



## Promoting your event and sharing news with your community

Community events offer a great opportunity to meet with others and enhance a sense of community.

If you're thinking of having an event in your community, be it a quiz night, a village fete, a film screening, a treasure hunt, a street party, a scarecrow festival or a performance; in addition to planning and preparing you'll need to think about how you can promote it and share information with others.

Here are some ideas for free and low cost things you might like to consider to help promote your event.

**Ask others** - If this is the first time you have run an event, reach out to others who have run and promoted events in the past. Find out what did and didn't work for them and what they would do again or differently in the future.

**Develop a promotion plan** - Work out what time, people, contacts and other resources you have available. Identify what you're going to do, when you're going to do it, how you're going to do it and who will be involved.



### Think about different types of promotion and ways of letting people know – decide which might work for you:

**Emails** - Prepare emails to send out to all your and others' (local) contacts. Don't forget to mention the 5 Ws – what (is happening), when, where, who (is it for) and why (should people come). Personalised subjects and messages have been shown to be most effective. Ask people if they can forward the email on to others they know who may be interested. You may like to create targeted information for different groups.

**Newsletters** - Feature your upcoming event in your local weekly or monthly village, parish or school newsletter. This offers a cost-effective way to promote your event and share news. Work out the key information you want to let people know and, if you can, write concise and engaging copy with a 'hook' to ensure readers will want to find out more. Make sure it includes how people can find out more.

**Put up posters and flyers at local meeting points** - There are a number of poster design programmes available on the internet you can use to make posters. You may like to look at other examples to see which designs draw your eye. Put your printed posters wherever you see a notice board locally (library, doctors, parish notice board, community building) or even a window. Put posters further afield if you would like to draw people from a wider area. It is also a good idea to have some smaller fliers. These can be put in places where bigger posters may not be possible and are great for being included in children's school book bags.

## Social Media

**Facebook** - Create an event that people can link to and share. If you're not already a member of local public or private Facebook groups, ask to join and post information or contact group administrators and ask if they can do this for you. You may like to offer a little incentive such as free admission if they are able to do this. A good starting point for local groups is to search the names of places in your local community.

**Buy Facebook Ads/boosted posts** - You may want to buy an ad and take advantage of Facebook's sophisticated targeting capabilities. Information can be tailored to gender, age, interest and location and from a budget of under £5. Promote a clear action such as Register or Buy Tickets. Wherever possible, use photography from your local area as this will help local people connect with your ads.

**Twitter** - Hashtags are a great way to help make conversations around particular topics easy to find. Create a hashtag for your event and encourage people to share and comment on this. It's good practice to engage with existing hashtags too. You can find active people in your local area and ask them to share too.

**Instagram** - Stories and the Live feature can be a great way to get in front of an audience and immediately capture interest if you have a following on there. Record a quick snapshot of someone talking about your event. You could even do a live Q&A session on Instagram stories or IGTV, allowing potential attendees to send in any questions beforehand.



**YouTube** - If your event lends itself to interesting and unique video content (whether that's high octane and slickly produced or simply interviews with speakers) you can make new videos or share footage from previous events to help give attendees a taste of what to expect. This may offer an opportunity for young people from your community to get involved. Links and content can be shared via social media

**Messaging** - In addition to text messaging, apps such as Whatsapp have enabled groups to be set up in many communities since the advent of Covid-19. Is there a group in your local area?

### Utilise your networks:

**Word of mouth** - Still one of the most highly effective ways of getting a message out there. Encourage people to tell their friends, colleagues and relatives. Even just a quick Tweet or Facebook post to their network can help extend reach.

**Make phone calls** - Not everyone has access to technology, so if you can, get in touch with people by phone, particularly leaders of any local groups, and confirm they are aware of your event. If they need a little extra support to get there, let them know if there is someone who could help them.

**Update your voicemail** - You may like to update your voicemail so every time someone can't get hold of you, they hear a brief message about your upcoming event.

**Get local businesses involved** - Local businesses can be fantastic in helping to promote an event. If you don't already have links, work on building these. You could offer to add their logo to your promotional materials in exchange for their help in spreading the word to their customers/clients or selling your event tickets.

**Local press** - If your event is a local one, press can really help generate interest. Many local publications carry free online and printed listings of events and things going on in communities. Pick up a copy and see how you can get your event listed.

**Press release** - It can also be a good idea to prepare and send out a press release and photograph to local press and radio, particularly if there is an interesting story behind it. Look at the kind of information the publication usually includes and think about what might make your event interesting to their readership. Being published in the paper gives the opportunity for you to be added to their website and potentially promoted via their social media profiles.



**Attend other events or meetings** - If there are other activities taking place in your community where you could promote or speak about your event, ask if you can take along flyers, present a speech or drop in and have a conversation.

**Guerrilla marketing** - See if you can think of something visually appealing to help carry the message about your event and draw the attention of people. Knitting? Dancing? Unicycling? Gardening? This can be a great way to involve groups before an event and get people talking.

### Offer a competition/raffle or tombola/refreshments

Let people know these are available.

**On the day** - If promotion on the day is important to generate buzz/attract last minute interest – put up banners, signage or balloons outside your event space.

**At the event** - Try to collect as many email addresses and contact details as possible. You may like to do this via an advert in a programme or by offering cards and a post box. Confirm that people would be happy to receive information about any future events. If you can, and with permission, take photos, record videos and carry out interviews. You can use these to promote the event while it's running and for future events.

**After the event** - If you can, post pictures and highlights from your event on social media channels and include any good feedback. You can use positive feedback and photos (with permission) to promote the dates for your next event (as well as doing this on the day). You may like to make a special offer to promote loyalty or offer as a thank you for attending your event.