

Community First New Forest

Writing a Media Release

- Before writing the release, think carefully about your audience as this may affect what information you put in the release.
- Always make sure you put the most important information at the top: what, why, when, where, who.
- Start with an eye-catching headline. Journalists think in sound-bites, so use the most exciting, attention-grabbing part of the event to sell the story. Focus on what is new and what is happening at the moment – think of how tabloids write headlines.
- You should be able to tell what the story is about from the headline and first paragraph – the rest of the release is just developing this information.
- Your first paragraph should explain the headline (without repeating the wording) but also include more information. It should highlight the main news point clearly and vividly.
- Each paragraph used thereafter should go down in order of relevance.
- Keep the release concise and factual and try to be as objective as possible (it should be written in the third-person – as though you are the journalist – apart from the quote).
- Provide a quote about half-way through the release from the most interesting, newsworthy person involved. If there are two sides to the story, include two quotes from different perspectives, eg. someone running the event and someone experiencing it.
- If you want to give a website, email address or phone number for people to contact, make sure you include this in the last line of the release, e.g. “for more information about this contact XXX”.
- At the end of the release write ‘ENDS’ to differentiate where the material you want to be printed ends and the additional information for the journalist begins.
- Below the word ‘ENDS’ you must include your own contact details – so the journalist knows who to contact for more information, e.g. “For interviews, pictures or more information about the above, please contact me on...”
- If there is any additional background which does not add to the story but you think the journalist should know, include it at the bottom of the page in a section marked ‘Notes to Editors’.
- Try not to write more than a side of A4 in total – although it does not matter if your ‘Notes to Editors’ go on to a second side.

- Always include at the top of the release the date it is issued to the media and include details of any embargo (when you aren't permitted to publish information until a certain date).