

Section 3: Press and media

The press and media can be an effective and highly influential tool in promoting your project. They can reach a large audience in a short space of time, which is why it is important that you provide accurate and clear information. Examples of media are TV, radio, magazines, newspapers, newsletters, and websites. The most common form of media that will benefit your project will be your local newspaper.

If your group has secured a large or flagship grant (over £50,000) you will need to work closely with the Community Spaces PR team on all press and media activity.

Large and flagship grant recipients must submit all press releases to the press@community-spaces.org.uk address for approval before the scheduled release date. Please allow sufficient time for this, we will need a week to go over your press release and co-ordinate any quotes from the programmes team.

If your project is going to generate any significant media interest please notify nisha.virdi@groundwork.org.uk or call 0121 237 5872. If the event occurs outside office hours please call: 07748 320 074.

Contacting the media

Get in touch with your local newspapers to find out who the best person to contact is, and when would be a good time to get in touch with them.

Gaining media interest

Find out what 'angle' journalists are looking to write the story from. Remember journalists are busy people, but if you can find out what works for them you will have a better chance of getting your story published.

Example: If a journalist wanted to write a story on community involvement, tell them what the local people have been doing to support your project and the activities that they have been involved with. Also, mention who you have been working in partnership with to deliver your project, such as your local council, the police, community wardens, residents associations etc.

Writing a press release

Sometimes you will want to generate media interest by issuing a press release. Press releases can be issued to announce activities that your group has taken part in, visits from a significant individual, or recognition that your group has reached a particular milestone. Below are some useful tips on compiling a press release.

- Create a title that sums up your story. The headline should be short and snappy. Be creative, but keep it simple. (You may find it easier to make up the headline after you have written the story).
- Use the 5 Ws: Who? What? Where? When? Why? This will ensure you include the key points of your story.
- Who does the project involve? Mention your community group, the Big Lottery Fund, Groundwork UK, and other local partners.
- What are the aims of your project and how are you going to achieve them?
- Where is your project site? Describe where your project is situated and the condition of the site in a way that reflects the need for the project in the first place.
- When did you start your project and when do you plan to complete it? This will give people an idea of how long a project like this takes, which in turn may inspire another project idea. By letting people know when your project will be complete, it will encourage them to see the site for themselves and start using it.
- Describe how you are going to achieve or how you have achieved your project outcomes.
- Try to keep your press release to a single side of A4 paper.
- Use 'plain English' and avoid jargon and acronyms.
- Include a quote from a local resident or a member of your group to support your story. Try and include a quote from an influential figure such as your local MP or Councillor.

- At the end of the press release put a short paragraph in to explain the background of your project.
- Add the name and (preferably mobile) telephone number of the person who will be available the same day to give a full story about your project.

Please [click here](#) for the press release template.

Making the most of the media

Getting your story in the media is a means of promoting your project. Why not use the opportunity to include details about what else will be happening in relation to your project – your next event for example, or if you need more volunteers. Request that the journalist gives it a mention, and give them the relevant contact details so that people know who to phone or e-mail if they want to volunteer.

TV and radio

You may want to contact your local radio and TV stations to make them aware of your project. These two forms of media will be more difficult to engage than the press but are still worth contacting, especially if you have influential people attending a launch event or coming to officially open your project. Make sure you give them plenty of notice for particular events and again, ensure you are talking to right person.

Local publications

Contact any other local publications such as a parish newsletter, the local council's newspaper or magazine or other free papers or magazines that are distributed in your area.

Speaking to the press and media

Let your local newspapers know about what you are doing, especially if you are planning an event or if there is something of interest during the project that would make a good human-interest story.

- Take time to prepare for questions that you might be asked. Decide what your key messages are. Consider whom your 'audience' or 'reader' will be.
- Maintain an objective view of what you are doing in order to put across the right messages to people.
- Always mention Community Spaces, Groundwork UK and the Big Lottery Fund when you talk about your project, so that people can identify where funding and support for your project has come from.
- Be truthful when answering questions. If you do not understand a question, say so. If you cannot give them an answer, say that you are unable to comment.
- Explain the need for the project. Compare what the site was like before you were given the funding, and what improvements have been made since.
- Mention other partners that have supported you in delivering your project.
- Highlight the positives. If your project has been well received in your community, then say how. Include any interesting anecdotes – give real examples of how it has improved the lives of particular individuals, but be careful not to mention names without people's prior knowledge or consent.

Media coverage

Following a press release, hopefully your story will get picked up by the media. This may be a radio station, television network, online publication, newspaper or magazine. We would like to see evidence of any media coverage your project receives. Please e-mail press@community-spaces.org.uk or send in hard copies of examples.

Speaking to the media can be a daunting prospect, so if you need any support or advice please contact felicity.russell-jones@groundwork.org.uk or nisha.virdi@groundwork.org.uk.