

# Media support and top tips to showcase your group

## Media support

The Communities team works throughout the year to raise awareness of the efforts that It's Your Neighbourhood and Beautiful Scotland groups commit to improving their communities, using communication channels such as the print and broadcast media, our web and social media sites.

We currently provide media support by:

- issuing national media releases announcing awards and certificates;
- issuing regional media releases detailing achievements and highlighting the work of each group;
- providing quotes, on request, to support your own media work throughout the year;
- providing information to groups and reporters throughout the year to assist with media enquiries;
- providing template press release and photo call release documents for groups to modify and issue, highlighting the work of the group and the groups' participation in It's Your Neighbourhood or Beautiful Scotland; and
- promoting the work of groups through social media channels – so, sharing and liking our Facebook posts and tweets is a great way to promote your own and other's activities.

We encourage all participants in It's Your Neighbourhood or Beautiful Scotland to work towards generating as much press coverage for their activities as possible.

## What does media coverage achieve?

Media coverage can result in good knock-on effects, for example:

- The more frequent and interesting the media coverage about your initiatives, the more people will be encouraged to support and participate in planned activities and programmes.
- Editorial coverage is great third-party endorsement; journalists help the public form their opinions and can motivate people to get involved.

## Top tips for a good story

To gain coverage in the media you need a newsworthy story. A story can come from many viewpoints or perspectives, and you need to think creatively. Consider the following:

- What sets your project apart; how is it different to other community projects?
- Are any new sectors of the community contributing to your project?
- Are you tackling issues such as composting and water-wise gardening in a new or interesting way?
- Are you working on a special horticultural feature?
- Are you doing something interesting in relation to a well-known feature of local heritage?

Think beyond the physical side of your entry: the media are often interested in the human angle. Is there a story behind the people involved in your activities? Has volunteering with your group helped someone back into work, or improved the quality of someone's life?

Other media hooks your group might draw upon could include:

- Have you transformed an area (for example, a 'before and after' story)?
- Have you restored or re-introduced natural habitat or wildlife areas?
- Do you include rare, exotic or unusual plants in your displays?
- Do you have a notable celebrity or personality linked to your project?
- Are you featuring people, a display or planting that has an interesting story or history?
- Does your planting reflect a wider public interest such as the environment (for example, conserving resources) or the community (for example, completely volunteer created)?

### **Contacting the media**

The easiest media for you to target will be your regional/local press by issuing a media release (see tips for writing media releases below).

#### ***Regional daily, weekly and Sunday newspapers***

Before you send in your story, consider which section of the paper it would best fit (news; features; gardening supplement etc.) and call the relevant journalist to introduce the story and ask if you can email them a media release.

If you are organising an event, a media release should usually be sent about a week in advance; however, if your local paper is only printed weekly, you should send your release to them two to three weeks in advance. Invite them to send a reporter and photographer along on the day. Try to confirm before the event whether any journalists or photographers will be attending and make sure you give them your mobile contact number.

If you gain a significant sponsor or other local recognition, your local newspaper might wish to write a story. They may wish to visit your community and take a picture. This is also a good opportunity to talk about upcoming projects or events you want them to attend.

#### ***Television and Radio***

When contacting your local television or radio station we would suggest you call the newsdesk for the programme you want to target and ask for the forward planning person who will be looking after the news on the day of your event.

### **Top tips on writing a media release**

- Be accurate and informative – get someone else to proof it for typos before you send it.
- Don't waffle; the ideal press release is one side of A4.
- A punchy, eye-catching title will capture attention.
- Key information should come in the first paragraph: what is happening? Why? Where? When? Who is involved? Many media releases don't get read below the opening paragraph so make sure you sum it up here.
- Include a quote or testimonial from yourself, a sponsor, a local dignitary, a volunteer or celebrity.
- Make sure your contact details are in the "Notes to Editors" at the end of the release, should the journalist have any follow up queries.
- If you can supply a high-quality image to illustrate your story, mention that in the "Notes to Editors". Often a good picture will get a story featured. See our top tips on images below.

- Always write “Media Release” across the top of the page and include the date together with any logo (the It’s Your Neighbourhood/Beautiful Scotland logos are available from us – please email [beautifulscotland@keepsotlandbeautiful.org](mailto:beautifulscotland@keepsotlandbeautiful.org)).
- Include the date to be released (for example “For Immediate Release”, or “Embargoed until 30 July 2023”).

Please do consider sending information to us too. We can use it on our website, social media sites, or include it in our newsletter to share with other groups.

**\*\*And please make sure to mention that your group is ‘taking part in It’s Your Neighbourhood (or Beautiful Scotland), which is run by Keep Scotland Beautiful, your charity for Scotland’s environment.’\*\***

## Top tips for taking photos to send to the media

- Consider what makes an interesting image. The best images are those with some action in them. People doing something while also looking at the camera make excellent images, and even more so if the photographer has angled themselves, so they are either looking up or down at the subject. For further guidance and examples, check out our [useful guide](#).
- Make sure you’ve got permission from the people in the photograph, and a full list of names and job titles to put in the caption. If you haven’t taken the photo yourself, you’ll also need the photographer’s permission for the picture to be used publicly. Where children under 18 are featured, a photo permission form will need to be signed by the parent or guardian giving their permission for the photo to be used.
- The media often ask for before and after shots, as a way of illustrating a story - keep a photo record of your activities from the very beginning.
- Only attach a couple of photographs (jpegs or tiffs) when emailing a story to the media and don’t let your email exceed 10MB; otherwise it may not get through the newspaper’s email system.

## What else can you do?

**Use surveys:** The press want to cover the issues that concern its readers/viewers; if 250 local people have signed your petition to renovate a communal garden, contact your local paper with a press release.

**Target specialist media:** Consider ‘specialist’ media outlets in addition to your local paper, for example: the local community channel, horticultural press or programmes, tourism magazines, lifestyle magazines, and county-wide glossy magazines. If you have an idea for a feature, call the features editor and run it past them. Please note, lead times (the editorial schedules the magazines work to) for monthly publications could be as much as three months in advance and even longer for quarterlies.

## Social media

We are active on Twitter and Facebook and, where possible, we follow our groups and share their information with our wider audiences.

Please consider ‘liking’ our pages and do provide us with your Facebook/Twitter page names and we will reciprocate. If mentioning Keep Scotland Beautiful/It’s Your Neighbourhood/Beautiful Scotland in any posts, please use @KSBScotland @RHSBloom

@rhscommunitygardening #ourbloom – that way we will see them and can reshare. We would also recommend that you follow the RHS Britain in Bloom Facebook page, and like its Twitter page, to get inspiration from others and so that you will inspire others too.

Find us on:

Twitter: [twitter.com/ksbscotland](https://twitter.com/ksbscotland)

Facebook: [facebook.com/KSBScotland](https://facebook.com/KSBScotland)

Find the RHS Britain in Bloom on:

Twitter: [twitter.com/rhsbloom](https://twitter.com/rhsbloom)

Facebook: [facebook.com/rhscommunitygardening](https://facebook.com/rhscommunitygardening)