



Cotswold Vale Talking Newspaper

GUIDELINES FOR EDITORS: Revised December 2016

1. Objective

Editors prepare a selection of local news stories, comment and opinions chosen from the current edition of the Gloucestershire Gazette. The selections should be relevant to our target audience, residents or former residents of Berkeley, Cam, Dursley, Wotton-under-Edge and the surrounding villages. The fact that our listeners are visually impaired and may also be elderly is of course important but they are entitled to take their full part in local life and be informed of current events and issues. Editors must resist the temptation to “protect” listeners from unpleasant stories: they have the right to know all the information in the paper.

2. Source Material

CVTN has permission from the publishers (Newsquest) to read and record stories from the Gloucestershire Gazette. The Gazette is published every Thursday and has three editions. Our edition carries news from Cam, Dursley, Berkeley, Wotton-under-Edge and the south-west part of Stroud District Council. The other editions cover Thornbury, Chipping Sodbury, Yate and other areas of South Gloucestershire Council.

News pages are, on the whole, only about each edition’s target area, but the paper will, if short of news, fill-in with stories from another edition. The most significant stories are on the front page or other odd-numbered pages

The Arts, Education, Community Champions, Business and Sports sections are common to all three editions, as are Family Announcements including Deaths. Advertising, small ads, advertorial and public announcements are also in all editions.

Motoring News is common to every local paper produced by the publishers and is usually based on national press releases by the motor trade.

Newsquest publish three sister papers, Stroud News and Journal, Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard and Gloucestershire Independent. The Gazette and these papers now all have the same editor. We assume de-facto consent to also source items from these publications. We also have permission to include stories from Stroud Life and the Citizen. We do not have copyright clearance for any national papers or magazines. Since we broadcast our weekly recording on the internet, items from these sources should not generally be included. When short of relevant news items we can also draw on publications such as the Cotswold Lion, the Berkeley Flyer, other local newsletters or even church magazines.

3. Preparing your programme.

Buy at least two copies of the Gazette on publication day (Thursday). Two copies are needed to ensure stories on both sides of a page are included. Read through to make a preliminary selection and check for any stories continued on other pages. Cut through the central spines of both copies and make two piles, odd pages and even. Combine the piles carefully to make a sequential set of sheets with copy you intend to include. Use this as an opportunity to discard obviously irrelevant pages (pages with stories “out-of-area”, pages that are difficult to read meaningfully, including lists, advertisements etc.

Cut out the items you think should be included, starting with the front page news. Include headlines, describable pictures, editorial comment etc.

Sort the clippings into your programme. Select 60 to 70 minutes of readings. There is no time limit on Memory Sticks but while we are still issuing CDs there is a maximum time governed by their data limit. There is no need however to completely fill the entire CD. Once your readings are finished the CD will stop, so gaps at the end are not noticeable to the listener.

The software used to record the programme can handle up to 30 tracks. Aim to produce 21 to 25 tracks, each with a different reader. Prepare one track per page. Keep the track length to an average of 3 minutes. This gives the listener a regular change of voice and the readers a chance to keep their presentation fresh.

Paste the content for each track onto a separate sheet of paper, putting the stories, if more than one, into the order you want them read. Leave enough space for the reader to make notes and comments. Number the pages sequentially. The reader sitting to the left of the editor will always start with page, and hence track, number 3.

4. Compiling the running order.

Track 1 is a short announcement with the date and recording identity, e.g. "It's Friday the ___ of _____. Welcome to the Cotswold Vale Talking Newspaper". This gives listeners and duplicators a quick way of identifying which recording is on a particular memory stick.

Track 2 is always the editor's. It's a chance to address our listenership directly, introducing the readers, technician and duplicators and passing on news about CVTN. It begins with our signature tune, which may be added later by the technician. Welcome new listeners or volunteers. Say something about newcomer's backgrounds. If you feel confident enough, have the technician bring up a new reader's mike and do a brief interview or conversation, but plan what you are going to say first. It's also an opportunity to apologise for any problems that may have arisen with previous recording or the Royal Mail.

Check the duplicators day book before recording begins for any listener donations and acknowledge in this section.

There are several standard announcements that should also go on track 2.

- a) The weather forecast: the Gazette's is prepared on Wednesday so is usually out of date by Friday's recording. Up to date weekend forecasts for our area are available on the BBC Weather Web Site, www.bbc.co.uk/weather/2650613 If all else fails, use the Gazette's.
- b) This site also gives sunrise and sunset times, an acceptable alternative to "Lighting-Up Times".
- c) The phases of the moon are available on some calendars, or may be found on-line at www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/moon
- d) Listeners' birthdays are on the calendar on the studio desk. Editors should check against the current tick-list in the studio to ensure entries on the calendar are up to date and the listener hasn't cancelled or died.
- e) There is a standard number, currently Mary Moss, to read-out for listeners to report problems. Replacement contacts will be notified as and when.
- f) Explain area codes procedure; only if they are other than 01453.

Also use track 2 to tell listeners of changes to routine, eg, Christmas and Easter recording breaks or changes to or from GMT. Include brief acknowledgements of any donations included in returned pouches

Trail the contents of the CD, previewing news stories that are to follow. With all the above, your two-three minutes will be up, so hand over to the first reader to carry on.

From this point the readers should announce the track number, beginning with Track 3. This should always be the Gazette's front page story. This is the one with banner headlines and usually a photograph. It is sometimes continued inside the paper, so make sure all the copy is included. Sometimes a minor photo story is also on the front page. This is there to fill space and can be fitted into your selection later as required.

If the Gazette's editorial comment refers to the front-page news, follow on with it as track 4. Sometimes the editorial repeats verbatim copy in the story so feel free to edit this out as long as the sense of the piece is retained. If the editorial is not relevant put it after the appropriate story later in the programme.

Look out for other stories or letters linked to the front page news. Keep the continuity.

The balance of the rest of the tracks may be different according to the tastes of each editor, who is free to put his or her own spin on the programme. The following is therefore only for guidance.

Tracks may be grouped by area eg Dursley news, Wotton news or by topic eg schools news.

Other common themes and topics may be:

Sponsorship and fundraising

Crime, including police and court reporting

Business news

Council news, including planning issues, financial reports, Particularly Gloucestershire County, Stroud District and local town or parish councils.

Parliamentary matters from Stroud and Cotswolds constituencies.

Health and hospital news

Fire and Ambulance services

The Arts, including local amateur drama and music, exhibitions

Transport, particularly local buses, road accidents, planned road closures (check Public Notices)

What's on; meetings, fund-raising events, jumble sales etc. Check the dates carefully. Most listeners will only hear the programme one or two days after recording, so publicising events on publication day (Thursday), recording day (Friday) or the day of receipt (Saturday) is pointless.

Letters to the Editor can be included if fun, informative, or interesting. The key is to check continuity, as some refer to the previous week's paper. Listen to last week's recording on-line or phone last week's editor to find out what's been included. Avoid politics and politicians. Be cautious with correspondence on contentious environmental issues as authors can get bogged down in technical detail. Avoid letters from celebrities promoting national charities as these are written by PR companies and go to every local paper in the country. Anonymous "name and address supplied" letters are rare, but are usually written by a reporter to fill space or generate controversy; treat them with suspicion.

Deaths: an often requested item by listeners. Edit the notices to include name, date, age and funeral date and place. Check dates carefully. Tip: arrange them on the page in date order of funeral, and amend if required to read yesterday, today, etc, remembering that "today" is the date of recording not date of publication. If you don't intend to read this page yourself, you can help other readers by writing out the announcements in say-able English, rather than press shorthand. Only include people from our area. In case of doubt, sort by the address of the Funeral Director or the location of the funeral. Obituaries of significant local personalities may also be on the news pages, and can be included accordingly.

Sport: Some listeners have past links and retain an interest in local football teams. The Gazette includes sports reports based on submitted articles which include the scorers from recent matches. Consider compiling a brief list of relevant results and include them towards the end of the programme. Look out for stories about individual or team that has achieved county, national or international success. These may be included, but be prepared to edit the copy to remove extraneous details that would be difficult or boring to read out loud.

Motoring, Gardening, Local History and any other articles of interest may be included if short of content.

Some or all of the above can be rearranged and presented in the area format of news from Wotton, Berkeley, Dursley, Cam, Sharpness, Slimbridge etc if you prefer.

The final track is important and should always be planned and read by the Editor. If possible, find something quirky or memorable in the style of a "and finally" piece. Also use this track to repeat any important announcements about CVTN or the next issue. Conclude with the sign-off.

5. Final checks

Read through each story carefully. Delete 01453 area codes. Edit out web site and email addresses; these are difficult to read as some addresses are complicated and case sensitive. Some listeners are skilled web users and will be able to find information from statements such as "More information is available on the group's/company's/council's/etc web site" Write this in if required.

Find the correct pronunciation of difficult names and write it in phonetically, or if it can be done without losing the sense of the story, edit the text to remove them.

Edit longer stories if repetitious or very technical, but take care to include both sides of any argument.

Look at pictures. Are they really worth a description?

Check and correct references to "today" or "tomorrow".

Write in continuity links if tracks follow on.

Check that all Friday's team are still available. Check the current version of the rota on the CVTN web site. Phone round Technician, Readers and Duplicators by Thursday afternoon. Find cover if necessary. Don't leave this until you get to the studio!

Finally, think about your reading team. Decide in advance who should read some of the tracks. Not all volunteer readers are as capable and might have difficulties with longer pieces. Some might have special knowledge of the topic. Some are really good at describing pictures.

6. Breaking News

On rare occasions you may discover an item of important breaking news published after the Gazette went to press. Examples may be local and national election results or a local accident or emergency reported on the broadcast media, or on-line.

In these cases prepare a short summary based on whatever source you have, and include it in your introduction, with the line that there will be a full report in next week's edition.

7. At the Studio

Get to the studio as soon after 9 am as possible on recording day.

Read through the log book and find out if there were any problems with the last recording, or notes from listeners reporting issues. Write a comment into your script for track 2 if appropriate. Also include a welcome to any new listeners. Acknowledge cash donations from listeners; no need to mention the sum, but thank them for their generous gift. Check this week's birthdays. Check obituaries against tick list or listeners records; they might be one of our customers.

Decide where you want readers to sit. If possible balance the voices. If there are two male readers, alternate with the females.

Set out the sheets in the order you want them read.

Readers should arrive by 9.15 am. Get them to read through and check pronunciation. Remind them to write links and photo descriptions, including colours. Point out where stories follow on.

Encourage simple voice warm up exercises; tongue around mouth, humming, tongue twisters etc.

Liase with the Technician and complete sound checks.

Remind readers of rules of engagement., particularly to avoid expressing any personal opinions on the news. Wait for nod from technician to start. Introduce themselves on first reading, include the track number. Raise hand just as you are about to finish – care here when there is also a picture to describe. Relax and enjoy the session, we are reading to a group of friends.

8. During the recording

Listen out for slips, coughs, splutters. The technician can edit out simple extraneous sounds, but if a reader has got confused or tongue-tied ask the technician to stop recording and start the track again. The technician is the only person in the studio who hears what the listener hears, so he also has the authority to stop recording if deemed necessary.

Keep a check on the length. The technician can tell you how many minute there are left on the disc, so in the event of a potential over-run, decide what to cut but always record your last track sign off.

If you are short, include any back-up pieces, but remember, a CD or memory stick stops after the last track. There are no embarrassing silences as there were on cassette tapes.

9. End of Recording

Check with the technician that no-retakes are required, and all tracks are saved.

Note in the log book any issues covered; apologies, donation acknowledgements, listeners welcomed etc.

Remember continuity. If the Gazette promised more next week on a story, or if you included breaking news, phone or email next week's editor when you get home so they can include the follow-up.

Finally, pass on feedback regularly to Committee members so any issues can be discussed and problems resolved.



Cotswold Vale Talking Newspaper

Track 1 - Recording Ident

It's Friday the ____ of _____. Welcome to the Cotswold Vale Talking Newspaper.
(or similar)

Track 2 - Editor's Introduction

Standard content (paraphrase to suit you own style)

Hello everybody, I 'm today's editor.
Reading news from the Gazette with me today in Kingshill House are
Our technician is
and the recording will be duplicated and sent out later today by
.....

Optional extras

A warm welcome today to (new volunteer(s)
new listener(s) from

We sorry some of you has problems (when/with)
We have (say what has/will happen)

More Standard content (paraphrase to suit you own style)

The weather forecast

Lighting up time/Sunrise and sunset

(Seasonal) British Summer Time starts/ends on Saturday night. Remember to put your clocks on/back an hour.

Phases of the moon

Happy Birthday this week to:.....

If you have any comments or problems, or know of a blind or partially sighted friend that would like to receive this programme, you or your friend can call Mary Moss (or alternative as notified) on 01453 860801, 86081. She will arrange for one of our volunteers to call.

If there are any more phone numbers later, we will only read out the area code if it's other than 01453

(Seasonal) It's the Christmas/Easter holidays next week, so our next edition will be in three/two weeks time on day/month

Now, onto this week's news.

(Optional) First, we think you'd like to hear some important news that broke after the Gazette went to press.

.....
.....

We'll bring you The Gazette's take on this story in next week's programme.

This week's Gazette includes stories from.....

.....
.....

The front page news this week

is

Over toto tell you more