

Creating and publishing a newsletter

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Reading Neighbourhood Network



Reading Neighbourhood Network

www.rgneighbours.net

What kind of newsletter?

The main question is what kind of audience you are trying to reach...

- ♦ Online – generally sent out by email, with social media backup; easy to publish and share beyond your area so may be read more widely
- ♦ Print – accessible to your audience without internet access; needs a delivery network; often more likely to be read and retained
- ♦ Often the answer is that you need both types



Publishing and sending an online newsletter



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Publishing an online newsletter

- ♦ Online newsletters are generally sent out by email, which usually has a higher hit rate than social media
- ♦ You can use social media to increase your reach, e.g. by tweeting your stories and sharing them on Facebook
- ♦ But: it is not advisable to just send out an email to your subscribers. Use a third party mailer instead, such as Mailchimp or Charityemail.



Why use a third party mailer?

- ♦ A single email with too many recipients is more likely to be treated as spam and therefore less likely to be opened
- ♦ Recipients can subscribe and unsubscribe themselves
- ♦ Your newsletter will comply with anti-spam laws
- ♦ Just sending email doesn't give you any feedback. With a third party mailer you can collect statistics, see what topics are interesting and even see who is reading what!
- ♦ We recommend using Mailchimp, which is free for small-scale users

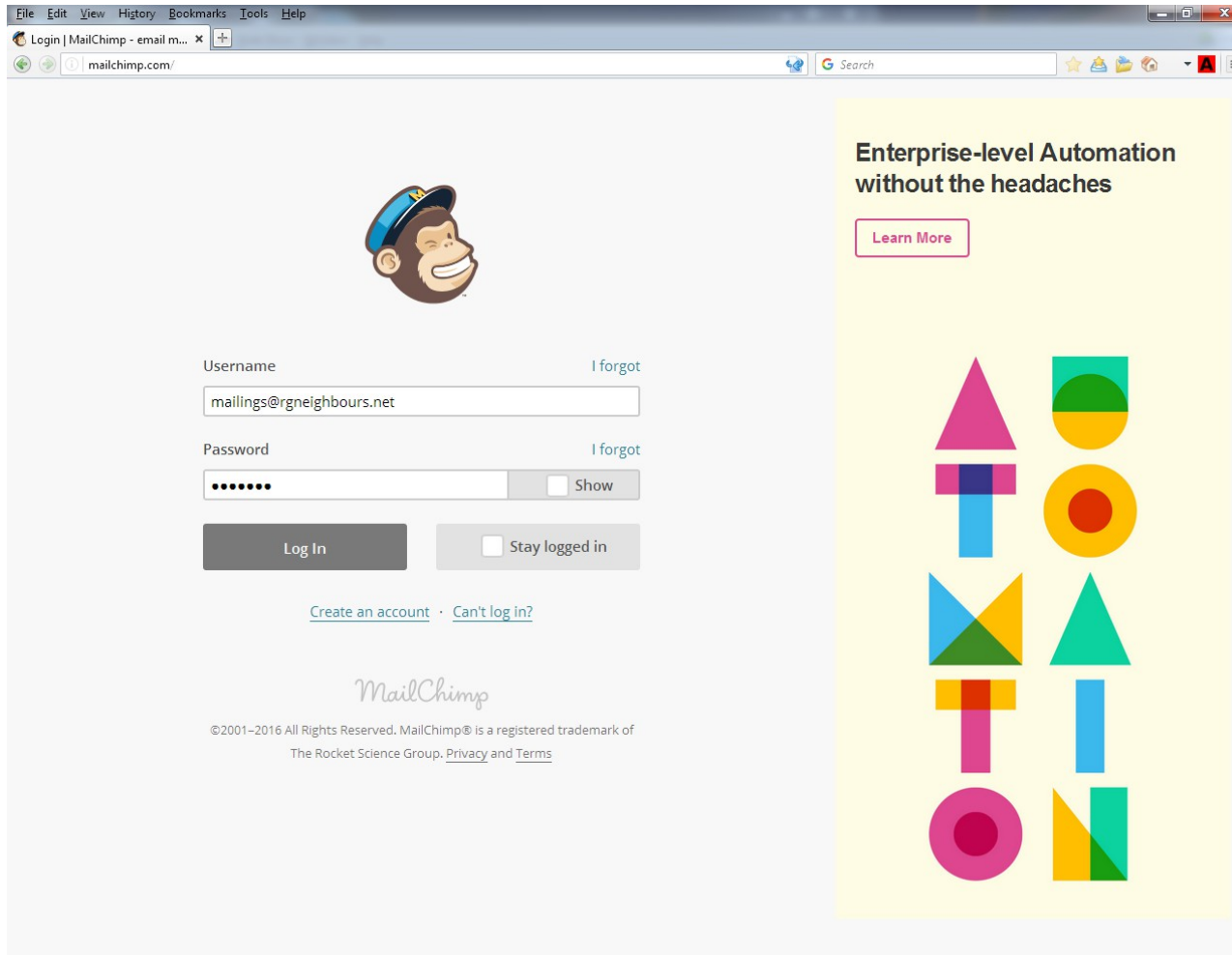


What do I need to get started?

- ♦ The text for your news stories, with suitable snappy headlines
- ♦ Some nice colourful pictures – for online use we recommend using one size of about 800 x 600 pixels (use a picture editor, e.g. Paint or Photoshop).
- ♦ Don't be afraid to use free library pictures, e.g. freeimages.com, pixabay.com – check the terms of use (e.g. whether you have to credit the photographer)
- ♦ Your mailing list. If it's in Excel, so much the better!



An introduction to Mailchimp

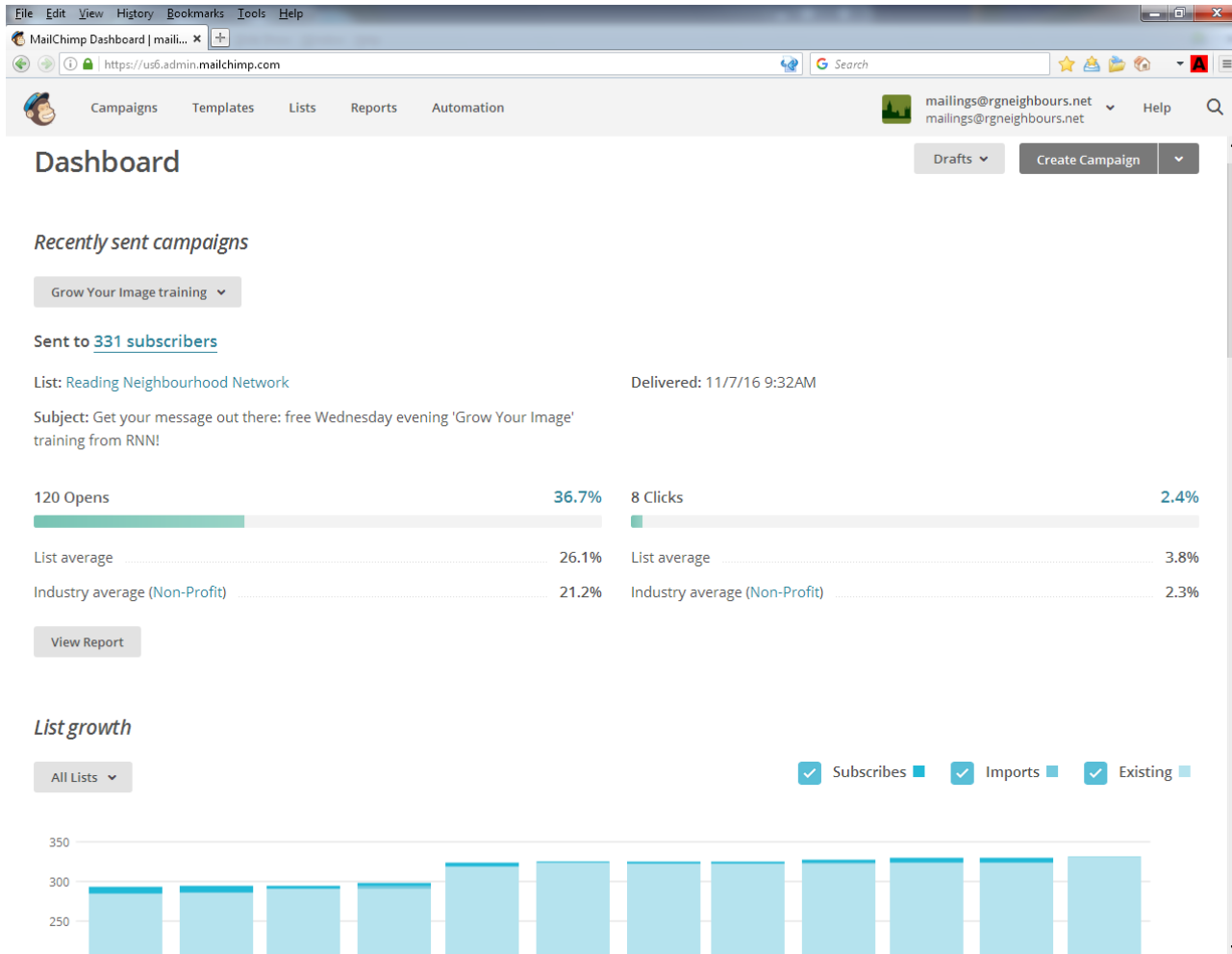


A free Mailchimp account can send out up to 12,000 individual emails per month – fine for a community group.

You just need an email address to sign up.



The Mailchimp dashboard



From the Mailchimp dashboard you can manage mailing lists, create and view 'campaigns' (mailshots) and view statistics for your previous campaigns.



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Creating a Mailchimp mailing list

- ♦ In Mailchimp, select Lists then Create New.
- ♦ Fill in the necessary details for the list
- ♦ Import your initial list of recipients from Excel, text or CSV (the spreadsheet should have columns for first name, last name and email address as minimum)
- ♦ Alternatively, you can enter individual recipients manually, but this is slow so only suitable for a small list
- ♦ Once all the recipients are entered you're ready to go!
- ♦ Later you can customise the sign-up web page if you like.



Creating your e-newsletter in Mailchimp

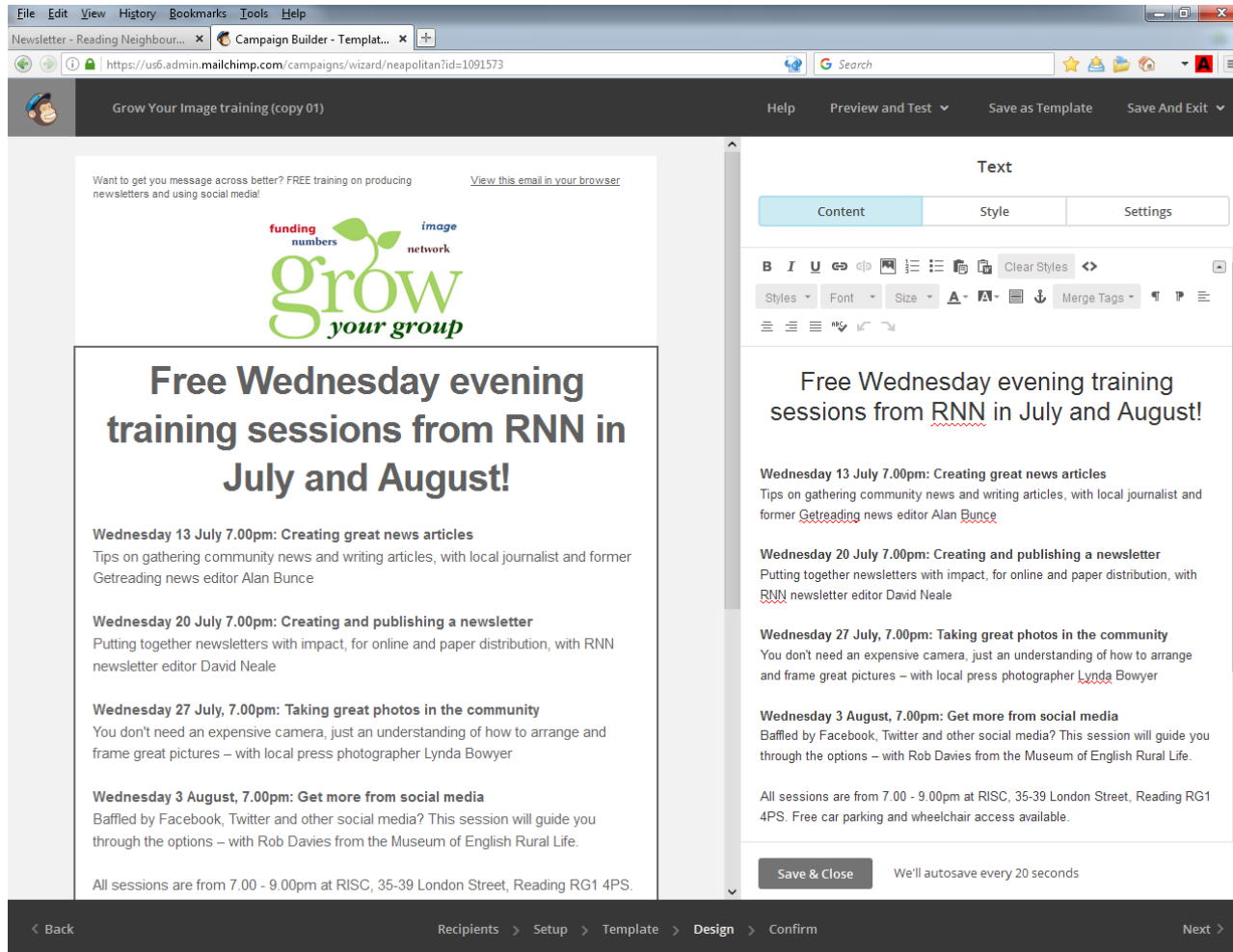
Set up the newsletter – choose a suitable snappy title (e.g. Free training! News from Reading Neighbourhood Network), select the mailing list to send it to...

Choose a template – a simple one is fine...

You will then go into the Mailchimp editor, the 'Design' section – this is quite straightforward, and you can mix text and pictures as you like and add new content blocks.



The Mailchimp editor



A preview is shown on the left with the active content block highlighted, and the editor is on the right.



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Checking and sending your e-newsletter

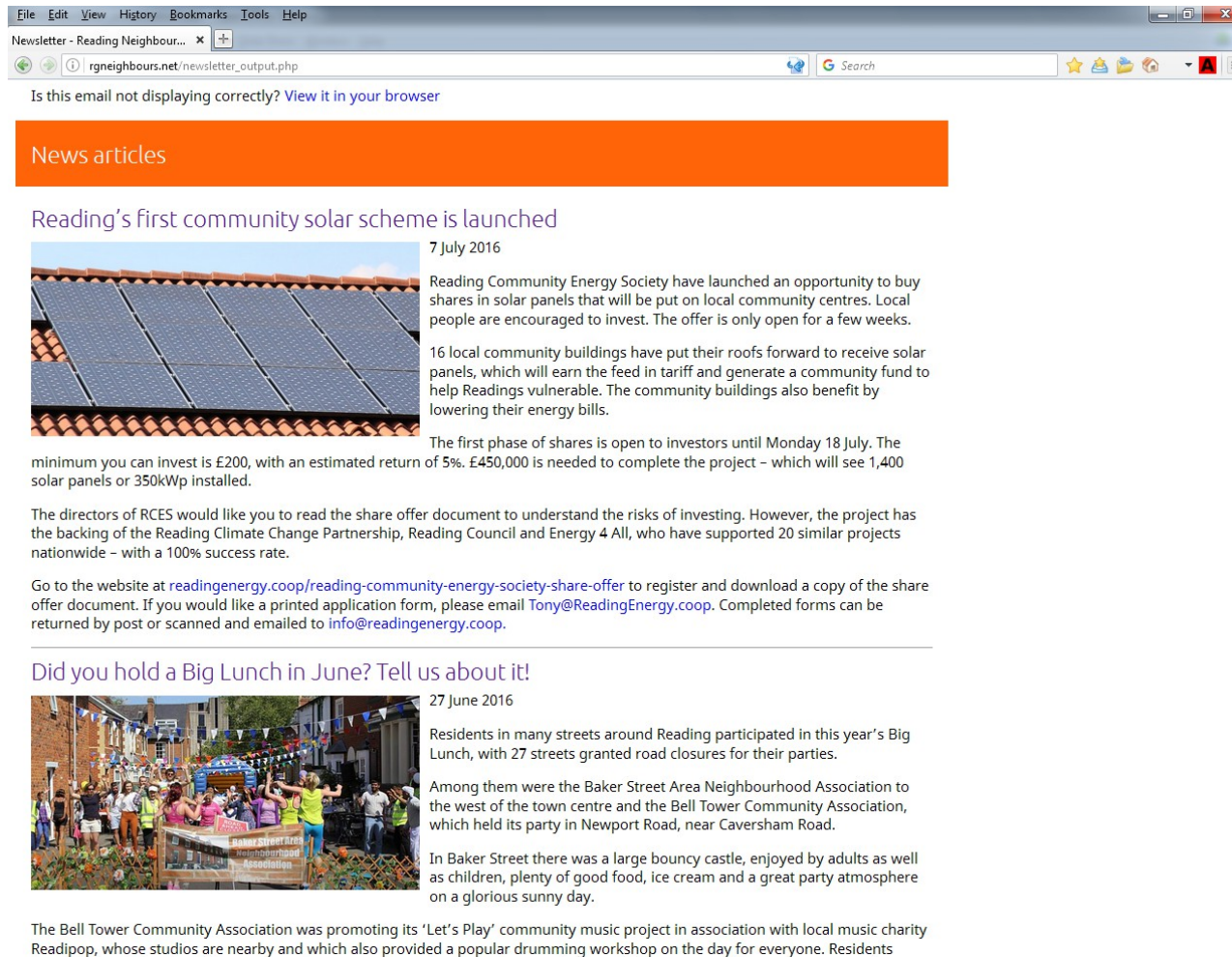
Mailchimp provides an instant preview. You can also enter 'preview mode' which gives an indication of how your newsletter will look on desktop and mobile devices

You can also send test emails. Best to try sending your first newsletter to a variety of platforms, e.g. Gmail, Outlook and Yahoo (create your own test accounts)

Before sending you can also optionally select an image for social media 'cards'. Check it's ready to go and press the button! You can also schedule sending for a time in the future (e.g. if you want to catch people early morning).



The fancy way – direct from a web page



If your website is built in Wordpress or similar, create a page listing your news, format it and 'import from URL' in Mailchimp. That's how RNN does it!



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Who's reading my newsletter?

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

BT must 'put its house in ord... Campaigns | MailChimp

https://us6.admin.mailchimp.com/campaigns/#t:campaigns-list

Search

Most Visited BBC News BBC Weather Bell Tower Netweather RNN Streetmap Google Maps Facebook TrainSplit.com Wikipedia Webmail Login VCC login

Campaigns Templates Lists Reports Automation

mailings@rgneighbours.net mailings@rgneighbours.net Help

Create Campaign

Campaigns

Download Sent Campaigns

☐

Folders

Filter

☐

☒

Grow Your Image training

Regular · Reading Neighbourhood Network

Sent on Mon, 11 Jul 2016 9:32 am

331

Subscribers

38.5%

Opens

2.4%

Clicks

View Report

☐

☒

RNN Newsletter 49

Regular · Reading Neighbourhood Network

Sent on Tue, 28 Jun 2016 10:38 am

334

Subscribers

36.8%

Opens

4.9%

Clicks

View Report

☐

☒

RNN Newsletter 48

Regular · Reading Neighbourhood Network

Sent on Sat, 28 May 2016 9:04 am

333

Subscribers

32.6%

Opens

6.4%

Clicks

View Report

☐

☒

RNN Newsletter 47

Regular · Reading Neighbourhood Network

Sent on Fri, 29 Apr 2016 1:11 pm

331

Subscribers

40.5%

Opens

4.6%

Clicks

View Report

☐

☒

Free finance training for RNN members - 2

Regular · Reading Neighbourhood Network (segment)

Sent on Fri, 08 Apr 2016 11:14 am

99

Subscribers

32.7%

Opens

1.0%

Clicks

View Report

☐

☒

RNN Newsletter 46

Regular · Reading Neighbourhood Network

Sent on Tue, 29 Mar 2016 4:12 pm

328

Subscribers

44.6%

Opens

2.8%

Clicks

View Report

Mailchimp statistics can show the open rate for each campaign, who's reading what and who's clicking on your links. Recipients are even given a star rating!



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Publishing and printing a paper newsletter



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Workshop: which newsletter style?

We are now going to look at printed newsletters...

- ♦ Take a look at some of the sample newsletters
- ♦ Which ones do you like and dislike and why?
- ♦ Feel free to keep a copy of one or two that you like. You may like to use some of the design ideas in your own



How do I produce my newsletter?

There are various ways to produce a printed newsletter:

- ♦ Word processing – e.g. Microsoft Word, OpenOffice Writer
- ♦ Desktop publisher (DTP) – e.g. Adobe InDesign, QuarkXpress (expensive); Microsoft Publisher, PagePlus (inexpensive), Scribus (free, open-source)

Why use a desktop publisher? DTP programs handle mixed text and graphics much better. Ever struggled to get pictures to align in Word? That's why!



DTP recommendations

- ♦ Microsoft Publisher is popular and comes bundled with some versions of Office. Fine to use if you have it anyway.
- ♦ Scribus is free and very powerful, but takes longer to learn so probably not best for beginners
- ♦ PagePlus is a good compromise with excellent reviews – about £70. There is a free (SE) version too - this is limited to 5 pages and needs an external PDF writer (e.g. CutePDF, free) to send the newsletter for printing.



Getting started with PagePlus

- ♦ Page Plus SE (the free version) can be downloaded free from the vendor's website www.serif.com
- ♦ Free registration with an email address is needed to get the download link and licence key
- ♦ The SE (free) version doesn't support exporting to common formats to send to the printer, but CutePDF (free from cutepdf.com) can make a PDF file.



Page layout basics

Headline (or artistic) text

Body (or frame) text

Picture (or graphic)

Frame with border

Picture (or graphic)

Text frame

Neighbourhood News
from the Bell Tower Community Association Issue 37 - September 2014

Bell Tower tidies up again

We learnt a great deal about our fellow residents at the Big Skip, sponsored by Festival Republic on Saturday 16 August. Items disposed of included two baths and three toilets so we are obviously all a clean bunch. But it seems that many New Year resolutions may have fallen by the wayside, judging by the amount of exercise equipment that found its way into the skip.

The skip marshals, Bell Tower secretary Rod Plinzeon and vice-chairman Jonathan Dart, were able to enjoy a full workout lifting lumps of concrete, bags of rubble, hurling mattresses into the skip and smashing up furniture to maximise the space for items like a water tank.

Cycle wizard Steve Dale was working magic with his can of WD40 and managed to find new homes for some of the many bikes brought in. For those impressed with this fife of industry, Bell Tower chairman David Neale and his wife Mary were on hand to recruit new members, while those who needed refreshment were able to get free tea, coffee and biscuits kindly provided by the Crowne Plaza and organised by committee member Barbara Kendall.

Unfortunately we were not able to accept electrical items this year because the skip company now charges per item to take them, but we are hoping to find a recycler who will take them next year. If you have any suggestions please let us know.

Many thanks to all those who helped make this event so successful, especially Festival Republic for their sponsorship and the Crowne Plaza for the free refreshments.

Jonathan Dart

FORTHCOMING EVENTS
Saturday 13 September, 6.30pm
BARBECUE at the Crowne Plaza.
Tickets £10 from Barbara at 77 Addison Road
Friday 17 October, 7.30pm - **QUIZ EVENING** at the Crowne Plaza.
Come along and join us for a fun evening in luxurious surroundings.
Tickets £5 including food and refreshments from Barbara at 77 Addison Road, telephone 0118 950 7685.

CLEANING UP: (clockwise from top left) plenty of takers for the skip, a satisfied customer with his recycled bike, the Crowne Plaza's free coffee stall, and members of the Bell Tower team with another full skip

DREWS THE IRONMONGERS 0118 957 2053

S&J Predator Saws now only £6.00 inc VAT

www.bell-tower.org.uk info@bell-tower.org.uk [facebook belltowercommunity](https://www.facebook.com/belltowercommunity) [@BellTowerRdg](https://twitter.com/BellTowerRdg)



Design tips

- ♦ An eye-catching masthead will attract attention (and differentiate your newsletter from the pizza leaflets!)
- ♦ A 2 or 3 column format gives you more flexibility and generally looks more professional.
- ♦ Stick to one or two plain fonts, perhaps one serif font and one sans serif
- ♦ Suggest at least one colourful picture on the front page
- ♦ For a small local newsletter a double sided A4 sheet is fine (or A3 folded in two if you're feeling more ambitious)



Pictures and graphics

- ♦ You generally want a higher resolution picture than for an online newsletter (original photos recommended)
- ♦ Follow your printer's recommendation when choosing the size of your pictures. Generally 300 dots per inch (dpi) is recommended – this roughly equates to 2400 pixels for the width of an A4 sheet (5MP = 2560 x 1920).
- ♦ Use a picture editor (e.g. Paint or Photoshop) as needed
- ♦ Photos are usually in JPEG format. For higher quality logos etc. with few colours you may prefer PNG.



Alternative view – as frames

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0118 957 2053



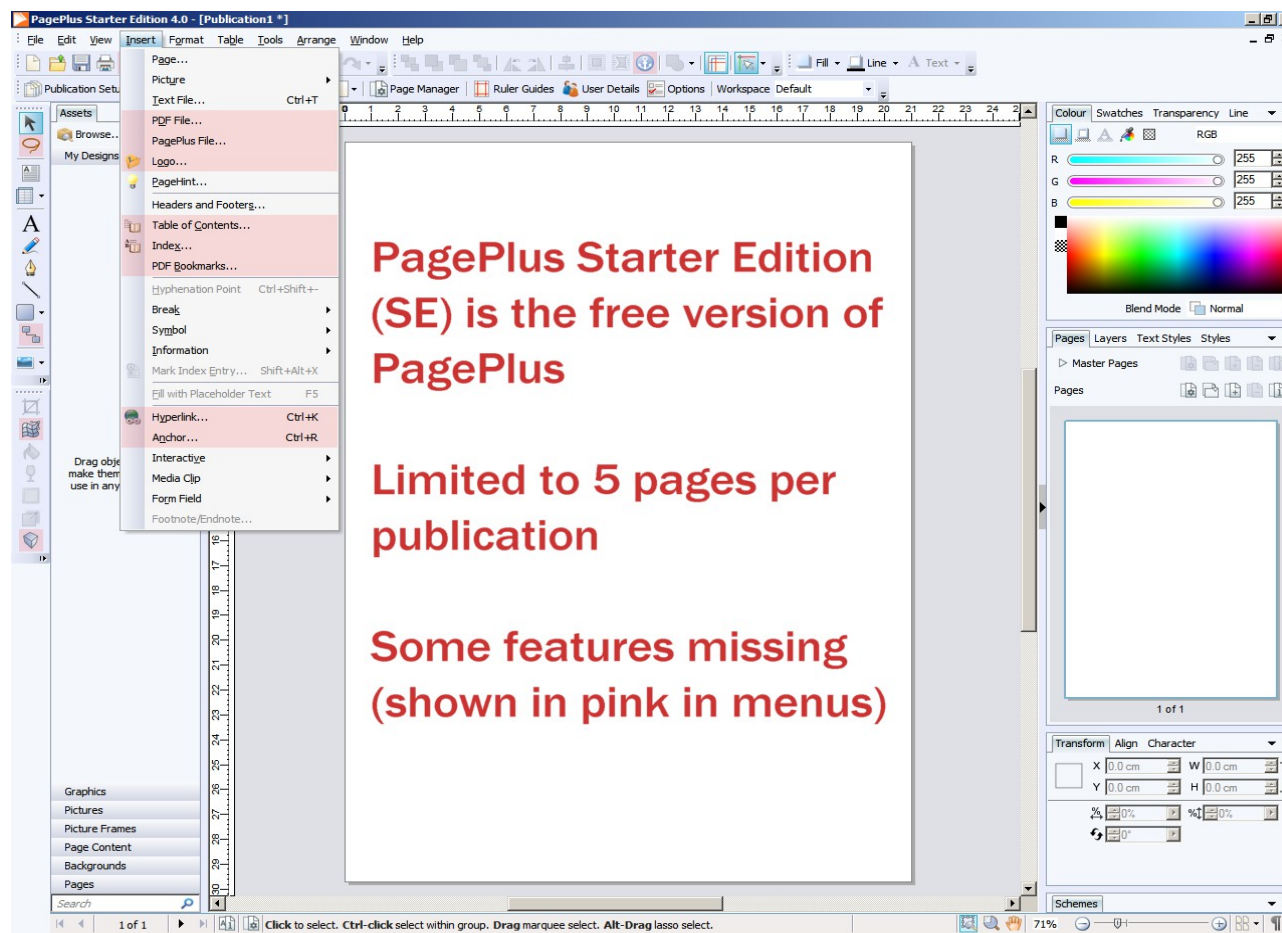
S&J Predator Saws now only £6.00 inc VAT

www.bell-tower.org.uk  info@bell-tower.org.uk  [belltowercommunity](https://www.facebook.com/belltowercommunity)  [BellTowerRdg](https://twitter.com/BellTowerRdg)

- ♦ Most desktop publishing software builds documents using frames
- ♦ Exactly how frames work depends on the software you are using
- ♦ PagePlus has 3 basic frame types – for text, decorative text and pictures



Introducing PagePlus SE



Your first document

- ♦ Create a new publication (blank A4)
- ♦ Insert a standard text frame and paste some text into it from a document or web page, or type some text yourself
- ♦ Try playing with the frame properties (e.g. right click and select Frame setup to change the number of columns, or use Properties to add a border)
- ♦ Try playing with the overall layout (number of columns)
- ♦ Try changing the text font and size and paragraph layout. This works just like Word.



Pictures and artistic text

- ♦ Make a picture frame and drag a picture into it. Experiment with size and wrap settings.
- ♦ Try importing a picture directly. How does it behave differently?
- ♦ Try moving the picture frame round
- ♦ Make an artistic text frame. How does the text behave when you change the frame size?
- ♦ Don't forget to save your document!



PagePlus tutorials

Lots of video tutorials at

http://www.serif.com/appresources/PPX7/Tutorials/en-gb/videos/intro_video.htm

Topics include getting started, templates, working with frames, text and pictures



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I need inspiration!

Do a Google search for 'residents association newsletter', 'community newsletter' or similar

Click on a few sites and see which newsletters you like

All the example newsletters we have seen today were found like that!



My newsletter is ready to print!

Are you ready to send your newsletter to the printers?

- ♦ Most printers only accept a few common formats, with PDF being the most universal
- ♦ If you are using PagePlus SE, you need to install CutePDF or similar as well (it's free)
- ♦ Just select File—Print and choose CutePDF. It works like any other printer and creates a PDF from almost any kind of file.
- ♦ You can also publish your PDF newsletter on your website – pay attention to file size when doing this.



Printing tips

- ♦ Consider the page layout carefully. How will it look in print? Try printing a draft copy of the PDF yourself.
- ♦ When printing 4 x A4 pages on to A3 the page order is usually 4-1-2-3 so you need to create your PDF using this page order.
- ♦ Try folding your printed copy to see how it looks.
- ♦ Printers use CMYK (cyan-magenta-yellow-black) colours. Most pictures are RGB (red-green-blue). The printer can usually do the conversion, but at the expense of some colour accuracy.



And finally ...

Any questions or
feedback?



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