

# **Elstree and Borehamwood Town Crier Guidelines**

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## **1. Purpose**

Elstree and Borehamwood Town Crier should be a lively, vibrant and informative newsletter containing material of interest to all the diverse communities of the Town.

The purpose of Elstree and Borehamwood Town Crier is to:

- inform residents of Elstree and Borehamwood on a regular basis about community events and news stories;
- to provide key information about Elstree and Borehamwood Town Council's services in a politically neutral format;
- to encourage residents' participation in, and feedback for, community and Council run events and activities;
- help improve the quality and accessibility of information provided by the Council;
- Illustrate that the Council is working closely with key strategic partners.

It will achieve this by:

- Being politically impartial;
- Including information about key services the council provides;
- Including contributions from other partner agencies where appropriate;
- Providing a mix of news and information;
- Providing information solely relevant to the Town and its residents;
- Encouraging feedback from residents, providing a listening platform, so the product and the Council, continues to evolve.

## **2. Accessibility**

The newsletter is intended for all residents in the Town. Large print or taped copies will be provided on request. The newsletter is written in English and if requests are made for the translation of articles / information in alternative languages, the Town Council will do its best to help in the most cost effective manner possible.

It is published on the web and delivered to key locations across the Town, as well as every household.

## **3. Editorial management**

The day-to-day responsibility for the editorial content of the newsletter rests with the Town Council.

However, the general content of each issue will be considered jointly by an advisory panel made up of:

- the Events Coordinator

- the Chair of the Entertainments committee
- any other elected members

The advisory panel should meet to:

- Agree production schedules;
- Review the previous edition;
- Consider the list of provisional content as notified / submitted by residents / community organisations.

Final editorial control rests with the Events Coordinator who acts as editor. The editor reserves the right to edit and amend all articles and has the discretion to omit articles if required.

#### **4. Legal parameters**

Elstree and Borehamwood Town Crier is required to be politically impartial and is bound by the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Government Publicity (revised 2001).

The revised code (para.20) defines the main functions of local authority publicity:

*To increase public awareness of the services provided by the authority and the functions it performs; to allow local people a real and informed say about issues that affect them; to explain to electors and rate-payers the reasons for particular policies and priorities; and in general to improve local accountability.*

The Code of Practice (para 41) is specific in terms of limiting the publicity that can be issued in the formal period ahead of a fixed election. Elstree and Borehamwood Town Crier will not be produced or distributed after the date on which notice of an election is published and until after the election date.

In the case of a general election, which may be called with little notice, a decision must be made at the time whether the distribution of an issue must be held over until after the election. The decision should be taken after being referred to the Chief Executive and legal department.

#### **5. Content**

All residents of Elstree and Borehamwood, Town Council staff members and all elected councillors are entitled to submit ideas and articles for inclusion in Elstree and Borehamwood Town Crier. Articles submitted by partner agencies and groups within the community will also be considered. Any items from partner agencies would need to be considered with audience and relevance in mind.

Wherever possible, content will:

- Aim to achieve a good mix between shorter, more immediate items and longer stories (Stories no more than 300 words)
- Cover information from a broad range of services;
- Be written with the audience in mind;
- Identify in each appropriate story where further information is available via phone numbers and website addresses.

Elstree and Borehamwood Town Crier will not include:

- Information which is politically biased;
- Information which has no relevance to Elstree and Borehamwood;
- Information which may be detrimental to a particular Elstree and Borehamwood community;
- Information which may be perceived as being unduly supportive of a particular business concern and thereby showing a preference;
- Articles / stories / letters from, or about, anonymous people.

Councillors will only be quoted:

- When representing the Town Council at events associated with the town;

Advertising:

- As the newsletter seeks cost neutrality and is not produced to generate profit, any advertising will be limited;
- Advertising costs will be reviewed annually and the rate applied;
- There will be no paid for advertising on the front page;
- The Town Crier welcomes all reputable organisations to advertise yet reserves the right to refuse advertising space at any time;
- Priority will be given to local organisations on a first come first served basis;
- The newsletter reserves the right to cancel any advertising agreement at any time and refund any monies paid for at any time;

## **6. Production processes and delivery**

The newsletter will be A4, produced in full colour and normally be 16 pages. It will be produced quarterly. It will be produced in the most environmentally friendly way.

The editor will be responsible for the setting of, and circulation of deadlines.

The advisory panel will meet at the beginning of the planning process for each edition.

Printed full colour proofs will only be provided at the final stage. All other proofs will be provided in black and white, or in colour via electronic means.

## **7. Design and style**

The look and feel of Elstree and Borehamwood Town Crier should be of a consistent high standard of quality.

The layout of the newsletter should follow the simple rules of regular publications and have regular slots for specific items.

At least one photograph or illustration should be included on each page.