

HOW TO PUBLICISE EVENTS



Introduction

A key part of any event is the publicity. Both before the event so that you get as many people coming as possible, and afterwards so that your supporters know what's been achieved. Our 'how to' guide on publicising events provides you with some top tips.

For help, call our dedicated customer services team (please have your policy number available) on

0345 606 1331

(Monday to Friday 8am-6pm excluding bank holidays)

Email us at

enquiries@micmail.com

For more information and guidance, go online at

www.methodistinsurance.co.uk

Keep it local

First things first

Get in touch with everyone on your Electoral Roll to let them know about your appeal. Use all the channels you can think of but don't forget word of mouth. Whenever you meet people in your community, tell them about it and ask them to spread the word too.

Think about possible partners and joint messages

Can you 'piggy back' off a well-known tourist attraction nearby? For instance, join forces with a local pub and ask them to publicise the event. Could you persuade them to ask for a donation for every portion of a particular dish they sell?

Think about local events that you could use in your publicity, such as a village festival or a quirky local annual tradition, or bigger events that are held nearby, such as the TT Races, the Great North Run etc.



Advertising the event

Contact your local authority if you want to put up roadside banners near your venue. They may let you put up temporary posters in certain areas. Remember to take them down afterwards.

Ask for help

Ask local businesses for support. You can find their details by searching online, or by using Google Earth to see individual businesses on industrial estates.

If you need extra elements or services to make your fundraising a success, that can become a story in itself. For instance, if you need refreshments on the day, your Vicar could make a heartfelt plea on local radio for someone to donate an ice cream van.

If you're thinking of approaching local businesses for sponsorship support, think about what you can offer in return. Be realistic – remember, they probably have lots of requests for help from charities.

For example if your event will have a programme, you may be selling advertising space to generate extra revenue. You could offer local businesses free or discounted advertising in return for their support.



[Find out more on our website](#)

Clear messages

Who are you trying to reach?

Think about the different types of people you want to talk to. Local people in the community? Big businesses? Individuals who could be major donors? Write a short paragraph for each group, explaining why they should support your cause. Make it short and to the point. These messages can then be used in other publicity material including brochures.

Keep it simple and be consistent

Distil the messages down into one, simple message that works for every possible audience. Keep it simple, and focused on the benefits to the community.

Make sure that wherever your message appears, you are saying the same consistent thing. Don't confuse people by saying different things, just have one key message and say it over and over again.

Include everyone

Market the activity as a community event, not a faith or church-based event.

When creating publicity material, it may seem that a photograph of the church is the most obvious image to use. But for people who don't know the church, it might not mean much to them. People give to people, so use images of the people taking part or the people the charitable gifts will be helping.

Create a caption or strapline for your event. Don't make it solely about the church, but try to include the local community, village or beneficiaries of the fundraising. Straplines should be short, memorable and inclusive!

Spread the word

Keep communicating

If your fundraising is happening over a few weeks, it's the ideal opportunity to keep the story front of mind. Provide local newspapers and radio with regular updates as the event progresses.

Regular newsletters keep the momentum going. Give people updates, either digitally or in print. Use photos of people doing things and achieving results, not just photos of the church. If there's a setback, turn it into an opportunity.

Stand out

If you're on a main road, try and stop passing traffic with some really eye-catching messages. Intrigue people so that they want to find out more.

Be memorable

Choose a catchy name for your event that people will remember. It could be worth devising a logo too – ask a professional graphic designer. They may be willing to give their time for free. Some events also successfully use a mascot.

Spread your net

Use the publicity channels you already have – church poster boards, parish newsletters, church websites. Then start thinking further afield. Village magazines and newsletters, local newspapers, local radio stations.

Provide local businesses with posters and leaflets to publicise your event.

If you're raising money for a particular charity, they may want to publicise the event themselves. Give them photographs and quotations that they can use in their newsletter, website or social media.

Use local media

Create a press release for local newspapers and radio stations. Make it short and relevant. The first paragraph should sum up

the fundraising activity, and the next four or so paragraphs give further details. Include contact details at the end for people to get in touch if they need more information. If possible, email the release to the media as this usually preferable to paper and post.

Make a good impression

When producing publicity material, don't just think about the words and the imagery. Think about every element. Cheap photocopy paper may look like your church is struggling or not taking the issue seriously. Invest in good paper, and good quality design.

If you are producing a leaflet, start with messages about what you're trying to achieve, and how it will benefit the whole community. Try and avoid too much on the your church history unless it's relevant.

Tell the story

Your publicity materials should address any reservations people may have about the church. For example, people may think the church is rich, so explain how it is funded by the donations of people in the congregation. People may think you're exclusive – explain how you're open to everyone. People may worry that the church focuses only on Christians – describe your outreach and your help to people of any denomination.

Social media

Social media like Facebook and Twitter are essential, and easy to use. Whilst only a very few Facebook campaigns truly do spread like wildfire, they do encourage people beyond your community to get involved.



Using images and video make Facebook and Twitter much more effective.

Don't forget you can use their analytical tools to find out how many people have read or shared your messages or about other events in your local area. If you're not sure about using social media, ask your event committee for help – you're likely to find at least one social media enthusiast.



Find out more on our website

People already have social networks, with their Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts. You don't necessarily need to build up lots of contacts, but can encourage people in your congregation to spread the word digitally themselves.

Blogs that are updated every day gives people the chance to interact with your activity and keep coming back for more.

If you are using a website or social media make sure you keep updating it. If it stays unchanged for weeks it looks like you have run out of steam. Don't forget to include your website and social media details on printed material too.

Use the Charities Aid Foundation to include a link for donations on your web page. Make sure it is really easy and obvious for people to use. Once someone has decided to give money, anything that gets in the way will put them off.

Say 'thank you'

Saying thank you is a big part of the publicity. Do it properly – have a fundraising team systematically ensure that everyone involved has been thanked. Put notices in the pew sheets, let people know how much has been raised, and explain how the money is helping. And thank people on social media and your website too.

Make sure to write a personal letter or email to everyone who makes a donation, thanking them for their contribution. Goodwill today can lead to more fundraising tomorrow.



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