

FIVE STEPS TO GOOD PRESS COVERAGE

1. Know who your local press are.
Make a full list of all the local newspapers, radio stations and TV companies. Remember the commercial radio stations and the free papers. Get the list set up so that it can be copied on to sticky labels for the envelopes. Keep an eye on the papers and get the names of the journalists who are writing environmental stories. Then ring them up and develop a good relationship with them.
2. Have a food press angle.
The media likes local interest, clear stories and a good photo opportunity. The mayor planting the first tree in your new woodland is almost bound to get coverage, whereas a group of volunteers doing routine scrub clearance in a rather inaccessible place is unlikely to attract as much interest.
3. Make your press releases clear and short.
A press release can be very simple, but it always needs five key pieces of information: Who, What, Where, Why, When. Every press release should say what you (who) are doing at the project site (where), why it is important and when the action is taking place. It should also state the best time for the press to send a photographer/cameraman and reporter. The format illustrated will normally get you coverage.
4. Get your press release out in good time.
Find out when your local papers go to press and make sure that you get your press there before the deadline for the one you want your story to appear in.
5. Follow up your press releases.
Journalists are busy. They may ignore your press release or it may not have reached them. Ring them up and remind them about it and ask them whether they will be covering the event. You may need to send them another copy, so access to a fax machine or e-mail can be a big help.