

How to Guide: Promoting an event

Your group has decided to put on an event or activity. You now need to get as many people there as possible to make it a success. Here is a reference guide on the things you can do to promote your event. Not all of these elements may be appropriate for your event, but a lot of them will be.

Planning

It all starts with planning. You've already planned your event, but now you need to think about planning the promotion of it. What key messages do you want to get across in your communications about the event to make sure people have all the information they need.

Consider these:

- *What is the event? Where is it happening? What is it for? Who is encouraged to attend?*

Timeline

Create a simple communications timeline for when you want to send out your key communications. This will help you organise and share tasks within your group. It could be as simple as the following:

Item	Audience	Aim	When?
Create Facebook event and share widely	General public / partners	Raise awareness, sell tickets, get people talking.	1 month before.
Write and send press release about the event.	Press/general public	Raise awareness and sell tickets.	2 weeks before.

Websites

Post the event on your own website, if you have one. Include all the necessary information: name, date, time, venue, ticket info...

Even if you don't have all of that info tied down straight away, once you have the date and name of the event, start getting word out there to build momentum. You can always fill in the blanks later.

Tip: make the copy as compelling and interesting as possible. Include an image. And even better, a video if you have one, maybe from a previous year's event.

Partner websites

List the event on partner websites, such as the **CAG Oxfordshire** website by adding it to the CAG calendar [here](#) and the Project will help promote it.

Post your event on local listing directories, such as **Daily Info** or **OxonArts**, if relevant. For a full checklist of people to contact, email CAG Project and we'll send you more details.

Personal invites

Write a list of people you'd definitely like to come and the best method of inviting them (email, phone etc.). Consider inviting local politicians, councillors, and funders (if relevant) to showcase your work.

Email newsletters

If you have an email mailing list, send out a newsletter promoting the event. Be sure to use an image and clear **call to action** for your subscribers, such as 'book your place here' and include a **link**.

Tip: make the subject line as compelling as possible: e.g. Don't miss out on our best event yet...

Send more than one email: one in advance of the date, one a bit before, and then a last minute one reminding people. You don't want to annoy or bombard people, but people get a lot of emails and yours can be easily missed. A reminder email might just swing it for someone.

Other mailing lists

The Key

If you don't have your own list, ask partners to put the details in their newsletters, e.g. put it in the [CAG Project's The Key](#).



Add the details of the event to the bottom of your email signature to increase its visibility every time you send an email.

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

Social media

Social media channels can be a very effective channel for reaching large audiences. If your group has some social media channels, then use these to promote your event.

- Create and use a **hashtag** (checking it isn't already being used) - something that is unique to the event. For example #OxGreenWk was used to promote Oxford Green Week.
- **Tweet** and tweet again – twitter is one busy place! 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.
- Set up a **Facebook** event and share it on your group's page and all of your personal accounts. Use a clear and engaging image (if you don't have one of your own, you can use free images sites such as [Pixabay](#), always being sure you have permission to use an image before posting) and be clear what the event is about. You can also include a link to Eventbrite if you're using.
- Invite your list of contacts to your event.



- Post your event on any local Facebook community pages, e.g. Oxford City Community page
- If you have any budget, then you may want to consider promoting your tweet or Facebook event. Even £10 can increase your reach considerably.
- Use images and graphics to create interesting visuals for social media (e.g. [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) or similar online design sites are great for this, and free!).
- Make a really simple, short video to promote the event
- **Live-tweet** – depending on what kind of event you’re organising, live tweet during the event. This will continue to promote your event and will seem like your events are buzzing and well worth attending in the future!

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.

Tips for social media:

Use a mix of content including: just text, links to your blog or a website, images, and videos.
Tweet regularly (min. of 4 times a day); Facebook, post just once a day.

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.

Blog or news feed

If you have a blog, or news feature on your website, then write about your event there. You could write a few:

- **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 lots of pictures or even 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.

Press release

Let the local press know about your event and invite them along through a press release. By getting the local press on board then you will be sharing your event with the wider general public.

- The press will like a story with an interesting angle or personal story
- Give them all the information they need in the first paragraph.
- Follow up with a phone call – journalists are extremely busy and your press release may just get over looked.

- View a template press release [here](#) with more tips and advice.

The CAG Project has an up to date list of contact details for the main publications in the Oxfordshire area. However, it's also useful to build up relationships with your own press contacts. This will help with getting them along to your events.

Radio interviews

Should you be given the opportunity to take part in a radio interview, make yourself a list of three points 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.

Printed publicity

Create a poster or flyer. If your group doesn't have design knowledge, then online programmes like Canva.com are a great way of creating professional looking posters and publicity.

- Keep the design as clear and simple as possible (especially if you're not a designer)
- Include all the key bits of information – where, when, why, who etc.
- Include a link to website or social media channels if available



During and after the event

Signage

Put up signs in the venue and surrounding area to reach passers by.

Take pictures

Make sure you take plenty of photos at the event as these will be valuable for promoting future events. Photos tell a story in a much easier to digest way than lots of words. You can create a gallery of photos on your website, or on Facebook.

Social media

Post on social media just before the event reminding people to come along, during it and just after including photos and a thank you.

Videos

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.

- Keep in short – don't go over two minutes for a video for social media
- Use your phone! You don't have to have the latest technology to make a good video.

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.

Post-event email

Send an email after your event thanking people for coming along. You can include a survey if you want feedback on the event to improve in the future. This is also a great way to gather quotes to use on your website and social media (bearing in mind you add a statement in the survey to say they'll be used in promotion).

In the email, include a link to your post-event blog and image gallery/video.

Email the new subscribers that you gathered at the event, welcoming them to your group, giving them a little more information and encouraging them to follow you on social media.