

EASY 5 STEP GUIDE

STEP ONE

Once you have identified the need and decided to hold an event, by consulting with older residents, you will first need to decide on a date and book the village hall or community centre. Bear in mind that some of your exhibitors may need two to three months' notice to ensure their attendance. For an event such as this, we suggest a running time from 10am to noon, as experience has shown us this time period is more appropriate for smaller communities.

STEP TWO

You will now need to work out how many tables you can comfortably fit into the hall. We have found that in an average sized hall you will be able to accommodate between 12 and 15 exhibitors. This number will then determine the number and type of exhibitors you invite. Always allow for 3 or 4 extra in case some may not be able to attend. Tables should be located around the outside edge of the hall with a few smaller tables and chairs in the middle for attendees. This will encourage a good atmosphere and exhibitors will often sit and chat with people in a less formal way. You can also use these tables for completion of the event survey. (Sample floor plan and event survey attached).

STEP THREE

Contact your exhibitors using the list provided. You may be able to think of others local organisations also. The list contains exhibitors that attended one if not all of our county events so they will be familiar with the format of the day. Having established numbers you will need to follow up with a letter giving details of the time, date, venue, exhibitor list and floor plan. This will ensure that everyone knows exactly where they should be on the day. It may be useful to ask if power point access is required as this will affect location in the hall. Some may bring free gifts and bags or offer a home visiting service to housebound residents once the event has ended – please ask. This is a definite selling point on your poster. (Sample exhibitor template, potential exhibitor list and letter attached).

STEP FOUR

Organise publicity through the local parish magazine or newsletter, by poster on village notice board, flyers to residents, clubs and shops and possibly the local newspaper and radio, although these events are meant for local people rather than the wider area. Word of mouth is always the best kind of publicity. (Sample poster and press release attached) Publicity should be organised on a 'drip, drip' basis in the month leading up to the event. You could start with the parish magazine followed by flyers and then word of mouth at events leading up to the day. The local church may also mention attending at the Sunday service.

STEP FIVE

If you plan to run a raffle, you could approach local businesses for prizes. Other residents may wish to contribute by baking cakes or helping with the teas and coffees on the day. Apart from the organiser/s, you will probably only need two volunteers. It would be wise to set the named tables up the night before to avoid any last minute challenges. Make sure you get everyone to fill in their surveys before they leave. This will give an idea as to who they expected to see and whether it is something you want to repeat as an annual event or in a different format, i.e. subject specific like transport, health etc. It is worthwhile bearing in mind that these events **do not** need huge numbers to be successful and at parish level particularly, it is more about 'quality' rather than 'quantity'. Previous events have had smaller numbers attending but the enquiries have been from the most needy and hard to reach.

We have included a brief parish survey for you too, so that we can ensure this toolkit has been useful. Once complete, you can either email it back to us at barbarap@grcc.org.uk or post to Barbara Piranty, GRCC, Community House, 15 College Green, Gloucester, GL1 2LZ. Remember, all the hard work has been done for you but if you need any additional help or advice, please call either Barbara at GRCC (01452 528491) or Linda at Age Concern Gloucestershire (01452 422660) – Good Luck!