



COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER TOOLKIT



INTRODUCTION

Community newspapers create community cohesion. They provide a voice for residents, a way of communicating important community messages and create opportunities for employment, work experience and improvements to self-confidence and self-esteem.

Leys News is a highly successful community newspaper that was established over 18 years ago. It serves the South East corner of Oxford known as Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys, and in the last four years has grown from being a bi monthly publication to a monthly publication. We now also produce community newspapers for six other areas of Oxford and four in Reading, with more to follow in 2015 following the creation of our umbrella organisation Community Media Group.

Leys News provides a comprehensive news and information service for local residents, giving everyone the opportunity to contribute to the content of the paper and enjoy the feeling of 'ownership' that this offers.

We provide training and learning opportunities for volunteers in our office and working with Oxford Brookes University deliver Community Journalism Training Courses which are run by Sarah Edwards, the newspaper's editor who has worked in journalism for 24 years.

The Leys News office is run by Business Manager John Charlton who has run and managed many businesses and has been pivotal in moving the paper from a bi-monthly to a monthly publication. All our design and art work is created by Julian Dourado, an experienced and talented graphic designer and page layout artist.

Our team is built from professionals who have worked in the business/corporate world, mainstream media and broadcasting and the third and public sectors.

Using the skills and experience that we have brought to Leys News, we are now offering a 'COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER TOOLKIT' package that can help communities across the UK to launch their own community newspapers.

We recognise and understand the importance that community projects play in enhancing the lives and expectations of people. Leys News has provided many people with free training and the chance to realise their ambitions and create aspirations for their futures and those of their families. Many of our volunteers have gone on to take further training that has led to employment opportunities; others have experienced an increase in self-confidence and awareness that they would not have been able to achieve outside of a community project. We have opened our doors to everyone and embrace the diversity that working in these communities has to offer.

Now we want to spread this message further and offer other communities the chance to create their own newspapers and experience the success and life improvement opportunities that we have been able to offer.

By investing in our "COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER TOOLKIT", communities will be able to take advantage of our direct skills, experience and professionalism to create their own thriving and truly local newspaper while also offering local people some potentially life changing opportunities for self-improvement.

WHY START A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER?

Every village, town and city in the UK has a local newspaper. However, not every community has its own dedicated news and information service. Leys News provides

local news, information, features, sport, photography and even competitions and give away for its readers, and you can create the same resource in your community.

Leys News started life as little more than an A4 newsletter. Over the years it has grown into a 16 page full colour monthly tabloid newspaper that now attracts major advertisers, sponsorship from universities and car manufacturers and regular contributions from a team of community journalists. As well as being a superb communication tool and a great way to bring a community together, Leys News is also a successful community-based business that offers employment opportunities and contributes to the local economy.

In a recent report, The Media Trust commented on the importance of community media projects and with the coalition government's plans for a Big Society, this is the right time to launch a newspaper for your community.

As well as being an important part of the community, working in community newspapers is fun, rewarding and no two days are ever the same! You will meet new people as you build your team, and acquire new skills and experience that will stand you in good stead as you develop your newspaper.

BUILDING YOUR TEAM

The best way to start gathering interest for your community newspaper is to tap into your existing networks and groups. The idea of a project like this is to include ALL sectors of your community so start with the groups, clubs and meetings that you attend regularly and then start to widen your search. Playgroups and toddler groups, sports clubs, youth groups, the local WI and business networking groups are all involved with Leys News and groups like this exist in every community. By contacting organisations like these you will create interest in your newspaper and also get to make some interesting and diverse new friends from all backgrounds, cultures and ethnicities and this is one of the reasons that Leys News is such a success.

Everyone has a valuable contribution to make. Whether they have ideas for stories, take great photographs, have an interest in local sport or are happy to deliver the paper. Everyone's contribution is really important to the success of a newspaper and should never be overlooked. Leys News has worked with many people who do not have English as their first language and with people who lack confidence in their abilities to communicate. By taking part in our training courses, we have helped people to overcome these obstacles and improve their lives.

“As a dyslexic with a spelling age tested to be an eight-year-old I had no idea that I could train to be a community journalist. The course helped to not only

build my confidence but also my self-esteem which from being unemployed for more than a year at that point had hit almost rock bottom”

J (50) Leys News Community Journalist

I can't work at present because of long standing difficulties with agoraphobia and anxiety, and was looking for something to do on a voluntary basis that was stimulating and would get me out of the house, but without too much pressure. We have just completed a second issue of Cowley News and I am so pleased to be involved. Through volunteer community journalism I have to talk to strangers, and get out of the house a bit more. It can be difficult, but I feel it has had a beneficial effect on a personal level, helping me to slowly gain in confidence”

H (28), Cowley News Community Journalist

As well as a team of enthusiastic volunteers, you will probably find that you need a management committee to begin with. As your project takes off, you may need to create a board of directors to support you and help you move things forward. Your committee should consist of a group of like-minded and community focussed people who have a real passion and interest in developing a really good, solid community newspaper. If you have people on board who have a business background you will find that incredibly beneficial and obviously if you have the support of someone with experience in journalism, advertising or printing then even better! However, the most important part of forming a committee is to generate support and interest for your new project from people of all backgrounds.

FUNDING

Leys News started life with little money in the bank! However, thanks to support from community initiatives, local authorities, foundations and local businesses it has grown to the success story it is today. Your start up costs can be minimal to begin with, but you should investigate funding and sponsorship opportunities to get your project off the ground.

Part of our business kit includes solid advice and help to guide you through the application process for grant funding. We have many years of experience in pitching for funding from various sources and therefore we are in an excellent position to help new community groups. We can also provide advice on how to generate income

from advertising. Many local businesses, government and health bodies are keen to promote their services through community newspapers.

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER TOOLKIT

Community Media Group has developed a unique all-in-one package which will allow your community to produce a quarterly newspaper for one year. The package includes everything you need to get started and run the project for the first year. The package includes:

- Community Journalist Training Course – A 20 hour training course delivered by the Leys News Editor Sarah Edwards
- Newspaper Design – Your own personalised design for your newspaper
- Four issues of an 8 page tabloid style full colour quality printed newspaper x 3000 copies
- Design, layout and production for four issues
- Print for four issues – 8 pages x 3000 copies
- On-going Editorial consultancy – Up to 10 hours per issue
- On-going management and advertising consultancy – Up to 10 hours per issue

To discuss the COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER TOOLKIT in more detail please call:

John Charlton, Business & Community Development Manager on 01865 711756.

Email: officemanager@leysnews.co.uk

or

Sarah Edwards, Group Editorial Manager on 01865 711756

Email: editor@leysnews.co.uk

Leys News Ltd t/a Community Media Group
26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX
Tel: 01865 711756 Email: info@leysnews.co.uk
www.leysnews.co.uk