

Traf News

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HANDY HINTS FOR WRITING

ARTICLES FOR THE *TRAF NEWS*

The aim of the *Traf News* is to produce a high quality monthly publication that uniquely portrays the Trafalgar and surrounding communities in its style and is grammatically consistent. In order to have conformity and consistency of approach in articles written for the *Traf News* the following points provide guidance to those who contribute to the paper.

We believe that this document will be beneficial to all contributors, especially those who contribute a regular basis. This is not intended in any way to inhibit the individual writing style of contributors. The aim of this document is to help make your article stand out and achieve a polished product that we can all be proud of.

WHAT MAKES YOUR ARTICLE SPECIAL?

The purpose, when writing an article, is to inform and/or entertain the reader. In order for the reader to want to read your entire article, not just the first few lines, the article should attract, and then maintain, the reader's interest.

Each writer has their own individual style, however, to get maximum reader 'participation' and impact, the following guidelines may help in the writing of your article:

- Subject matter - you need to have clearly in your mind what it is that you want to impart to the reader.
- Clarity of expression - read through what you have written and assuming that you know nothing about the topic ask someone else to read it too. Have you clearly conveyed what it is you wanted to say?
- Think carefully about your choice of words and the grammatical construction of your sentences. Remember, that punctuation is an important aspect of effective writing. Be succinct in your writing.
- Look carefully at the structure of your article. There should be an introductory paragraph, main story in detail, then summing up.
- Length of article - remember that more is not necessarily better. *Traf News'* preference is that articles be kept to a maximum of 500 words
- Attach a photo with your article – remember, a picture is worth a 1000 words.

PHOTOS

If enclosing a photo with your article, these must be submitted in one of the following formats:

- electronic, as a JPG file, with full resolution. It may be on disc/CD or as an email attachment. The photo should be taken with a camera with 3.1 mega pixel resolution or higher. This is the preferred format.
- Good quality hard copies from an analogue (non digital) camera.

The following photos will **NOT** be used by *Traf News*.

- digital photos from mobile phones or the internet.
- printed hardcopy photos from digital cameras that are embedded in a word file or printed on an inkjet printer.
- photos that have been scanned into the computer unless high resolution and in jpeg or TIFF format.

Digital photos: embedded in word files; printed with inkjet printers; or that are taken from the internet or mobile phones cannot be used due to their poor resolution. Poor quality photos diminish the impact of your article.

A stamped self-addressed, stamped envelope should be provided if you want your disk or photo returned.

ARTICLES

Articles to be provided in either Microsoft word (*.doc) or plain text only (*.txt) file. If the article contains tables it is better to be in Word, and if not, will need to be saved in rich text format (*.rtf).

SOME 'TECHNICAL' ASSISTANCE

The remainder of this document provides you with information on the rules and standards used by Traf News. It should further assist you in writing your article.

HEADING

If you wish to include a heading for your article, please remember that it should have an impact on readers. For a heading to have real impact active words (verbs) should be used. Headings for an article should only take up one line (3-5 words). If you do provide a heading, the *Traf News* editorial group may have to amend it due to space, etc. If you can't think of a heading the *Traf News* editorial group will do one for you.

FIRST SENTENCE

The first sentence of your article should catch the eye of the reader and set the scene for the article.

LIST IN ARTICLE

If a list is included in your article, use dot points.

APOSTROPHE

The apostrophes must clarify contractions, such as *can't* for *cannot* and *shouldn't* for *should not*. When attempting to portray ownership through words, an apostrophe must be used. For the singular possession, the apostrophe falls before the *s*, when indicating plural/group possession the apostrophe falls after the *s*, e.g., boys' sports, choirs' performance. The exception to this is when the plural form of the word shows this, e.g., children's toys, women's meeting, etc.

When plural, persons, places or things are used in merely a descriptive sense. Therefore, the apostrophe may not be needed and can be omitted. For example, girls high school, visitors book, members social club, travellers cheques.

Apostrophes should not be used with already possessive pronouns, such as *theirs*, *yours*, *hers* and *its*.

It's stands for *it is* and *its* stands for *possession*, such as *its wheels*.

COMMAS

The correct use of commas within a sentence can add to the clarity of the sentence. Misuse of commas can lead to ambiguity/misreading of the sentence.

DATES

Generally *st*, *nd*, *rd*, and *th*, are not written within dates in the *Traf News*. For example, the *Traf News* rule is '18 February 2007', not 'the 18th day of February 2007' or 'Feb 18th 2007'.

NUMBERS

If not sport scores, numbers up to and including *ten* should be written. Numbers above *ten* should be converted into figures. (e.g., eight, nine, ten, 11, 12). There are some exceptions to this:

- the writing of money, dates, phone numbers, and percentages
- sport scores should be converted into figures, even those numbering below ten
- a number greater than ten commences or ends a sentence. For example, 'Seventeen people attended the conference'; 'attendees at the conference number seventeen'

However, sometimes it is necessary to write out numbers to avoid confusion. For example: 'The Bloods finished miserably in the fourth quarter by not adding to the 1.1.7 score. Note 'fourth' not 4th 1.1.7 even though these numbers are less than ten.

Numbers with four digits are written as 3500 not 3,500.

Numbers with five or more digits are written as 11,261,553 - not 11 261 553 or 11262553.

Decimal Point

The *Traf News* rule is 0.75 not .75

Fractions

If the value is less than one, fractions should be written out. e.g., one third, three quarters, etc.

Phone numbers

The landline number should appear as 5633 1234 - not 56 33 1234 or 56331234

Mobile phone numbers are written 0412 435 678

Percentages

The *Traf News* rule is 50% - not 50 per cent; 8% - not eight per cent

Time of Day

The time of day should be written as follows: 5.00pm, not as 5pm

Mick Bourke

Editor

January 2007