

CAG Devon How-to Guide:

# Promoting an event





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# Promoting an event

## Step 1: Create a timeline

Creating a simple timeline will help you determine what needs doing and when, what channels and methods to use, and when to release your communications materials.

Forward planning will help you organise and share tasks within your group, so it doesn't all end up falling to one or two people. The main channels and methods you are likely to use are:

1. Web content
2. Printed materials
3. Press release
4. Social media posts

## TOP TIPS

If you've run this type of event before, include a good quality image from that on your publicity.

On social media posts, include a video clip of a previous event if you have one.

An example timeline might look like this:

What?	Who?	When?	Audience
Create Facebook event and share widely	Sim	4 weeks before	General public / partners
Design poster	Jules	4 weeks before	General public
Print posters	Freddie	3 weeks before	-
Distribute posters	Abraham, Alex, Marjorie, Fizz	2 weeks before	-
Write and send press release	Alex, Fizz	2 weeks before	Press / General public
Web content	Sim	2-4 weeks before	General public / partners
Social media posts	Sim, Jules	1,3,5 and 14 days before	General public / press / partners

When thinking about audiences, think also about other people you'd like to come along to your event. For example, you might want to invite local politicians, councillors, and funders (if relevant) to showcase your work/group/activities to them. If you are sending out

personal invites, consider whether email, text, phone call or by post would be the most appropriate method.

## Step 2: Clarify your messages

At the planning stage, decide what are the key messages you want to get across when communicating about the event to make sure people have all the information they need.

For instance, which of the following do you need to tell people about:

- What is the title of the event?
- Where is it taking place?
- What date and time does it take place?
- Who has organised the event?
- What is it for? Is it a fundraising event?
- Do people need to bring anything?
- Who is encouraged to attend?
- Is there a cost?

Consider which of the key points need to be got across in which methods of communication as the amount of content for a press release, a poster and a Facebook post will, of course, all vary widely.

And one more point. How will you get across the reason why people should attend – Will it benefit them? (The WIIFM factor - What's in it for me?) Or benefit others? Or benefit the planet? Or all three!



## Step 3: Decide on methods /channels

Decide at the start - as soon as you know the event will run – on what methods and channels you will use to promote your event. Bear in mind that these may not be the same for every event you organise. For example, if you run a weekly Food Surplus Café, you would be unlikely to send a press release out for every single one, but regular social posts will be vital.

### Web content

First and foremost, you'll be posting the event on your own website if you have one. Even getting the date and name of the event out there early (with a 'Watch this space' at the end) will help to build momentum. You can always add more detail later as it becomes known.

List the event on any partner websites, such as the CAG Devon website, by adding it to the Events Diary and the CAG Devon team will help promote it. You can also post your event on local listing directories, such as Recycle Devon or Explore Tiverton, if relevant.

If you have a blog, or news feed on your website, then write about your event there. For a major event, you could write more than one blog:

- **Pre-event blog** – write about planning for the event, maybe featuring a participant or speaker talking about what it is, why it's happening and how people can get involved.
- **Post-event blog** – either write up the event yourselves, including pictures or videos. Or ask someone who was there to write a guest blog to give an alternative perspective.
- **Share the presentation** – if your event is a talk or presentation, then try to get each speaker to use the same branded PowerPoint template. Ask for the presentations afterwards so you can post them on your website and then share to your group and wider audience.

## Printed materials

If your group doesn't have anyone with the design skills to create a poster or flyer, never fear! There are free online programmes available, such as [canva.com](https://www.canva.com) which is very easy to use. This software is a great way to create engaging and professional looking posters and flyers. It has free templates, images, graphics, illustrations and lot of fonts.

The trick is not to go overboard by mixing different styles or too many fonts, just because they're available online. As a rule of thumb, stick to no more than two fonts but create interest by making them different sizes or colours or boldness.

Refer back to Step 2 as you are creating your designs and remember to include your web address / social media where people can go to find out more detail if there is not room for everything on the poster or flyer.

## Press releases

Let the local press know about your event and invite them along through a press release. If you can get the local press on board then that is a great way to share information about your event with the wider general public. An example of a press release can be seen in Appendix 1.

Some tips on how to get the press to pick up your piece are:

- Give them something with an interesting angle or personal story.





- Give them all the information they most need in the first paragraph. Quotes or fine detail can follow further down.
- Follow up with a phone call – journalists are busy people and your press release may just get over looked.

It is useful to build up relationships with **press and media contacts** in your area. This will help with getting them along to your event as well as writing about it in their paper.

Should you be given the opportunity to take part in a **radio interview**, make yourself a list of three points (your ‘key messages’) that you want to get across during that interview. You will usually not be given vast amounts of time on air, so it is essential to get your main points across clearly and repeatedly to ensure the message is heard.

## Social media

Social media channels can be very effective for reaching large audiences. If your group has Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, then use these to promote your event. If not, could someone in your group set up one or more of them for you?

Make use of social media channels in the following ways:

- Set up a **Facebook event** and share it on your group’s page and on personal accounts.
- Create and use a hashtag (checking it isn’t already being used) - something that is unique to the event.
- Tweet and tweet again! Don’t be afraid of sending your message about the event more than once, on different days, and at different times to ensure you are reaching your audience. Using a scheduling service such as Tweetdeck or Buffer can help with this.
- Use a clear and engaging image or graphic in your posts. If you don’t have a suitable one of your own, you can use free image sites such as [pixabay.com](http://pixabay.com). Always be sure to have permission to use an image before posting.
- In [canva.com](http://canva.com) (or similar online design sites which are free), they have templates in the correct dimensions for every shape and size of post, story and ad for all the different social platforms.
- Remember to include a link to Eventbrite if you are using that to ‘sell’ tickets. It is free to use if your event is free to attend.
- Post your event on any local Facebook community pages.



## TOP TIPS

### Tips for social media:

Use a mix of content including just text, links to your blog or a website, images, and videos.

Tweet regularly (suggested minimum of 4 times a day); Facebook, post just once a day.

- If you have any budget, then you may want to consider paying to promote your Facebook event. Even £10 can increase your reach considerably.
- Consider if someone in the group has time/skills to create a very simple, short video to promote the event.

## Step 4. Utilise additional methods

If you've covered all the bases as listed in this guide, now is the time to make use of additional ways of promoting your event, such as an email newsletter, outdoor banners and live tweeting during the event.

### Marketing Pack

If you are working with partners, you may want to send out a marketing pack to help them promote your event. This could include a press release, poster, link to Facebook event, and some example tweets.

### Registration thank you page

If your event is ticketed through an online service like Eventbrite, then you can create a thank you page that will ask people who've signed up to share the event on Facebook and Twitter. You can also use the registration form as an opportunity to invite people to sign up to your newsletter/mailings.

### Live tweet

Depending on what kind of event you're organising, live tweet just before and then during the event. This will continue to promote your event and will seem like your events are buzzing and well worth attending similar ones in the future!

### Newsletters, email and noticeboards

If you have an email mailing list, send out a simple e-newsletter promoting the event. Mail chimp is widely used for this. Be sure to use an image and include a clear call to action for your subscribers, such as 'book your place here' and include a link. You might want to send a follow up email a few days after the newsletter has gone out - a reminder email might just swing it for some people.

If you don't have your own mailing list/newsletter, ask partners to put the details in their newsletters, e.g. [The CAG Devon Newsletter](#), and perhaps your CVS.

Ask members of your group to add details of the event to the bottom of their email signature to increase its visibility every time you send an email. (and remind them to take it off again afterwards!)

Post the event on a staff electronic (or real) noticeboard if relevant.



## Signage, banners and logos

Make a banner with your logo on to hang outside the venue in the week before the event to attract passers-by. Make sure it is reusable, so use wording like 'Event here this Saturday' rather than using specific dates. You could also create some colourful bunting from surplus textiles to hang up at each event to grab more attention.

If you are holding an online event, a banner behind you when on Zoom (or similar) will remind everyone attending who your group is.

Your logo is of course a crucial piece of your publicity material. If your group doesn't yet have a logo, see if someone locally could design one for you for free, or run a competition perhaps. And if your logo has been around for a while and is looking a bit tired, think about giving it a subtle refresh.



## Step 5. During and after the event

It is easy to forget, having run the event, that there is potential for extra publicity to come out of it. For example photo and video content, a follow up blog and hopefully post event press coverage. Sending out another press release with photos of the event and describing the success story will help with promoting similar events in the future.

### Gather photos and videos

Photos tell the story in an easier to digest way than lots of words. Make sure you take plenty of photos at the event as these will be invaluable for future promotions. Remember to gather permissions from people to use their images for publicity purposes. A simple form is usually sufficient.

If you have the ability and resource to take a couple of videos during the event as well, then that's even better!

Videos are increasingly being used for communication on social media channels and are a powerful way of telling a story. Why not create a gallery of photos on your website as well.

### Gather email addresses

Use the event as an opportunity to increase your mailing list so you reach more people in the future, and because they've attended your event, they should be engaged and willing to hear from you. To comply with data protection regulations (GDPR), make sure they sign to give you permission to store and use their information for specific purposes. Email the new subscribers that you gathered at

## TOP TIPS

### Creating video clips:

Keep it short. Aim for one to two two minutes in a video for social media.

Use your phone! You don't have to have the latest technology to make a good video.



the event, welcoming them to your group, giving them a little more information and encouraging them to follow you on social media.

### **Send a post-event email**

Send an email after your event thanking people for coming along. You can include a survey if you want feedback to help improve future events. This is also a great way to gather quotes to use on your website and social media but remember to add a statement in the survey to say that quotes may be used in future promotions. In the email, include a link to your post-event blog and image/video gallery.



## Appendix 1: Example – Press release template

### Press Release

*[Date here]*

#### For immediate release

“Fix it, swap it, don’t throw it away!” – *[your CAG name]* announce Repair Café(s)

*[Your CAG name]* is running an innovative new event called a Repair Café in *[your location]* to tackle the growing issue of electronic waste and change the way we view normal household items like toasters and radios.

A Repair Cafe *[and/or swap shop]* will be happening on *[date]* at *[venue]*. It will match people bringing along broken electricals and electronics *[and other things as applicable]* with skilled people who like fixing things.

*[your CAG name]* have been assembling a team of enthusiastic volunteers who have expertise in fixing electrical items *[and other things as applicable]*. The focus of the event is on skill-sharing and building community as, rather than throwing items in the bin, attendees will be invited to learn how to fix their item alongside the volunteer repairers.

There will also be *[list any other activities or repairing facilities here]*. Attendees will enjoy a relaxed social atmosphere with tea, coffee and cakes *[or other]* provided.

*[Volunteer name]* from *[your CAG name]* explains how this came about “*[insert your quote here about why your group is doing the repair cafe]*”.

*[Name of representative, local councillor other VIP]* from *[insert partner organisation, local authority etc.]* said: “*[insert quote about local significance or why they support it]*”.

For enquires please contact: *[insert contact details]*

Notes to editor:

*[Insert description of your CAG]*

For more information please see: *[Insert website and any social media links]*

ENDS