TOP TIPS FOR WRITING A GREAT PRESS RELEASE

At some point, all charities and community groups need to contact the press. This could be the local or regional newspaper or local radio. Or it could be a national newspaper if your story is newsworthy or topical enough. In order to achieve this, you will need a press release.

What is a Press Release?

A press or media release is a concise informative document that is meant to be distributed to selected targeted media: editors, journalists, publications, TV and radio in order to connect with and engage the public. It is intended to create awareness and increased visibility for your organisation.

When do you need a Press Release?

You might need a press release for a variety of reasons. Here are some examples:
- To promote a new service
- To recognise a special event
- To announce achievements by staff or changes to staff
- To acknowledge a charitable donation, funding or legacy

It is very important to note that a press release is not an advert. It is information not promotion. The best press releases are great stories. So here are our top tips to writing a good press release and getting it published.

1. **It should begin by stating exactly what it is** (Press or Media Release) and providing publication details. For example, is it 'For Immediate Publication' or is it 'embargoed' until a given date? Make sure this is clearly visible.

2. **It needs a punchy unforgettable headline that grabs attention**. Remember, you will most likely be sending this as an email, so this headline will be in the subject box of that email and will probably determine whether it is even read!

3. **The first sentence is the most important and should sum up what the release is about**. It should be totally compelling and make the reader want to find out more. Equally important is the rest of this first paragraph. It should engage the reader and get 'straight to the point' with the key points of the message you want to communicate.

4. **Subsequent paragraphs will provide supporting information.** This might be facts and figures. Data to support the need for a new service or historical background information explaining precisely why an event is unmissable and exclusive will all help to justify your release being published.

5. **Quotes are essential!** They can be the human element to the story. Quoting a significant person in your organisation can attract integrity and also raise the profile of the organisation. It may lead to being asked to provide comment on future similar stories or it may lead to TV 'soundbite' or radio follow-up.

6. **It should preferably be one page and no more than two**. (or it won't get read) Use a common Font such as Arial or New Times Roman in a legible size 11 or 12pt.

7. **You must provide access to more information.** This might be social media links or website for the organisation to allow the reader to follow-up the story.

8. **Every press release should include 2-3 factual sentences about the organisation.** This is sometimes called the 'boilerplate'. Assume the person reading the release may not have heard of the organisation. This provides context, separate from the main text and is a clever way of providing background. It might be in a different font or italics to distinguish this.

9. **Make sure to include contact details at the end of the piece.** This should include name, email and phone/mobile number of the person to contact who wrote the piece or who knows it was distributed.

10.   **When sending to an editor or journalist, try to find their actual named email rather than news@ or editor@.** It is more likely to get a response. Before sending **proof read and proof read again.**