



Producing a Church Magazine

Guide to Good Practice

Produced by Keith Wood on behalf of the Association for Church Editors

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Throughout this publication the term "magazine" is being used to include both magazines and newsletters

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Introduction

**“The quality of church magazines needs to be such that they stand out amongst all the magazines that enter a household. They need to be attractive. They need to be informative.”
(Peter Crumpler)**

The first church magazines were published around 1850. As they increased in popularity they began to use news inserts that were becoming available nationally. Other material might have included a letter from the Bishop and diocesan news sheets produced by the Church of England. The editor was often the incumbent or minister. Gradually the work of editor began to move to the laity. The new editors were often people with a working knowledge of publicity or public relations, almost always working alone.



The Association for Church Editors was formed in 1999 with the aim of helping editors and their teams to improve their church magazines. In doing so, the Association has also accepted that there is an important need to help those who are either starting a new church magazine or who are taking over the daunting task of following on from a no-doubt successful predecessor.

What can the Association for Church Editors do to help?

This guide is designed to help editors learn something of the basics of producing a church magazine.

These days, the majority of church magazine editors are computer literate. If not, they have access to a computer either through an associate graphic artist or, in a few cases, using the services of their printer.

There is a wealth of knowledge available not just here but almost anywhere in the world. Editors are not alone. If an editor has got a problem, help may be only just down the road.

Producing a church magazine is not always easy. Almost all editors will readily confirm that doing so is an extremely satisfying and enjoyable occupation which benefits the whole of the congregation and frequently the surrounding community as well.

To discover more, then please go to the Association's website, www.churchmag.uk where there is plenty of help.

Please keep ACE informed of any changes to your publication, for instance the name and contact details of a new editor. That way we can keep our contact details up-to-date.

Do you know of any editors working near you who might like to join ACE? Please ask them to get in touch and we will be happy to provide them with full information and explain the benefits of membership.

Enjoy your membership of ACE

Managing the church magazine

My Notes



Do we need a magazine?

“But we’ve always had a magazine of sorts” is not the answer. Ask what the magazine should be doing for your church. It should be

- communicating
- informing
- useful
- readable
- accessible to everyone in the church and in the surrounding community

Now answer the following questions.

- Who is it for?
- Why do we need it?
- How often do we need it?
- What sort of content should be included?

The answers should form the basis of your editorial policy.

What about the costs?

Different churches have different policies towards the costs of the magazine. At one extreme the combination of advertising and subscriptions are set to make a healthy profit for the church. At the other extreme there may be no advertising and the magazine may be given away free. The church is happy to carry all the costs within its budget.

Whatever decision is made, make sure the treasurer agrees.

Who will help produce the magazine?

- Who is available?
- How much time can they give?
- What skills do they have?
- Will they need any training?
- How will decisions be made?

This should enable you to set up the production team in a way that it will work.

Financing the magazine

There are three very important questions to answer.

- Is advertising to be accepted?
- Is the magazine to be given away free, or will subscriptions either cover all the costs, particularly if there is no advertising, or cover a proportion of the costs and if so, what percentage?
- Could the magazine be supported by donations, perhaps annually, towards the cost. These could be Gift Aided. One suggestion is to include a plea envelope once a year for the results can be amazing.

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There are no fixed answers. However, advertising can represent a major source of income. Indeed the magazine can be financed entirely from advertising.

Encouraging donations is also an interesting approach especially with the added possibility of Gift Aiding.

There have been changes during 2013 in relation to Gift Aid. These changes may affect how Gift Aid can be related to magazine subscriptions and to donations. The church treasurer or the person responsible for dealing with the church's gift envelope scheme may be able to discuss this and give advice.

Accounting

Balancing the books, in other words keeping the records of money in and money out, is best left to the church treasurer.

Preliminary suggestions



Four useful tips

Everyone’s eyesight is vitally important and anyone using a computer needs to remember this. Here are four important tips.

1. If possible, make sure there are no daylight or artificial light reflections on the monitor screen. Also try and avoid facing directly at a window, particularly if this faces the sun. Try and arrange the work area so that eyes can relax by looking out of the window periodically. Eyes are at their most relaxed when looking at the far distance.
2. There is strict legislation in force in the commercial world defining the breaks that are necessary when working on a computer. This for good reason. In summary, this means “Don’t slog away all day without a break. Morning coffee, lunch, afternoon

tea and dinner taken away from the computer give eyes the periods of rest they need. So arrange working time accordingly.”

3. An experienced optician will need to know if a computer is being used as this may affect the way your prescription is prepared or the optician may recommend a second pair of nearer focal distance spectacles. Varifocal lenses will need to be set up accordingly. When using reading glasses only, a slightly different focal length may be needed for glasses set up to focus at the correct distance for the screen. Comfort is very important. Leaning forward or back to bring the screen into focus may result in back strain.

4. Years ago, in a book on office design a section on lighting said that working under fluorescent lights quite often resulted in headaches. The cure was simple. Light the working area using a desk lamp fitted with a tungsten bulb. So if working under modern energy saving lights is thought to result in headaches then it may be worth trying a different type of lighting over the working area.

Software

“What software do you recommend?” is a frequently asked question. Most software will do the job. The best answer is probably “The one you are used to”.

The most important software is a full Security Suite. Norton, McAfee, AVG, Avast and Kaspersky are top end programs and perform extremely well, keeping virus, spyware, malware protection and more always up-to-date. Subscription renewal can be set to be automatic to avoid being without protection.

AVG, Avast and Kaspersky offer free versions of their security software and there are a number of others from well-known software companies. General reports are that they all perform well, but the downside may be that telephone or on-line support may not be available.

Producing a magazine will almost certainly require a DTP (desk top publishing) program. Nevertheless a few simple layouts can be achieved with Microsoft Word but in

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DTP terms this is very limited. There are a number of DTP programs available and cost varies widely. The two most popular are Microsoft Publisher and Serif PagePlus. The latter is a DTP program within a suite of programs including PhotoPlus, DrawPlus and WebPlus, each of which is available separately.

Programs such as Adobe's Acrobat Reader and WinZip or Stuffit are also worth having, especially as they can be downloaded free of charge.

Questions are often asked about the availability of clipart and photographs. As well as books with artwork to scan in, CD/DVD collections are available. Hemera, QuickArt and Serif are three such sources. Be careful as there may be copyright restrictions so read the permissions for use. Downloading from the Internet is also possible but again, be careful over copyright restrictions. If in the slightest doubt, either don't use it or check with the publisher. For safety, the editor might take photographs specially for articles in the magazine or ask a member of the congregation to take them. Can someone in the congregation produce hand-drawn or computer-drawn illustrations? Don't be afraid to ask the youngsters.

Internet and e-mail

The majority of computers use Windows as the operating system. This no longer includes an e-mail program, although g-mail is available within WindowsLive. There are a number of e-mail programs available and all will do the job.

There is a similar situation with the Internet. Microsoft Explorer comes as part of Windows. There are other programs such as Google Chrome, Mozilla, Safari and Firefox which you can install as alternatives.

Some e-mail programs allow the use of background "stationery". This is not always popular with recipients for whom it may take up additional computer memory.

Similarly, whilst the use of colour for the text on e-mail looks nice and makes it stand out from the others, if the recipient wants to print it out, then it uses valuable coloured ink instead of the much cheaper black ink.

Most Broadband ISPs offer a choice of speed. The downside is that the higher the speed selected, the higher will be the monthly fee. So the choice depends largely on what is comfortable to work with.

However, most subscribers to Broadband Internet access find that after a while Internet becomes essentially a part of the computer, being used more and more frequently. It makes sense when paying a fixed monthly fee, since the subscription is the same however much the Internet is used.

Producing the magazine

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Copyright

Before looking at the mechanics of producing a church magazine, all editors need to know something about copyright.

Copyright exists in almost every country in the world. It is the legal means by which an author's livelihood is protected. Using the written words, drawings or photographs produced by any other person without their permission is breach of copyright unless the document being copied specifically says that the material contained in it is available for use without copyright restriction. For example, items from the ACE Ideas Forum and press releases are accepted as falling within this category. Incidentally, the work of pavement artists, even though it is transient, is copyright. Pavement or wall drawings should not be

photographed without asking permission and, if requested, making a financial contribution to the artist.

From this it should be understood that everything put down on paper or in any other written or recorded form is copyright. This applies just as much to the notes left on a desk to remind the writer what to do tomorrow, through love letters and articles for the church magazine to the novel that was such a thrilling holiday read.

Copyright exists for seventy years following the death of the author. During that time no-one may use the author's material without the written permission of the executors or the person or company to whom copyright was assigned by the author. The owner of copyright may, of course, attach any conditions or copyright fees to permission to copy, and these are legally binding. If using material by another author then make sure these conditions under which permission has been granted are understood and followed.

Copyright also exists for seventy years following the last publication of an author's work. This can be tricky. The book from which an extract is of interest for publication in the church magazine may have been published over seventy years ago. Is this the most recent issue? Has it been reprinted? The publisher will probably, though not necessarily, own the copyright. The editor's problem is to determine who holds the copyright or whether it is in public domain.

Use either e-mail or a letter to the publisher to request permission, but be warned, a reply may be a long time coming. It is best to explain that your publication is a church magazine with minimal funds. Ask if the publisher will tell you what acknowledgement is required.

The most important exceptions to this are the various versions of the Bible and prayer books. It is good advice to check the conditions that apply to the particular one that is to be quoted from; it is nearly always printed in the copy of the Bible or Prayer Book and Google may also help point in the right direction.

Legal Deposit has existed in English Law since 1662. The Copyright Act 1911 established the principle of legal deposit, ensuring that the British Library and five other libraries in

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Great Britain and Ireland are entitled to receive a free copy of every item published or distributed in Britain. The other five libraries are the Bodleian Library in Oxford; the University Library in Cambridge; the Trinity College Library in Dublin; and the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales. The British Library is the only one that must automatically receive a copy of every item published in Britain; the other are entitled to these items but must specifically request them from the publisher after learning that they have been or are about to be published, a task done centrally by the Agency for the Legal Deposit Libraries.

Magazines sent to the British Library under this obligation should be addressed to The British Library, Legal Deposit Serials, Boston Spa, Wetherby, LS23 7BY; telephone 01937 546267.

The Christian Copyright Licence is also something editors should know about. Primarily it is a means of legally printing the words of hymns that are included in the scheme in such publications as orders of service and the church magazine. The scheme has been extended to include recordings and the production of DVD's that are often the staple of young people's services. CCL and associated licences require payment of a subscription.

The CCL does not give the right to reproduce anything else. It is certainly not a licence to reproduce any material that takes the fancy of an editor, as some editors not only think but in some cases actually state on the cover of their magazine.

One final point, it is not necessary to register publications for copyright. However it is important that it is clear when a publication is printed. In the case of church magazines, the month of publication is usually included on the cover and this is sufficient identification for copyright purposes, assuming that copyright is vested in the church. If not, then the details of copyright should be included on every issue of the magazine. Remember that there may be joint ownership of copyright by the editor and the church.

At the time of writing, early 2014, there are indications that new legislation is being discussed worldwide and this will have significant implications on the way in which copyright works.

The digital age through the Internet and social media has created a massive new problem in relation to copyright. There are literally millions of orphans (files for which the original links have been lost) out there, including photographs and articles which have lost their accreditation to their authors. On social media this can happen within moments. It is a worldwide problem and there are worldwide discussions in an advanced stage concerning new tighter legislation in relation to copyright.

In advance of this, everyone involved in church magazine production should be aware that these changes will take place, possibly within the next two or three years, and should bear in mind various recommendations as to what we should be doing now to protect the interests of authors.

Remember that everything that is written or photographed is copyright. Nothing produced by anyone other than the editor may be used without permission of the author, although when articles or photographs are produced specially for the magazine this permission may be implicit. Copyright in all articles and photographs belongs to the author and is retained by the author unless assigned by way of a document detailing any change in copyright and this document must be signed and retained by both parties. All articles should be by-lined and the authorship of all photographs acknowledged.

Photographers are strongly advised to complete the metadata information for every photograph, particularly if there is any possibility that the photograph might be used on a website. Tracing authorship is then made more possible which is important in relation

to copyright fees if anyone else wishes to use the photograph, or even has used it elsewhere.

A useful website for exploring copyright information is www.copyrightservice.co.uk.

Magazine content

The possible content of a church magazine falls broadly into four, that which is written by the editor, that which is written by others specially for the magazine, press releases and advertising. The editor has a role to play from front to back cover.

A useful piece of advice to new editors is to encourage all contributors to write their piece before the deadline and send it to you in good time. There is always someone who is going to be late. So ask for articles well ahead of the deadline, giving contributors enough time to write their piece. Also ask them to let you know if they are going to be a day or so late so that you can work with that in mind, but do not encourage this as a routine.

Contributions

The editor should be able to write news stories related to local events connected with the church and in the surrounding areas. Other sources of wider interest include the websites of organisations such as Christian Aid and the Church of England, but do remember that these may be copyright and so may need to be rewritten for the magazine. The ACE Ideas Forum is sent out by e-mail to members monthly. It includes a wide variety of articles covering religious and other interests which are free for use by the Association's members.

There are many other sources of information worth looking at on the Internet.

Whenever possible members of the congregation should be encouraged to provide material for the magazine. It will help them to feel that the magazine belongs to them. Do encourage young people too. They are the future of the church and particularly of the magazine and this is a way of bringing them into church life in a positive way.

Some people may be willing to contribute articles every month, others less frequently or less regularly. These articles may cover church events or they may be community events, poems, book reviews, holiday stories, gardening, sport and much more.

Too often editors are afraid to go through these contributions and edit them. This is a vital role. Discuss with contributors how many words are required. Encourage authors to tell the story in the first paragraph followed by everything else in decreasing order of importance, just as a professional journalist would. Then if the article is too long it is easy to take the professional editing line of "cutting from the back" knowing that that is the least important part of the story.

Press releases

Newspapers and magazines, both national and local, receive large numbers of press releases by e-mail and by post. The editors are well-aware of the value of these as sources of news and information and make regular use of them. Church magazine editors should also take advantage of this valuable source of local information. The websites of various Christian denominations may also carry news stories that can be adapted for the church magazine.

Who supplies press releases? Local authorities, industrial companies and businesses are the main sources for local stories. Why not get in touch with the county council, the local district council, the parish council, shops, supermarket chains, garages, businesses and industries. Who is the contact? In the larger organisations, the public relations (PR)

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or marketing manager will nearly always be pleased to add the church magazine to the mailing list. Sometimes an enquiry of this nature may be directed to a consultancy carrying out this work. That's fine. In small businesses, for instance village shops, the owner will be the person to talk to, or one of the directors or marketing manager. They too will nearly always be pleased to add the church magazine to the mailing list.

Advertising

Whilst advertising is of importance to many magazines, there are others in which it is not used at all. There is nothing ethically wrong in carrying advertising; indeed it may help to boost circulation. The church magazine may be a valuable facility for local traders who wish to advertise to the local population.

ACE often hears people say "No, the church magazine shouldn't accept advertising." Why not? Advertising in a successful church magazine can be a really important and useful benefit to local businesses. Shops, restaurants, pubs, garages and others are all looking for ways to reach out to the local population. Your church magazine may well be the answer to their prayers.

Most advertisers will probably wish to book advertising for the whole year. That is fine. It enables the advertising pages to be set up at the start of the year. Only small changes will be needed for a new advert even if it is booked just for a month or two.

It is important to work out the exact dimensions for the different sizes of advertisements that will be carried. Bear in mind that from the point of view of appearance the dimensions for a full page advertisement should be the same as those for a full page of text.

Some advertisers may present their material print ready and knowing the dimensions required helps them to provide adverts of the right size. A computer file is best. A pdf, jpg, tiff or similar file format is usually the easiest to handle. Adjusting the size may take some getting used to, especially in the case of pdf files which have to be imported into the artwork before being adjusted for size.

If either a paper copy of a previous advertisement, or just a sketch of the sort of thing the advertiser would like, is provided then there is an opportunity to offer a design service. Do ask for jpg files of any logos or graphics. They too can be easily adjusted to size. If this is not available, ask for a good printed copy that can be scanned into the computer. However, the quality of reproduction may not be quite as good.

When the advertisement has been designed, don't forget to let the advertiser see and approve it.

Remember that the advertiser is paying for your service, so you must do your best to present advertisements really well.

A free copy of each issue of your magazine should be provided for each of your advertisers. This is normal practice in publishing and makes you look professional in your approach.

The most valuable advertising space is on the front and back covers, outside and inside, although inside is slightly less valuable. This can be reflected in the price. Probably all church magazines will use the front outside cover for an attractive design to attract the eye of the reader but it may be worth seeing if a local business will sponsor the front cover in return for having their name on it.

Particularly in the case of new advertisers, make sure you get the advertising money up front. To look professional, prepare invoices for all advertising and offer a receipt from the church treasurer if required.

Encourage readers to let advertisers know they have seen their advertisement in the church magazine. Ask advertisers to say how useful the church magazine is. Do they receive such comments as “I saw your advertisement in the church magazine”? Lastly, here are some interesting thoughts from editors on advertising:

“When advertising forms a large and integral part of the income of the magazine, we as editors have a duty to ensure that an advertisement is seen every time a magazine is opened and read. The advertisement must be carefully prepared and as well presented as possible”.

“Where a supplement of advertisements is placed in the centre of the magazine in each issue, many readers reach this section and turn straight over to the reading material towards the rear of the magazine. Few professional magazines have a centre fold booklet of advertising space unless it is solely for one product. A centre fold of advertising is done to save money on a printing run. Some printers will store the copy after a long run and feed it in with the copy each time. You do have to have a double sided set of adverts to do this, eg page 3 and 4 plus 49 and 50 in a 52 page magazine and so on.”

“It may cost a little more to have a page of text next to an advertising page, but the effort and minimal cost is worth the effort for our customers, the advertisers. They benefit from readers seeing the advertisement on a regular basis.”

“The use of left hand pages for advertisements is often preferred.”

Editing

Do you remember from schooldays how to précis an article? Here is where it comes in useful because contributions may need to be shortened without losing any of the sense.

For an editor there is a bit more work first. Read through all articles and perhaps assemble the paragraphs in a different order. Most PR people often write a press release, read through it and realise the real story is in the second or even third paragraph. They will then either delete the previous paragraphs or move them elsewhere in the press release. Some contributions to the church magazine may need this treatment. Explain why to the author and this will help to train him or her to look for the story and put it first, just like a professional journalist.

Next, go through the article almost word for word and delete anything that is repetitive, be it an odd word, a phrase or even a sentence. At the same time, check all spelling and punctuation.

Now look at readability. Try and vary sentence lengths. Short is sweet! That is very true within a paragraph of longer sentences.

Even paragraphs can become too long. Try and break them up. Two or three sentences may be sufficient. Avoid the one sentence, one paragraph syndrome.

But sometimes a one sentence paragraph can be useful for emphasising a message.

Try and avoid causing offence, which is not the same as being controversial. If an item is controversial, see if someone can be found who can express a different point of view so that your magazine gives a balance to the story either in the same or in the following issue. That way it is less likely to upset readers.

Editors also have a responsibility for trying to protect contributors from legal action, such as libel. If you have any doubts the best advice is to leave it out. Discuss it as well with the author and maybe the minister as well.

Political correctness is also a thorny issue. Readers tend not to like it as they may not be

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used to using it in their daily life. They often find it confusing. Know the magazine's readership and react to their attitudes.

Ideally, plain English is best. With the exception of the most common initials, an acronym should be followed by its full text in brackets the first time it is used. The use of technical words is more complicated. Is an ordinary word to be used or the technical one? Church jargon also needs careful thought before it is used. Non-churchgoers may not understand words used regularly in our churches. In choosing your words, try and avoid talking down to your readers. When does this happen? It depends very much on the locality and perhaps even on the age of readership. It is for the editor to know the readership and choose the words accordingly.

Build up a good relationship with contributors to the church magazine. Always talk to them about what an editor has to do. For instance, tell them that if an article goes beyond the bottom of a page by a line or two, then the editor should be looking at ways of pruning a word or two here and there to finish the article at the bottom of the page as this is easier for the reader and looks much better.

Should an editor show the final version of an article to the author before publication? It is not essential although it may be worthwhile. However, do explain that this may still not be the absolutely final version as something else of greater importance may need to be given space at the last moment.

Layout and typography

There are few hard and fast rules. Personal preference, an understanding of the magazine's readership and a feeling for good design are the basics.

How is a good design produced? The best advice is to suggest a visit to the local library and have a look through the magazines on the shelf. Ask why some magazines encourage a longer look than others. What makes some magazines easy to read? What is attractive? What makes them look modern?

Study some of the world's best magazines. Find out how the layout of the pages works. What are the constants? What are the variables from page to page and article to article? Why has that been done by the graphic designers?

Then have a look at newspapers. Have a good look at the way they set their type and design their pages. Understand how they help their readers to find their way around by keeping the same things on the same page from day to day (Page 3!!). Think about the relationship between articles on the different pages and between articles on the same page.

Ask where the different articles might be placed in the church magazine, for instance news from each of the churches, news from the parish council, an article from the minister, news about religions from the world, gardening and sports.

Part of layout is the choice of typeface. Many people say that sans-serif faces make for easier reading, particularly for those people with poorer eyesight, and this view is supported by the RNIB (Royal National Institute for the Blind). Having said that, there are some sans serif typefaces that are very difficult to read so it is up to the editor to choose carefully. The same is true of serif typefaces.

There are some golden rules of typography. First, don't use too many typefaces in any one publication, certainly not on the same page. The general rule is no more than three. Helvetica, Helvetica Condensed, Helvetica Bold, Helvetica Italic all count as one typeface. Garamond, Times Roman Bold and Univers Italic are three quite different typefaces.

Of course, the typefaces for advertisements are chosen by the advertiser and cannot be changed, so they don't count.

Don't be afraid to choose a large typeface for headings and to leave space between heading and body text. For body text, don't go smaller than 10 pt and if you have a proportion of elderly readers then consider 11 pt or even 12 pt to make reading easy for them.

In many magazines if sans serif is used for body text, then serif will be used for headings, or vice versa. Two different typefaces may be used for body text to make a visual difference between, say two churches or church and community.

Underlining is frowned upon by professional typesetters, mainly because it spoils the look of the page. If a word really must be emphasised then use bold or italic. Also try not to use too many commas as again they tend to spoil the appearance of the page.

The second golden rule relates to the way in which paragraphs appear over page and column breaks and around photographs. The term "widows and orphans" is one that may be familiar. These are odd single lines of text at the beginning or end of a paragraph that can be left behind in the previous column or page or carried over. Similarly with photographs. It is bad practice. A bit of sub-editing to remove a word two, or adjusting the size of a photograph, may resolve the problem.

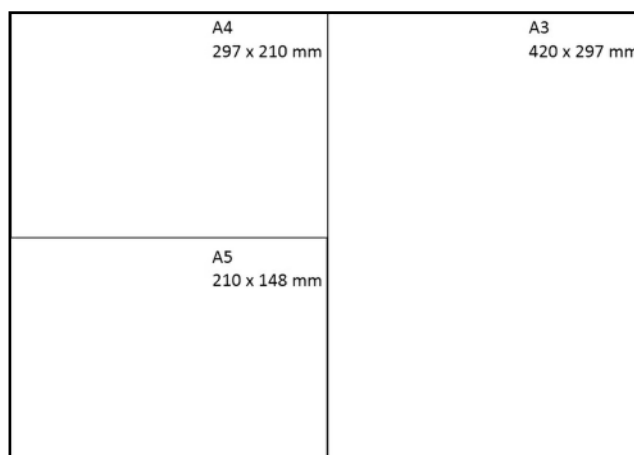
A similar technique can be used to shorten an article that runs over a page by a line or two.

What makes a page look good? There is an historic maxim among graphic designers, "White space sells". In other words, leave plenty of white space for the margins, for top and bottom, between headlines and body text, around photographs and around short articles.

Too many church magazines try to cram too much onto a page, usually based on the argument that there is so much to squeeze into the magazine. What's wrong with adding another four pages? Or could the text be edited down, often a good approach because amateur writers tend to be long winded, as do some professionals.

Margins: For an A5 magazine left and right margins should be a minimum of 10 mm. For A4 then look at a minimum of 15 mm, or even 20 mm for the outer margin and 10 or 15 mm for the inner, or gutter, margin. Top margins can be the same and the bottom margin a little bigger because there is usually the need for a page number below the text.

Columns: Pages are divided into columns to save the reader's eye from having to keep moving from left to right as the text is read. For A5 a single column is fine although some editors choose the equally suitable two-column layout. For A4 there is greater flexibility. Choose either 2 or 3 columns. They can be equal in width, particularly for a 3 column layout. For a 2 column layout the two columns can be of different width; one can even be twice the other.



International Paper Sizes
The most popular A series sizes for church magazines

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Folio (page number): This is usually placed at the bottom of the page below the print area, sometimes at the top. It is either centred or at the outer edge of the print area in which case it will be different for left and right hand pages. Here is a useful tip. If they are correct, the left and right folios on the same side of a sheet will add up to one more than the total number of pages, eg for a 40 page magazine $2 + 39 = 41$.

Paper sizes: The most popular size for church magazines is A5, ie A4 printed on both sides and folded in half. Somewhat larger is an A4 magazine, printed on A3 size paper. Both are A series sizes within the dimensions laid down by the International Standards Organisation.

There is, of course, no reason why other sizes shouldn't be used. It would be wise to discuss this with the printer. Even the tiniest bit larger than a standard size of paper and there will be an awful lot of waste paper to be paid for.

Photographs

How are the best results obtained when printing photographs in the magazine?

This starts with the photographer. Nowadays almost all photography is digital. Much can be done on a computer to improve the photograph. Even so, the photographer's aim should be to get the photograph right in the camera.

Resolution is important. Ask the photographer to use high resolution. Resolution cannot be satisfactorily increased on a computer. Although a higher resolution may be selected when working on the photograph, all that is happening is that the computer is expected to guess at filling in extra pixels, a process which often results in a pixelated appearance on the photograph.

Taking the photograph at high resolution gives the best flexibility when selecting size and resolution for publication. Always retain the original file of the photograph without any changes. Then if things go wrong, a fresh start can be made from the original. Or the original can be used for something else.

Crop, correct faults such as flare, and delete unwanted things like cables in the air or items like cars, telegraph poles and people: There are many books on the manipulation of photographs. It is a large and complex subject. This is not the place to go into this. It is better to talk to photographer friends, and perhaps buy or borrow a book or two on the subject. A visit to the local library may be worthwhile.

Final corrections: Before transferring the photograph to the artwork, colour balance may need correcting using levels and curves, and brightness adjusted. There are other adjustments that can also be made using the photo manipulation program. Lastly choose size and finally resolution.

Photocopiers and printing presses all seem to be happy with a resolution of 300 dpi. Some printers may request 600 dpi. If printing will be in black and white, then select black and white film or grayscale in the photo manipulation program, and then set the desk top publication program to save in grayscale. It sounds fussy but the aim is to avoid even a single coloured dot because this may be enough to cause a photocopier to go over to full colour settings with consequent increase in print costs.

Looking a little ahead, other changes to the magazine, such as a bit of minor editing, may result in a change to the size of a photograph. For the best results, return to this programme and readjust size here.

Proof-reading



Obviously no magazine should be printed without having been proof-read. In days long gone there were people who were professional proof-readers. That was their job. Strictly speaking their mandate was to correct spelling mistakes, missing words and double words after the text had been set by the typesetter at the printers. Most would also check and suggest corrections to grammar and would also mark areas of text which they felt the author should have another look at.

However, this is a luxury that few church magazines can afford. Indeed things have changed and proof-reading is mostly carried out after the text has been typed on the computer. From there on, the text is unlikely to be read again until after the magazine has been printed and received by its readers. This puts a

great strain on the editor and proof-reading team.

There is good reason for this. No-one can successfully proof-read their own work. Nor can proof-reading on the computer screen ever be regarded as reliable. The best way is for the editor to gather together a small team, perhaps those who also act as reporters, who can check the final artwork before it is sent to the printer. Everyone in the team should print out and proof-read the magazine and report errors back to the editor. The editor should receive them gratefully and make sure all the corrections are made to the text in the final artwork.

There are standard proof-readers marks and these can be found on the Internet. If the editor and proof-readers can learn and use these marks it makes the job easier but more important is accuracy. Professional proof-readers would always say that they could never achieve 100% accuracy. So there was always the risk of errors getting through and this is especially so in headings and areas of display type where the larger size of the letters seems to blind people as to what they are reading.

One thing is certain. The more people who proof-read the magazine the more likely mistakes will be found and corrected. Even then, something can still be missed! Also it is interesting to see how different people pick-up different types of errors.

Proof-reading done properly is a slow job. A recommendation from a proof-reading course is to use a ruler to cover everything up below the line you are reading. Then gradually move it down the page, line by line. This helps to stop your eyes straying over the page and losing concentration. Also remember that the editor should not do the proof-reading nor should it be done on a computer screen

In summary then, bring a group of people together. Help them as much as you can as to what it is you are asking them to do, be grateful for every error they pick up and praise them for their work. Finally, do not get upset when errors get through and someone in the congregation rings up to say there is a spelling mistake in this month's magazine! It will happen with certainty. Errors will get through and someone will phone up to say so!

If necessary, remember the maxim, "The editor's decision is final!"

Creating a pdf file



Most desk top publishing programs now include a facility for creating pdf files. They can also be created using Adobe's online system and a few standalone programs.

Various settings are needed for photographs, illustrations and text. It is a good idea to ask the printer for advice on this.

Make sure "embed fonts" is selected so that exactly the fonts used in creating the artwork will be used. This avoids problems arising from any small differences in the typefaces held by the printer.

Creating a pdf file for modern digital printing equipment only requires the provision of the A4/A3 size files, depending on the size of your magazine, A5/A4. You may see an option for "print ready" but for almost all church magazines this is unnecessary as it will involve the printer in much extra work and cost. The simple file is sufficient.

On the question of resolution, the general rule is that pdf files produced at 300 dpi are fine, since the file needs a resolution only half that used by the printing machinery.

Finally, using digital machinery and pdf files there is no need to worry about colour separations. Just think of how your computer prints in colour no matter whether you are using an inkjet or a laser printer.

Here is a quick word of advice that can save you a lot of problems. Always talk to your printer especially if you have not worked together before or if you are changing the design or size of your magazine. Your printer will always be willing to help you, so make use of his experience. Technology is always advancing and your printer is the person who can keep you in touch with new developments.

Printing



The two main methods of printing a church magazine are photocopying for up to 150 to 300 copies and litho for greater quantities. It is always worth getting a quotation for printing, particularly in or near the overlap zone. Modern equipment is usually capable of accepting artwork in the form of a pdf file either e-mailed or on a memory stick.

Photocopying has improved almost beyond recognition. Quality is excellent as is full colour reproduction. Using high-white good quality photocopying paper, it is often difficult to tell that it is photocopied rather than printed. Many models of photocopier will allow A3 paper to be used which is fine for short run A4 magazines.

Litho has been a favoured printing process for a good many years. Colour reproduction is great. There is always the option of printing in just black and white or spot colour can be included. For the most part, gone is the need for the printer to produce colour separation films from the artwork. Supply a pdf file, again with resolutions as agreed with the printer, and all should be well. Sending files to the printer is easy. Apart from just handing over a memory stick, if the file is not too big then it may be alright to e-mail your magazine as an attachment. If the file is larger it will be appropriate to use one of two forms of Internet transfer. Some printers run a website to which you can download your file. Or you can use an Internet transfer site such as www.wetransfer.com.

When handling files electronically there is a minimal risk that something on the file will get moved and the resulting print out will not be quite the same as the original artwork. This is very unlikely but it is exasperating if it does happen and has not been checked. Most printers will be glad to receive a paper copy of the artwork so that they can check their print out against it. They should also provide a proof so that there can be a last check for perfection. Yes, spelling mistakes have been spotted even at this late stage!

Some churches set up facilities to print their own magazines, but this always carries the risk of printer breakdown and subsequent frustration. Using a professional printer removes these risks and it may not be that much more costly.

Finishing the magazine



Send the magazine away to be printed and finishing will be included. It would be a big surprise if it wasn't. This is the final print process and includes folding and stapling (stitching is the professional term).

Of course, when the magazine is produced on the church photocopier, it is up to the editor to arrange this final process and it will have to be done by hand. Which comes first, stapling or folding? There is not a fixed answer; it is largely a question of personal preference.

To make the finished job look nice, use two staples, one near the top and one near the base of the spine. Fold so that the front pages very slightly overlap the back pages. It takes practice but get it right and it is a huge improvement to the magazine.

Backing-up files

It is always a good policy to keep backing-up your working file and to keep a back-up copy of every issue of the magazine. Files can get corrupted for no apparent reason and this is no joke when you are part way through producing your magazine and have no back-up when the file will not open, or opens incorrectly.

The simplest way of backing-up your file is to purchase an external hard disc, plug it into your computer and save your working file to it on a regular basis. One suggestion is to save alternately to the internal hard disc and to the external hard disc and to make this a routine. When you have finished your editing session, save your file to both internal and external hard discs before shutting down.

Slightly more complex is the Raid Array of external hard discs and relevant software. This ensures that copies of your files are automatically saved to alternate hard discs on a regular basis. Of course, it is a bit more expensive to set up but it is reliable and avoids silly mistakes such as saving the file to the wrong disc.

The latest method is saving your back-up "in the Cloud". There are many alternatives and the choice is yours. However, most of them require a subscription, presumably with the risk that if you forget to renew you may not be able to access your files. A few of these systems, Dropbox and OneDrive for instance, offer limited space for saving files free of charge. This may be worthwhile for your working file for the present issue as it would mean you could access it from other computers if needed.

Magazine distribution



Very few church magazines are distributed through the post. Almost all are distributed by hand, with a growing number being sent out on e-mail.

Reliable distribution requires a team of distributors to be built up in sufficient numbers to avoid it becoming an onerous task. Many churches rely on distributors collecting their magazines from the back of church. Equally copies can be left for readers to collect their own copy. Distributing in this way is, of course, free and also simplifies keeping track of the payment of subscriptions.

Arrangements can also be made for copies of the magazine to be left in waiting rooms at doctor's and dental surgeries and in shops in the area.

In the past there have been discussions concerning children, such as the local scouts or guides group, volunteering to deliver the magazine. Sadly, we all know of serious cases of child abuse. There is also legislation governing the employment of children. The use of children for magazine distribution cannot be encouraged in any way. Quite where an editor would stand if a young distributor was attacked in the street or on someone's doorstep is very much open to question and is not worth the risk.

As far as adult distributors are concerned, a sensible precaution is to make sure that the church's insurance provides adequate cover in the event that there is an accident. Relying on distributors simply saying, "Don't worry. If I have an accident while distributing the magazine I wouldn't dream of making a claim on the church" is too big a risk. Unfortunately in today's litigious world the situation is more complex. For instance, an employer's insurer may become involved and insist on a claim against the church.

Some church magazines are being distributed, at least in part, by e-mail. This can be done by separating the pages and putting them into numerical order and then creating a pdf file. The reader can then scroll through the pages. This file can be sent out to subscribers as an e-mail attachment.

Alternatively, if your church has a website, the file can be incorporated into the website. Then each month an e-mail can be sent to your subscribers with a hyperlink to the magazine page on the website.

Finally a database of readers can be set up as part of the church website or as a separate website. In either case it must be password protected so that it can only be accessed by authorised subscribers. It must be set up in such a way that no reader can access information concerning any other reader. One or two trusted people will be appointed as "administrators" and they will be the only people who have access to all the information on the database. This is essential for administrative purposes.

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Keith Wood

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Legal Note

Please note the writer of this Guide to Good Practice is not a solicitor, nor is he in any way connected with the legal profession. However, he has over forty years of experience in the publicity and public relations business, much of it as a freelance consultant. This Guide is therefore based on his experience working with many clients and publications, not just in the United Kingdom but also around the world.

If you have any requirement for detailed legal advice you will be well-advised to go to a solicitor or other legal adviser, preferably one with experience in the publicity and publishing businesses.

