# Local Trust
# Digital Toolkit

# Effective Meetings

This guide offers some quick and easy tech interventions you and your partnership can make, at low cost and high impact.

We have identified common problems and challenges that you may face in your partnership, and made suggestions about appropriate tech tools that could help address these common challenges.

The majority of these tools are free and come with comprehensive instructions. There's usually also bespoke support available from the providers that you can pay for if you need it.

Contact us at programmes@localtrust.org.uk

# Team communications

## Make a WhatsApp group with your team members

It's good to have a space for instant chat between team members. This can be used for quick-fire messaging and logistical chat - e.g. discussing when and where to hold your meeting. WhatsApp avoids clogging up email with lots of back and forth. WhatsApp can be used on both smartphone and on desktop site.
**web.whatsapp.com**

## Use Google Docs instead of Word for documents

Google Docs allows you to create documents online and share them in a way which makes it easy to collaborate. Multiple people can edit a document at exactly the same time. It makes it much easier to work on documents as a team.
**docs.google.com**

To share a Google Doc use the blue "Share" button on the top right of a Google Doc. To add comments on the document that others can read, highlight the relevant text and click the plus symbol to the right.

**Use Google Drive to store files and documents**

Create a shared Google Drive folder where you can save files and make shared documents. It's secure, fast and free.

Visit drive.google.com to create a google drive account (if you use gmail, you already have one). It might be helpful to create a desktop shortcut. The "+ New" button on the top left lets you create a new folder, or a new document AKA "Google Doc".

**Need to do a lot of group decision-making? Use Loomio**

For more complex online communication and discussions, you can try out Loomio, the collaborative online decision-making tool. Loomio can be used as a forum to discuss ideas and deliberate on a decision, and then their voting tool allows you to vote on topics when you have a proposal to vote on. loomio.org

# Effective Meetings

**Use a shared calendar to confirm dates**

Use **Google Calendar** with your whole team for quick and easy synchronisation. Google Calendar automatically sends meetingreminders and allows you to email everyone attending at once.
**calendar.google.com**

**Use Doodle to schedule times that work for everyone**

Doodle is a great tool for scheduling meetings around everyone's availability. Pro tips: choose a range of times across schedules,and set a deadline time for people to fill out the Doodle.
**doodle.com/create**

**Use a Google Doc for the Agenda**

Write your meeting agenda in a Google Doc and share it with everyone so they can review and add to it before the meeting starts. Aim to share this at least one day before the meeting.

**Take shared notes**

Have one or more people with laptops take notes in the agenda document so that it's all kept in one place. Aim to rotate the person facilitating the meeting each time. Google Docs can be shared, updated and commented on during and after the meeting by multiple participants, by people who are attending remotely, and later by people who could not attend. Name meeting minutes with the date of your meeting and keep in a Google drive folder for future reference.

**If meeting face-to-face is tricky, use Zoom to hold meetings online**

Free video conferencing technology has become so good and easy to use that you can seriously consider replacing some meetings with online meetings to make things more convenient. This is useful if you have members who are remote or cannot make in-person meetings easily.

Zoom is free, easy to use, and you can record your sessions which saves as a video on your computer. This means anyone who misses the meeting can catch up later by watching the recording.
zoom.us

**Struggling to track all tasks everyone needs to do between meetings?**

Try Asana for project management.
asana.com

# Engaging with the community

**Make a very simple website**

Our advice:

- Use **Squarespace** to make your website. It may cost a little, but it'll save you a lot of time and money in the long run. squarespace.com
- Tutorial videos for how to get started can be found at bit.ly/squarespacetutorial
- Keep it as simple as possible. Most people just come to your website to contact you. Focus on the important things:
    - What your partnership is, so people know they're in the right place
    - Your contact details (email address, phone number)
    - Collecting emails (see squarespace.com/email-marketing)
- **Google Unsplash** is a collection of professional photos that are free to use. unsplash.com

**Use one shared email inbox for your entire board**

There is probably already a contact email address for your partnership, e.g. hello@localpartnership.org or something similar. Either you will have one person who responds to everything, which is a burden, or multiple people logging into the same inbox, which is confusing.

Use helpscout.com to set up a single email address for the partnership with a shared inbox where all board members can see and respond to emails, while keeping their identities separate. The website has detailed instructions on how to set it up.

## Overlooked ways to use social media to engage local communities

- Existing local Facebook groups can be used to engage with your community, and are often popular with local people. Use bit.ly/facebooknearyou to find the largest local groups.
- Mumsnet is an alternative social media platform and forum for parents - find local groups here bit.ly/mumsnetnearyou
- Nextdoor is a social network specifically designed for neighbourhoods, and is quite popular in some areas. nextdoor.co.uk

## Need to make posters or images to share online?

Use Canva, a free online marketing and design tool which makes professional looking graphics easily.
canva.com

## Want to run a survey? Use Google Forms

Google Forms is a free tool that allows you to ask questions from your community. You can learn about how to use Google Forms.
bit.ly/googleformssurvey