

COVID-19 - STAYING IN TOUCH WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

Keeping in touch with family and friends during the pandemic is important both for one's general health but also one's mental health.

Perhaps the most obvious way is by telephone, providing (usually) person to person voice dialogues and charged according to the caller's tariff. Smartphones and PCs open up video link capabilities. Each of the following video communication applications are free to install/implement and use; all are subject to data charges being levied according to each contributor's broadband tariff.

A suggestion for all repeated communication methods. It is best to set up names, numbers and email addresses in the address book within your application, so that the correct connection will easily be made by clicking on the person you want to see and speak to.

FACETIME: This simple, proprietary, option is pre-installed, and limited to, users of Apple devices, such as an iPhone or iPad. Limited to two physical locations, but multiple devices can be linked at each of those locations to enable several people to participate.

Summary. Household to household, only on IOS (Apple).

Google Duo: Provides a matching service available across all Apple and Android devices, pre-installed on later Android smartphones, else to be installed from the appropriate application store for all other mobile devices.

Summary. Household to household, on all makes of smartphones and tablets.

WhatsApp: A similar looking application that is available across all mobile platforms, but not (yet) pre-installed on any. The enhanced feature is that many people can be clicked on and called to participate simultaneously in the video conference.

Under limited circumstances a PC can be used (linked through a close-by mobile device) to provide a more visible, and stable, screen and camera.

Summary. Several people across several locations, on all platforms.

Skype: Already used by many for years on a PC, but equally useful on mobile devices (walking along the pavement). Pre-installed with Windows 10 on PCs, but optionally installable on all other devices.

Summary. Family to family sitting around a PC at each location.

Zoom: This an application that fronts a video-conferencing service, to be managed by one contributor. A free version will operate for a limited time period.

Summary. Monthly committee meeting substitute, on all platforms.