

Writing Guide for Tottenham Community Press

The following guide provides some general tips and advice for article contributions. It is intended to help maintain a consistent format and quality to submitted articles.

Pitching an article: Before you write an article, email tcp@socialspider.com to pitch your article proposal. Once you receive confirmation that the article is suitable for the Tottenham Community Press, you will be given a word count and deadline for submitting the article.

Types of article: Before you make your article pitch, decide what type of article you would like to write. If you are writing about a local project you are involved with, an experience you have had, or a place you have visited, you should pitch a feature. If you are writing about your opinion on a subject for which you have a unique perspective, you should pitch a comment piece. If you are writing about an arts or cultural event that is taking place in the borough, you should pitch either a preview or a review (check the deadline to find out if the next edition goes to print before or after the event). If you would like to raise awareness of an issue that you think is newsworthy, and you are impartial to the issue concerned, you should pitch a news story. If you are writing solely about a local person and you intend to speak to them, you should pitch an interview.

News: Unlike other types of article, news stories must be written from an impartial standpoint, and be balanced. If a person or organisation is criticised in a news story, they have a right to reply and must be given a chance to respond.

Introduction: The introduction to your article is the most important paragraph you will write. If the reader's attention is not grabbed after the introduction, they will likely skip to the next article. Think about your introduction carefully, and try to keep it brief (ideally it should be under 25 words long, except for large features or interviews). Save unimportant or boring details for lower down in the article, and instead focus on what it is that would intrigue the reader and encourage them to read more.

Example of a bad introduction: On Saturday 25th June I visited the Haringey Food Bank, The Selby Centre, Tottenham, to find out more about their food work.

Example of a good introduction: It is a muggy, overcast Thursday afternoon and local residents are queuing up to collect food at the Haringey Foodbank, which is located just off White Hart Lane at the Selby Centre and is part of the Trussell Trust network.

Quotes: Unless writing a comment piece or feature recounting a personal experience, include quotes in your article. Quotes can be obtained in person, on the phone, or via email. You must make it clear when approaching someone that you intend to quote them in the Tottenham Community Press. If you speak to someone on the phone or in person, ensure you write a transcript of what they said to you. Quotes may also be taken from public statements, such as those on social media (only quote from private posts if you approach the person via this method). Choose the most interesting and relevant quotes for your article. Introduce them with the full name of the person and reason they are being quoted.

Example of a bad quote: Raphael Olurtimi said: "The Haringey Food Bank provides food for lots of different families across Haringey"

Example of a good quote: On average, Haringey Foodbank distributes around 80 to 100 supplies a month to people from all walks of life. "Hunger and poverty cuts across borders. It has no respect for race or gender. It does not discriminate. When you are hungry you are hungry," says Olurtimi.

Background: Relevant background information should be included. Always assume the person reading your article has no prior knowledge of the subject, and they therefore need to be introduced to it. You can either do this at the point where you first mention the subject, or further down in the article, but everything must always be explained.

Facts: It is often useful to provide relevant facts in an article. If doing so, clearly state the source in the article. Do not use a bibliography or reference mark.

Example of a fact: Over the past year, more than 1.1 million three- day emergency food supplies were given to people in crisis by Trussell Trust foodbanks, with children receiving 436,000 of these.

Cliches: Avoid using them. Cliches often hinder a reader understanding the article, particularly those for whom English is a second language.

Example of a cliché: Raphael admitted the work being conducted by the Haringey Foodbank was only touching on the tip of the iceberg when it came to addressing poverty in the UK.

What you could write instead: Raphael admitted the work being conducted by the Haringey Foodbank was only addressing some of the symptoms of poverty in Haringey, but that it still played a very important role.

Jargon: Avoid it. Jargon is language typically used within a group of people, but which can be confusing to outsiders. Organisations often use it to mask their true intentions.

Example of jargon: The council wants to find savings by merging two branches of its library service and creating a central learning hub for the community.

What you could write instead: The council is closing the library.

Waffle: Avoid extraneous words.

Example of waffle: I went along to the Haringey Foodbank that is based at the Selby Centre and is run by my friend Raphael because I wanted to ask him all about the work that they are doing to make sure families and individuals based in Haringey have food on their table.

What you could write instead: I asked Raphael why the Haringey Foodbank was set up.

Information box: If your article concerns an event, campaign, project, or you simply want to help readers find out more information about the subject matter, include an information box. Details such as a contact phone number, email address, or web link, should always be contained in the information box at the end of the article, rather than in the body of the article.

Style: The use and application of punctuation, capital letters and abbreviations, when they have many potential executions, is governed by the Tottenham Community Press Style Guide. For unambiguous spelling and grammar usage, refer to the Oxford English Dictionary.

Images: Articles should whenever possible be accompanied by strong images. If you're taking your own photos, provide a small selection (three or four). The best images are high resolution (1MB or higher); in focus; well lit; and clearly show a person, group of people, or scene, that is relevant to the article. If you are submitting images not taken by yourself, make sure you obtain permission to use them from the copyright holder. For a fuller guide on how to use images see the Tottenham Community Press Image Guide.