



HOW TO CREATE AND MANAGE EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

This guide has been created by Scotland's Urban Past (SUP), a five-year community-engagement project from Historic Environment Scotland.

We support communities to record, research and celebrate the history on their doorsteps.

Through our free training and resources, people of all ages can discover and share the fascinating stories of Scotland's towns and cities.

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How to create and manage email newsletters

Also known as **'eNewsletters'**, email newsletters are exactly that – a way for organisations and community groups to keep people up to date with their latest news through regular emails.

Email newsletters are usually created in the HTML coding language, which includes hyperlinks to websites, but you do not need to know how to code because many websites offer free pre-made email newsletter templates.

Set your email newsletter goals

Before you establish an email newsletter, consider what you and your group want to achieve. What is the overall purpose of this email newsletter? Perhaps your community group intends to raise awareness about specific issues or recruit new members. You may be looking to increase event registrations, promote blog posts or possibly raise funds. Decide on the goals of your newsletter and you will already be generating some ideas of content.

Preparing an email newsletter

For every email newsletter that you prepare, you will need to consider the content, the layout and who will produce these.

If your email newsletter is for a community group, we recommend assigning roles to people in the group. Decide who is responsible for creating content and who will send out the email newsletters regularly. It is always a good idea to have someone on hand to proofread test versions of the email newsletter before it is sent out.

Creating content

The people on your mailing list are already interested in you, your project and your group. Keep them interested with positive and interesting news. This might include:

- promoting upcoming events and meetings
- links to your most recent blog posts
- a summary of what your group has been doing
- sharing the good news when you reach project milestones
- future plans and next steps for the group or project
- introducing a different group member in each newsletter with a short paragraph or two
- highlighting useful resources for subscribers who may be working on a similar project
- featuring organisations that your group may have worked in collaboration with news or information, whether it's on a local scale or international, that may be interesting to your subscribers and in keeping with your group or project
- photographs of people and events – make sure you have permission to reproduce these

If you are in need of inspiration, invite people in your group to make suggestions for newsletter content and sign up to related organisations' newsletters.

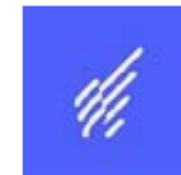
Remember that collecting information takes time and organisation.

Ask people for contributions well in advance and set a clear deadline date.

Building your email newsletter

Most email newsletters feature:

- a banner at the top
- a friendly introduction from the group or the group's leader
- contact details so that readers can get in touch
- a table of contents, which may vary for each newsletter or be the same titles with different content in each edition
- blocks of main content, separated by images, dividing lines or alignment
- a hyperlink at the bottom (the 'footer') of the email which gives recipients the chance to unsubscribe or 'opt-out' of the newsletter.



MailChimp, Benchmark Email and MPZMail all feature 'Drag and Drop' systems, so you can build your newsletter without needing to know any HTML coding.

You can also adapt existing templates to suit your community group or personal preferences.

When you add your content, you may discover that the email newsletter seems very text-heavy. Try trimming down long blocks of text by cutting out extra words, turning your content into short paragraphs, bullet points and lists wherever possible, and introducing subheadings.

Hitting the 'send' button

Before sending out your first newsletter, make full use of the preview and test features of your email newsletter provider. This will enable you to check that it displays correctly in your inbox and still make changes to the email campaign before it is sent out to your mailing list. Send the test version to someone in your group who can view it with a fresh pair of eyes – it is very easy to miss typos in a piece of writing that you have written yourself. You may also find that printing out a hard copy on paper can help to highlight any errors.

Monitoring the success of your email newsletter

Whichever email newsletter service you choose, remember that it is more than just a platform to send out emails. It will also provide you with data about what happened to your email newsletter once you clicked the 'send' button. These analytics can reveal:

- **how many of your subscribers successfully received an email newsletter**
- **how many of your successful recipients opened an email newsletter**
- **how many times your recipients opened a newsletter**
- **what links those who opened it then clicked on**
- **comparisons between your email campaigns.**

This information can help you shape the content of your future email newsletters to your subscribers' interests. It may also highlight which stylistic choices have a greater impact – for example, more people may click on 'buttons' rather than hyperlinked text, indicating that your future email newsletters should feature 'calls to action' as buttons rather than text.



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