Video-making tips

Video can be a really easy and effective way to get your community group's message out. Here are a few tips to help you make a video that looks good and gets people's attention.

Before you start filming

Get to know your camera

Make sure your camera / phone is fully charged. Check you know how to:

♦ Start filming quickly if something interesting happens

♦ Zoom in and out smoothly

♦ Scan across a room or landscape smoothly

Find a filming buddy

When you are concentrating on the camera it is easy to miss what is going on somewhere else. It makes a really big difference if you have a buddy to help to plan your film, carry the kit, interview people, give you a break, and have a good overview of what is happening.

Plan your film

Think in advance about what would make your film interesting and engaging.

If your film is about a campaign, think about what the main points are, and how to get them across. Visual images are useful for getting people's attention and having impact. Interviews are useful for giving more detailed information. For example, if you are campaigning to get a local park cleared up, you could take footage of rubbish in the park. Have an interview with a member of your group explaining what the problem is and what you want to change.

If you're making a film about an event, think in advance about what the highlights will be, where they will take place, and where you should position yourself to get the best footage. Remember, you don't need to make a film of the whole event. Just showing the highlights will be much more interesting.

Check with people that they are happy to be in your film, and that they understand what the footage will be used for. It's really important that they know if it will be uploaded on the internet. See our sheet on *Taking photos at community events* for more help with this.
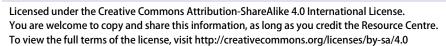
Taking good footage

♦ Take a shot of something and leave it there for 10-20 seconds, stop the recording and take another shot. Don't quickly move the shot from one subject to another.

- Use slow, smooth, and deliberate motions when panning and zooming. This will make your videos much more watchable.
- Do a 'little shot composition': before you hit the record button, look at your shot and see if you have everything in it that you want and that it is framed nicely. Do this as you would if you were taking a photograph.
- Think about lighting: whenever possible, film in a well-lit area. Try to have your back to the sun or any bright lights, rather than pointing the camera at them.
- Only take footage that you think you will use, as editing video footage can take a long time.
- Keep your film in clear clips. Take some footage, stop filming, get ready for the next bit of filming, start recording again.
- Use a tripod if you can – this is one of the best ways to improve your video and ensure that the images do not move around like a ship sinking.
- Ensure the microphone on your phone or camera is picking up all the sound you need. If not, you may need to use an external microphone.

Using interviews

Use interviews with people to bring your story to life. Before you start filming have a short chat about the questions you will ask the person and the things they would like to say.

When doing an interview:

- Frame the shot with the head and upper chest showing and with the person off-centre to one side or the other.
- You, as the interviewer, should stand next to or behind the camera, so the interviewee is looking at you.
- Tell the interviewee NOT to look at the camera, but just carry on a normal conversation with you and keep eye contact.
- Leave plenty of space in the shot to allow for the interviewee to move naturally and nod. This way they won't slip out of the shot.

Editing your footage

If you plan to put your film online, try to keep it less than 5 minutes long. 2 minutes is even better. People don't watch things for very long!

There is lots of video-editing software available, including some for free. What is best will depend on whether you are working on a computer or on a phone/tablet, and whether you are using Windows, Mac, Android or some other system. The easiest way to get an up-to-date list is to use a search engine to look for "Best video editing software", or "Best video editing app". You will find reviews which will tell you about different programs/apps. If you are inexperienced with video editing, keep an eye out for whether something is recommended as easy to use. If you choose a free program, check that your video won't have a watermark on it.

Storing your footage

Video footage takes up a lot of space on computers and phones. If you are short of space, you may want to save your footage on an external hard drive, or buy some Cloud storage (e.g. on OneDrive, ICloud or similar).