

Producing publicity- some guidelines to get you started

Before you start designing posters or writing press releases, make a list of everything you need to include. What does someone need to know about your event?

- What is it- what type of event is it
- When is it- date (or dates) and start time (and end time if relevant)
- Where is it- location, including address/ postcode
- Who is involved- is it the local church? Various community groups? Is a local or national celebrity coming?
- How much- is it ticketed, and how can you get tickets?
- Why- what do the church hope the event will achieve? Is it fundraising for charity? Is it an annual event?
- Where can people find out more- the church website, by contacting an individual or the church office, etc

For example:

- What is it- Church Flower Festival
- When is it- 10am-4pm, Friday 5th to Monday 8th June 2020
- Where is it- Wesleytown Methodist Church, High Street, Wesleytown, WE53 0WN
- Who is involved- Church members and local community groups have arranged the flowers, it is being opened by the local MP.
- How much- Entry £5, under 16's £3, to be paid on the door. Profits to be split between church funds and oversees charity Waterbox.
- Why- The event is held every year with proceeds going to church funds and a different charity each year. It brings together all the groups who use the church as each group contributes an arrangement based on a theme- this year's theme is 'Nursery Rhymes'.
- Where can people find out more- The church website.

Once you have assembled all the information, think about how you are going to publicise your event. Who is your intended 'market' or audience? What ages, what groups of people, local or further afield?

For example, for a new playgroup you might be looking at young families- but you might also want to reach childminders or grandparents. For a community coffee morning you might want to reach older people, or parents dropping children at the school gates.

Knowing who you want to advertise to will help you decide how best to publicise it. Different methods will be seen by different people

- Poster outside the church or elsewhere in the local community: the very local community, those who live nearby or go to nearby facilities (eg if you are near a school or library or shops);
- Poster inside the church: events aimed mainly at the church family and groups using the building;
- Poster and notice in the Church News email from the Circuit: members of other church congregations in the Circuit;
- Local paper, local radio or TV news, local events website: the local community, often older people. Potentially tourists looking for something to do while they are in the area;

- Parish/ village magazine: the very local community, often older people, often those who are already involved in churches or community groups.
- Facebook/ social media: who follows your church's page or group? Probably a mix of older people and young adults for facebook, more likely to be teenagers or young adults on instagram;
- Church website: could be anyone in the world, but only if your website is easy to find and a reliable source of information. A good place to put more details about your event so that people who have seen a poster or advert can go there for more information.

Once you've got an idea how you will distribute your publicity you can think about the format it should be in.

Landscape or portrait?

Again this will depend on how you plan to use the design. You may want to make two versions of your design, one landscape, one portrait.

If you try to fit a portrait design into a space designed for landscape designs (or vice versa) your design will be stretched or squashed and will look less appealing.

- For a Facebook event picture or 'cover photo' you will probably want **landscape**.
- For Instagram or anything else designed to be viewed on a phone you will probably want to use **portrait**.
- A printed poster or photo on a website can probably be either.
- If you're creating an advert to put in, for example, a parish magazine, you may want to ask the person who edits the magazine which they would prefer.

Colour or black and white?

- If you are creating a design to be used mainly online, you should use colour in your publicity. That could mean using a photo as your background or just using colours in the text.
- However, don't go overboard- generally (unless you're advertising a production of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat!) stick to two or three colours. Otherwise your design risks looking garish and off-putting.
- If you are planning on printing posters yourself on domestic or office printers, you may want to avoid using photos as they won't print well. Colour printing in this way can also be expensive.
- If you do want to use photos make sure they will show up well before you start printing- print a trial first. Well-lit photos without too much going on are best. If any people are in the photos, remember to get their permission before using them.
- If you want better quality printing, get a quote from a professional print shop or look online for printing services (try the companies that advertise business cards or postcards), it's not as expensive as you might think.
- If you are going to print yourself and want to stick to black and white, consider printing onto coloured paper- it will be more eye catching than plain black on white.

Again, you might want to create a colour design for use online and a black and white design for printing- but try to make the two as similar as possible so people can easily see that it's the same event.

File format

There are lots of design programmes that will help you create your publicity, from Microsoft Word, Powerpoint or Publisher (and their Apple equivalents) to online apps like Canva (<https://www.canva.com/>) Some will give you templates where all you need to do is fill in the details and tweak colours and pictures.

Once your design is complete, you will usually need to save, export or download it as a format that other people can easily see or use.

- **Photos:** to use your design on social media you will need to choose a photo format, either jpeg or png.
- **PDF:** Portable Document Format or PDF is readable by almost any computer without the design being squashed or altered, so is a good choice if you are going to be sending it by email.
- **Word documents/ text files:** can be useful for very simple designs, but because they are not always fully compatible with other people's computer programmes, the design can get squashed or parts of it can be hidden. A pdf is generally better. To save your Word or Open Office document as a different format, go to **File** then **Save As**. You can then choose the format from a drop down menu.

Writing a press release- some guidelines to get you started

You should start, as for any publicity, by making a note of all the information you need to include. This will include:

- what the event is,
- venue, dates and times,
- price or ticket information,
- who is involved,
- what is the reason for the event,
- where can people find out more.

When you are writing, try to think about the person reading the article. Why should a reader be interested?

- are you fundraising for a good cause?
- is a celebrity (local or national) coming?
- is it a major anniversary?
- is it a celebration of something that your church has achieved?
- does it relate to local or national events (e.g. VE day celebrations, Children in Need appeal)?
- does it involve local people or community groups?
- is it fun or exciting?

There may be other reasons you can think of, but the thing to remember is to be persuasive- you want the reader to understand why this is important.

Start with a heading giving the main information to make it easier for the journalist.

Your first paragraph should be short- only one sentence long- and should grab the reader's attention as well as telling people something about your event. If they're not interested, they probably won't read any further.

Include one or two quotes from people who are involved, and encourage people to sound enthusiastic.

The example below assumes the event hasn't happened yet, but the same structure and principles would apply if you are writing about an event that has already happened. If the event has happened, you should include a photo, or more than one, if you can (make sure you have the permission of any people pictured and the person who took the photo).

Example press release:

Flower Festival at Wesley Methodist Church, Wesleytown, 10am-4pm, Friday 5th to Monday 8th June 2020

It's going to be bloomin lovely at Wesley Methodist Church next weekend, as the church holds its' 6th annual Flower Festival in aid of church funds and the charity All We Can.

The church and community groups that meet at Wesley Methodist Church have worked together to create displays for the festival, which will be welcoming visitors to the church on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Refreshments will also be on sale with profits split between the church's redevelopment fund and All We Can, a charity that helps find solutions to poverty by engaging with local people in some of the world's poorest communities.

This year's theme is 'Nursery Rhymes' with arrangements telling the story of popular nursery rhymes, from Jack and Jill to Humpty Dumpty.

Church steward Charles Agar said, "I'm delighted that we have involved so many community groups in the festival. We look forward to welcoming many visitors to the church to see the fantastic work our arrangers have been doing."

Leader of 1st Wesleytown Brownies, Susanna Whitfield, said, "The Brownies always love creating their display for the Festival and this year's is extra special as the Brownies grew some of the flowers themselves. We hope people will enjoy looking at the displays as much as we enjoyed making ours."

The Flower Festival opens at 10am on Friday 5th June and is open 10am-4pm Friday 5th to Monday 8th June, with a special All Age service at 11am on Sunday 7th, including members from the groups taking part in the Festival. All are welcome to join the service. Entrance to the Flower Festival is £5 for adults, £3 for children under 16.

For more information see the church website www.wesleytownmethodist.org.uk or the church's Facebook page.

For information about All We Can see <https://www.allwecan.org.uk/>