

## **Ways of promoting your event**

You also told us last year that one of the most successful ways in which people found out about events was through word of mouth! Getting an invitation from friends and relatives seemed to be the most popular way that people ended up at events.

1. So, tell your family, friends and colleagues about the event. People love stories so the more you can introduce imagination-capturing snippets of information whilst telling them about your event, the more likely you are to pique their curiosity and interest.
2. Order the A3 posters that the Biodiversity Week team has produced for you and personalise these with the details of your event. Put these up in places where people tend to stand/sit for long periods of time and are more likely to notice them.
3. Research tells us that young people attend Biodiversity Week events in high numbers. Call your local school and tell them about your event and ask if they will help advertise it to the pupils.

If your event is on something that is likely to catch the imaginations of young people – for example, last year Geoheritage Fife went fossil hunting to discover Carboniferous plant and giant millipede tracks and there was a reptile finding expedition on Arran – then ask if the school would allow a local expert on the topic to give a short talk at the school assembly and tell the students about the event. Be creative in how you present your talk – props may be appropriate! For example, if your event is a marine wildlife watch then you could see if your local zoological society would lend you an assortment of shark bones! The Marine Conservation Society may be able to provide you with posters of basking sharks with their mouths open filter feeding – an attention grabbing sight. If it's an event about birds of prey, ask your local falconer if she/he will accompany you with a suitably impressive bird! Take along posters (order these from us) for the children to take home – it's a great story for the children to tell their families when they get home and likely to fuel requests to attend your event!

4. Local community centres notice boards
5. Swimming pool centres where there are often parents waiting for their children to finish classes or other events.
6. Libraries are a good place too for posters for reaching younger and older people. Talk to the librarian and find out if there is a reading class held there for children and ask if you come along and talk about your event (if it is suitable for young age groups).
7. Churches, mosques, synagogues and other places of worship often have community notice boards where you may be able to put up posters. The faith community has a unique and important contribution to make to nature conservation. If there is somebody there from the board or management team present when you call, then make the time to explain about your organisation's work and what you hope to achieve through the event. Find out who the best person may be to issue with a personally written V.I.P. invitation for your event and send them it.
8. Contact your local scout group and ask them if you go along and speak about the event you are holding.

9. Visit your local tourist office and ask if they would be willing to give out leaflets advertising your event to anybody who calls in for advice in the week of your event. It's also an ideal place for posters.
10. Contact 3 or 4 local businesses that have a high profile in your area and ask if they will circulate details of your event in their office/s by email. Email has the advantage of giving people time to browse the detail of your event when convenient for them at their desks. They can also click on any hyperlinks you include and learn more about your organisation at the same time. Don't forget to include a link to the Biodiversity Week website!
11. Contact your local councillor, M.S.P or M.P. – visit them during their surgery hours and give them a personalised V.I.P. invitation to your event if it is an appropriate kind of occasion. Explain your event and how you would like them to be involved. Use it as an invaluable opportunity to raise your councillor's/M.S.P.'s or M.P.'s awareness of biodiversity conservation in your area and to build a positive relationship with him/her. If they accept the invitation, remember that the press will be interested – see section later about working with the press to promote your event. Make sure that you have assigned somebody to look after the V.I.P. on the day and thank them for their support afterwards in written form.

**Aim for coverage of your event in your local newspapers and local radio. If your event is big or unique, then try involving local T.V.**

1. Last year some of you told us that you didn't see Biodiversity Week or events advertised in your local newspapers. So this year, we have changed our focus so that although we will still try to get national publicity for biodiversity through the launch event for the Week, we will put more effort into promotion in local papers. However, there is a limit to how much we can do centrally with a small team. So here is some advice which we hope will help you promote your event locally too.
2. Think about the newspapers that are issued in your area: some of these may have a relatively wide geographical coverage but others may be free community newspapers specific to the area in which your event will take place. Make a list of the publications that you think would be read by people in the area of your event. Find out who the relevant media contacts are for these and get in touch with them. These may be listed on the newspapers themselves or on their websites. Or you could simply call the newspaper and ask for the person who would cover the kind of story you are offering.
3. The Press are interested in covering "news" – something new or presented from a new angle or with a human story aspect. So think in advance about how you present your event in way that will make news. **This is the single most important thing to do when preparing to approach the media!** [The Media Trust offers comprehensive advice on generating local media coverage](#)

4. Think about your event, what you aim to achieve through it, who your main target audience/s is/are. Then identify what key messages you want to try and convey. Stick to two or three – you may have more than this but it is best to stay focussed.
  5. If a journalist comes to your event, you must make assign somebody from your organisation to look after them and help them speak to the right people – for example, to your media spokesperson if you have one or identify who the best person would be. Also, guide the reporter towards V.I.P.s. and any other participants who you think would make particularly good interviewees. For example, your event may be accessible for people with mobility difficulties. If there is somebody there who has been able to attend because of that aspect and can talk about having had an enjoyable experience, it will give the reporter an important human interest story to highlight through your event.
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### **Press Release – why write one?**

Issuing a press release means informing the media about something in order that they will then hopefully include a favourable piece about your topic in the media that they represent. The media depend on members of society for their news – so make the best use you can of this and actively seek out the media and tell them about your event/s.

The person reading your media release will be looking for stories that will interest their readers, viewers and listeners. An effective media release tells a story that will interest a number of people. Media releases need to be about the story and just enough relevant information for the story to work.

For an example of a good press release, see the [Media Trust's website](#).

### **How to write a press release**

- You must keep the release short (1 side of A4, 2 at most), clear and concise. You should include your organisation's the Biodiversity Week logo.
- Put a short, concise but attention grabbing headline at the top. You only have seconds to grab the editor's interest – so make the most of the opportunity.
- Date the release – even if it is for immediate use because unless you date it, the person reading it may not realise how old this “news” is and the media only want the news as it is happening and not afterwards.
- Remember to include all the important information about your event: the five ‘W’s - what, when, where, why and who.
- Write the release in an interesting a way as possible – editors are likely to be deluged with releases (especially if you are trying to get your story into a national newspaper) so you need to do everything you can to ensure that yours provides the editor with a well written, engaging and concise piece. Ask yourself if your piece is likely to be of interest to readers or if it captures the imagination.
- Put a contact name and telephone number at the bottom of the release and ensure someone is available to deal with journalists' inquiries. Provide contact details for

somebody who could deal with any enquiries if you are likely to not be available at any point – this may make the difference between your story being used or not.

- Remember that newspapers work to tight deadlines – you must check what the deadline is for submitting a press release the newspaper/s, which will probably vary depending on whether it is daily or weekly.
- Send the news release in 7-10 days in advance to your press contacts. Start an Excel spreadsheet of which newspapers/other media you have sent the release to and the contact details of the people you sent the release to. Follow up your initial contact a few days later with a phone-call to find out if they are interested in covering your event.
- Make sure you send your information to the right person – if you are not sure, call and get the correct person's name, email address/fax number.
- If you think your event will make a good photograph, include a note to picture editors, saying when, where and what photos can be taken of. You may want to organise your own photographer so you can send pictures to the local newspaper if they do not send a photographer.
- Please bear in mind that the above are *tips* on some aspects of writing a release but [The Media Trust has an excellent and comprehensive guide](#) and lists everything you need to do to write a great piece.