

Preparing for Paris: Carry the Baton and Become a Beacon of Hope



How to get a story in the local paper!

Please publicise the baton when it visits your church and community. Contact the local media with the story and pictures. Here are some tips.

Local papers are still one of the best ways for you to publicise the baton

Most are weekly, but some are daily, or evening meaning there is a growing demand for news. Many of them also have websites that are updated each day, so even if a story is too late for the printed paper, it can be put online immediately.



- If unfamiliar with the paper you want to send a story to, buy a copy. See how stories are laid out, the length of the articles, and who to contact. Most papers have a list of who to call about what items, and give phone numbers and emails and deadlines for sending information to them.
 - Check how and when to get your article to the paper to make sure it goes in.
 - Many weekly papers have 'group of the week' or 'district news' sections. It means you can send in your own report of your meeting to the paper and ask them to consider using it. Read your local paper, make contact with them, check the deadline and submit your information. They may even give you the chance for more publicity by sending a photographer to a meeting.
 - Remember, only the most compelling stories stand a chance of getting in the paper if they arrive in the newsroom an hour before the weekly deadline.
 - Ask if you could meet a reporter for a quick coffee to tell them a little about the baton. Overworked, underpaid local reporters can often be tempted by coffee, cake, a quick break from the office and a potential story.
 - Building a personal relationship with one reporter, through a face to face meeting, can increase your chances of coverage. It will also help you develop a clearer sense of what interests a paper.
- Ideally have something original and visual to report. Newspapers and their readers love something which is a little different and interesting to look at.

Who? What? When? Why? Where? How?

- These are the simple questions reporters have at the back of their minds. When speaking to a reporter or writing a press release make sure you think in the same way.
- Provide contact details including daytime and a mobile phone number if possible. Email addresses are useful but there is always the worry that the recipient will not reply for several hours or days.
- Contact people should be available to answer queries. Do not make sending in a press release, one of the last things you do before going away for a two week holiday.

Thanks to social media your story could even make you a star on the internet, thanks to [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

And finally...

Look out for other media where you can gain publicity. If there is a local radio station in the area, make sure they receive your releases and establish contact with them. There could be a chance to being invited in for an interview which is great free publicity.



For information on the baton contact Gordon Hudson at Eco Congregation Scotland:
manager@ecocongregationscotland.org

For media advice (Church of Scotland) contact Andrew Harris of the communications Team on aharris@churchofscotland.org.uk

Text from Church of Scotland Communications Team.