

Media Training for the Voluntary Sector in Redhill.

At a networking lunch meeting in September 2009 organised by the Reigate & Banstead Council of Voluntary Service (CVS), the Surrey Mirror was criticized for the lack of publicity given to local voluntary organisations. Following this meeting, the CVS organised a workshop to help member organisations write press releases and present their news to the local newspaper. The day was organised in conjunction with the Surrey Mirror with their content editor, Nev Wilson and senior reporter, Lisa Boardman attending as guest speakers.

Nev Wilson explained, "We want to build contacts with members of the voluntary sector and help them refine their press releases. Often voluntary groups have interesting stories to tell, but the way some are written makes them dull or long-winded. "We receive hundreds of press releases each day and have to be pretty ruthless about the type of stories we follow up. Hopefully with this guidance we will be inundated with juicy and punchy press releases."

30 Thursday, November 19, 2009 www.thisissurreytoday.co.uk Recruitment: 01737 732233



Helping hand: Des Shepherd, right, with one of the course members

Mirror staff share tricks of the trade

Groups taught how to pitch news stories

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LOCAL groups and organisations in the borough flocked to a Surrey Mirror masterclass on how to write a perfect press release. The 14 volunteers from the Council of Voluntary Services (CVS) spent a day with two Mirror newshounds – content editor Nev Wilson, and senior reporter Lisa Boardman – learning a few



The day was led by CVS Manager, Des Shepherd who started with a discussion on what makes news and the role of the newspaper. Surrey Mirror photographer David Berman gave advice about how to take a good photo using a digital camera. Later, participants were encouraged to write their own press releases with feedback from reporter Lisa Boardman.

Lisa said, "I was impressed with some of the releases at the end of the day. I gave some feedback and really hope it helps generate some great news stories in the future."



...se members writing their own press releases workshop
Surrey Mirror and understand how the newsroom works. Des Shep...nged the... off the... sing what the role of... "I have often heard the criticism that 'my story never gets published' and during the workshop, we aimed to demystify the process on the... being

Des Shepherd commented, "This session was an ideal opportunity for representatives of voluntary organisations to meet with key staff from the Surrey Mirror and understand how the newsroom works. We aimed to demystify the process and on the one hand make delegates understand news values whilst allowing the Surrey Mirror journalists get an insight into the issues that affect the voluntary sector."

The first workshop was well supported and led to two more taking place in December 2009 and January 2010 and afforded the CVS some valuable local publicity.

What the delegates said . . .

- 'informative and well presented'
- 'I feel much more confident about writing and press releases'
- 'I welcomed the opportunity to 'put the theory into practice'
- 'have a better knowledge of what editors are seeking and why some things (stories) are given good coverage'