to purchase Office/Microsoft 365) to be able to organise a meeting. However, if you *don't* have a Teams account, you will be able to join a meeting as a guest.

**If you don't have Office 365, you can use Microsoft Teams Free instead**. This will give you unlimited chats, audio and video calls, and 10GB of file storage for your entire team, plus 2GB of personal storage for each individual. Microsoft Teams integrates with all the Office Online apps, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote, and with more than 140

business apps. You can add as many as 300 people to your network of contacts, who can be inside or outside your organisation.

Be aware that the free version of Microsoft Teams is only available to those without a paid commercial Office 365 subscription. Office 365 subscribers who try to sign up for Teams are redirected to a managed account for their existing plan. Customers who don't have a Teams license as part of an Office 365 subscription can sign up for a free one-year trial.

You can read about the differences between Teams and Teams Free here: https://support.microsoft.com/en-gb/office/differences-between-microsoft-teams-and-microsoft-teams-free-0b69cf39-eb52-49af-b255-60d46fdf8a9c

**Getting Started with Microsoft Teams**
**To sign up for Teams Free,** you'll find detailed instructions here: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/sign-up-for-teams-free-70aaf044-b872-4c32-ac47-362ab29ebbb1?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&ad=us
You'll need to decide whether to use the desktop app or web app. Then you can invite others to join your Team. They can do this without having to download the app themselves.

You can also download the Teams Free App to your Android or Apple phone, via the Google Play Store or iOS App Store respectively.

**If you already subscribe to Office 365,** download Teams for Desktop or Mobile here:
https://products.office.com/en-gb/microsoft-teams/download-app

**You'll find some helpful how to videos here:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jugBQqE_2sM&list=PLXPr7gfUMmKwYKFSqoPN-aHQppI7rRQLf
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zB2jiCxxuQ

**4. WhatsApp**

WhatsApp https://www.whatsapp.com/ is a free service which has become the world's most popular text and voice messaging application. It specialises cross-platform messaging, letting users message one another seamlessly between mobile and desktop devices. Find out more here: https://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/what-is-whatsapp/.

WhatsApp can identify people in your contact list who currently use the app, so you never have to add them manually. You can also invite people who don't have WhatsApp or connect with other users you know but who aren't in your contact list. WhatsApp lets you create work, friend, or family groups to communicate with up to 256 participants.

The app allows people to video chat with up to 16 people, as well as group calls with up to 32 people.

**To download on your mobile device:**
1. Install the app from the Google Play Store (Android) or iOS App Store (iPhones).
2. Launch the app and approve the requested permissions.
3. Enter your phone number and tap Confirm.
4. Enter the verification code received via SMS (WhatsApp may do this automatically).
5. You're ready to go.

**To set up your WhatsApp profile:**
1. Tap the three dots in the top right of the app and tap Settings.
2. Tap your name at the top of the screen.
3. To change your picture, tap the camera icon and select a photo.
4. To change your name, tap the pencil icon next to Name.
5. To change your bio, tap the pencil icon next to About.

**To Start a Chat:**
The first time you open the app you won't have any chats open, but you can start a new chat by tapping on the chat bubble at the bottom right of the screen.
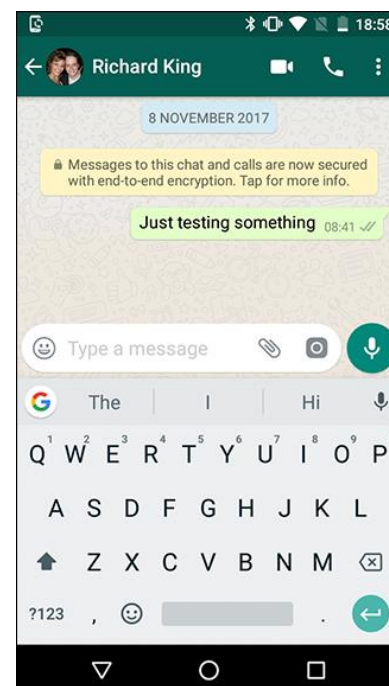
Simply select the contact you want to chat with from the list. If you already have a previous chat with that contact, it will open that instead of a brand-new chat. All that's left now is to type your message at the bottom of the screen. After entering your text, tap the arrow icon that appears alongside the text box to send it.

You can also send pictures or files on WhatsApp by tapping the paperclip or camera icons at the bottom of the screen.
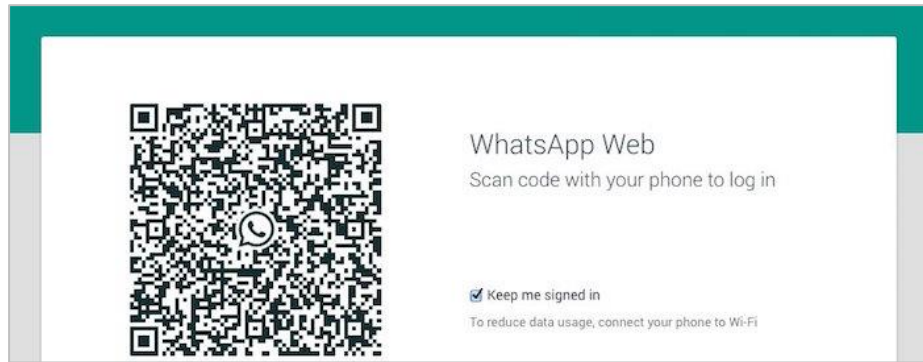
**To start a voice call or video call**, tap the video camera or telephone icons at the top right of the screen. Once connected, you can add more people to the call by tapping 'add participants', at the top right corner. You can voice call a maximum of 32 people and video call up to 16.

**WhatsApp Web,** the desktop version of the mobile app, doesn't offer all the services of the mobile app – no calling facilities are available, for example. It does sync with your phone, though, so that all of your chats will show up on both your desktop and phone.

1. On your computer browser, navigate to web.whatsapp.com.
2. Open WhatsApp on your phone, tap the three dots in the top right, then WhatsApp Web.
3. Tap the plus icon at the top right.
4. Point your phone camera at the QR code on your computer screen.

WhatsApp Web
Scan code with your phone to log in

☑ Keep me signed in
To reduce data usage, connect your phone to Wi-Fi

5. WhatsApp should instantly log in on your computer.

If you don't want to use a browser, you can also install the WhatsApp Web app directly on your computer, go to https://www.whatsapp.com/download

You'll find a good beginner's guide to WhatsApp here:https://www.androidauthority.com/how-to-use-whatsapp-1097088/

## 5. Facebook Messenger and Facebook Live

Facebook Messenger is a free mobile messaging app used for instant messaging, sharing photos, videos, audio recordings and for group chats (of up to 250 people) or video calls (up to 50 people).

Facebook Messenger is owned by the social media network Facebook, but you don't need to have a Facebook account to be able to use Messenger. If you're on Facebook, you can "message" a friend who's on live and chat with them. If not, you can simply download the Messenger app, select the "Not on Facebook?" option and enter your phone number and name. You can then send a message to any of the contacts on your phone, inviting them to join Messenger.
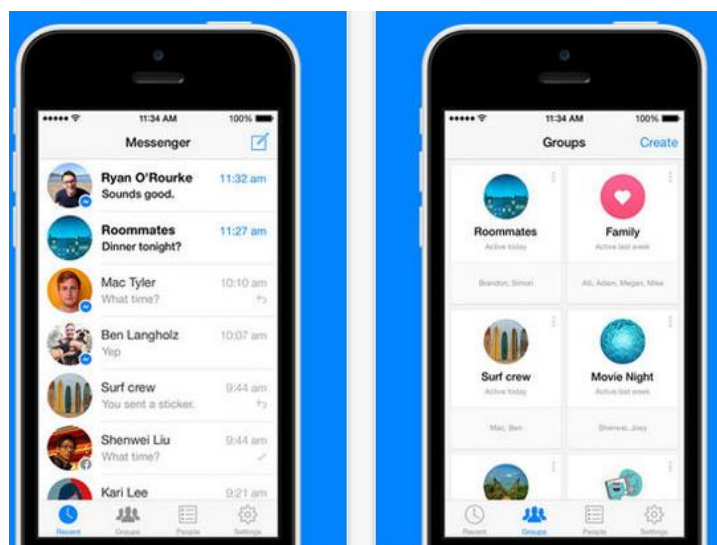


*Image: https://www.shinyshiny.tv/facebook-messenger-screenshot.jpg*

**To Download Facebook messenger** visit:
Android:
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.facebook.orca&hl=en_GB
Or the Google Play Store
iOS:
https://apps.apple.com/us/app/messenger/id454638411
or the iOS Store
Once downloaded you can begin to chat or create groups to chat in or video message.

You'll find more information about creating a group chat on Facebook here:
https://www.wikihow.com/Create-a-Group-Chat-on-Facebook

**Facebook Live** is worth considering if you want to broadcast a conversation, Q&A session or event. You will need to have a Facebook account (https://www.facebook.com/help/570785306433644?helpref=hc_global_nav Then you can broadcast to your own page, group or event, using the 'Go Live' button at the bottom of your 'create post' window. Further instructions are available here:
https://www.facebook.com/facebookmedia/solutions/facebook-live



Facebook Live allows your audience to write comments during your live stream. These appear on your screen for you and other viewers to see, and responding to these as part of your session is a good way to interact with your audience.

**A Note on Data Usage**
All these platforms can be used while out and about. However, they will use a lot of data which may cost you money, unless you have an unlimited data package from your mobile phone company. It is usually better, therefore, to try and log on to Wi-Fi before using them.

**Other Options**
The list of video conferencing platforms is growing all the time but it would be beyond the scope of this handout to consider them all! Do keep an eye out for up-and-coming apps, such as Cisco WebEx, Slack, Google Hangouts, GoTo Meeting and BlueJeans, particularly if they also offer free versions.

*The Gardens Trust, Historic Landscape Project*
*April 2020*