

LALG Newsletter – Guidelines for Contributors

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The Two-Minute Take-Away

If nothing else, read this bit.

Keep It Simple.

Unless you get it spot-on, adding formatting to the submission usually makes more work, not less, since we end up taking it all off, then starting again. In particular:

- Use the default font of your email system, or word processor if sending as an attachment. Don't use different fonts, different sizes, or other embellishments.
- Bold or Italic for emphasis is OK, though we may change it for the look of the page as a whole.
- Don't worry about line length, just let the text wrap as usual.
- Don't use centered text, or tabs to create a particular layout – it probably won't fit.

See the examples at the end of this document for guidance on the preferred layout.

And finally – please be concise. We are always pushed for space, and some entries do tend to take up more than their fair share.

NOTE that if necessary the editors will edit your text down to remove unnecessary material and to make the entry fit the space available.

The Ten-Minute Basics

For the great majority of regular entries.

Conform to House Style.

As well as keeping it simple, as above, there are a number of points which we try to adhere to, making a consistent House Style for the whole newsletter. Some we try and be 100% rigorous about, some are more in the nature of preferred guidelines – also depending to some degree on the personal preferences of the editor concerned.

Layout of an Entry

It is (strongly) preferred that each separate event in an entry is preceded by a line containing the date, and if relevant the time, with, if appropriate, a second line containing a title or very short description (3 or 4 words). Please put these in **bold** to make the item stand out.

If you want an introductory paragraph with common information on venue etc., or describing what your group does, then fine, but again please keep it brief.

We ask that you add a line at the end saying either 'New Members Welcome.', or 'This Group is now full.' as appropriate, to help readers looking to join an activity .

Lines and Paragraphs

The newsletter spaces paragraphs apart by automatically including a gap after each paragraph so there is no need for you to press Enter twice when starting a new paragraph.

If you are using a word processor the usual behaviour is:

- ENTER – Creates a new paragraph with a gap.
- SHIFT/ENTER – starts a new line without a gap.

Date and Time

Dates are given as e.g. **Tuesday 15 September**, in this order, with no 'th' etc.

The preferred format for times is e.g. **4.15pm**, using the 12-hour clock (no leading zero). There are however some exceptions, and we are flexible on several points to simplify submission and improve overall appearance. In particular:

- Use **12.00 noon** not 12.00pm.
- If quoting train or bus times, use the 24-hour clock, e.g. **16.15** (no am or pm) since this is what timetables use.
- 'am' or 'pm' may be omitted where there is no ambiguity, and in particular when writing two times together, e.g. 'starting at 10.15 for 10.30am'.

If date and time are both included then just separate with a comma, e.g.

Tuesday 15 September, 7.30pm

Dates of events will always be in the standard form, in **bold text**.

For other dates in running text the 'th' form may be used to improve the flow of the sentence.

Phone numbers

Phone numbers should have the full area code, and be formatted as e.g. '01462 623201' or 07970 411611 . Also we just give the number without 'Tel.' or 'Phone' in front.

Email and Web addresses

Email and web addresses should always be in italics – not blue and not underlined. You don't need *http://* on the front of Web addresses, and again don't bother with 'Email:' before an email address. E.g. *info@lalg.org.uk* or *www.lalg.org.uk*.

Hyphens and dashes

Please put hyphens in compound words such as '4-mile', 'multi-award-winning', 'non-member' or 'non-LALG' (some of the main offenders).

Please don't use hyphens to break words across two lines – we don't do this if we can help it, and they won't be in the same places once we have laid it out in the newsletter format.

If using dashes to separate phrases – as in this sentence – please use the character known as 'en-dash' rather than a hyphen. There are several ways to do this:

- Copy and paste it from here.
- In Windows, hold down the Alt key and type 0150.

- In Word (or some other Microsoft products) select 'Insert' then 'Symbols' from the menu/ribbon. The en-dash (with other dashes) is towards the bottom of the scroll-down box; select this then press Insert and Close. Once you have inserted a character once it will appear at the beginning of the 'recently used' box, so you won't have to do a search next time.

Other punctuation etc.

- Use the ½ symbol instead of e.g. 4.5 when quoting the length of a walk (or elsewhere). Often Word will automatically convert '1/2' into ½, but it doesn't cope with e.g. '4 1/2' unless you put a space after the '4' then back up and delete it again. Alternatively use the Insert/Symbol method above.
- Please ensure all your sentences have a full stop at the end. There seems to be a tendency to miss it off at the end of paragraph. (This does not apply to single lines containing e.g. a date, title or heading.)
- Also there are sometimes double full stops – please try to avoid this.
- Try and use the correct accents etc., mainly on foreign names but also some common words such as café.
- We prefer single to double quotes, except in the case of direct reported speech (not common).
- In running text, write the numbers one to ten as words, not figures. (Does not apply to compounds such as 4½, 5-mile, £3, and so on.)
- Please don't use abbreviations (except 'am', 'pm', 'etc.', and possibly 'e.g.' and 'tba'.)

The Advanced Course

For specialist entries with complex layout, such as forms, tables, surveys or centerfolds.

Conform to technical constraints.

For entries where a particular layout needs to be preserved then more care is needed in the original preparation of material to ensure that the item will fit, both physically and stylistically, without the editor having to lay it all out again from scratch. Relevant constraints are as follows:

- **Leave plenty of time.** Get the submission in at least 2 weeks early so that the editor can try to put it in, and get back to you if it needs changes, before the deadline pressure. Preferably also warn the editor that it is coming so that space can be negotiated.
- Unless you have access to Publisher 2013 or later please prepare in Word, which will give the greatest flexibility in handling the submission.
- Prepare on A5 pages, with a one-centimeter margin on all four sides.
- The standard font used in the newsletter is Arial 9.5 point. 9 point is usable, but a bit small. Please don't go above 10 point except for headings or titles, since it will expand the space required unnecessarily.
- **DO NOT** present material, or embed material, as PDF files. They go all fuzzy (lose resolution) when put into Publisher.

- Remember that the newsletter is printed in black and white, so be careful with use of colour. Red text will become grey and subdued, not stand out. Pictures which rely on colour rather than contrast will become dull mid-grey all over.
- Use a minimum of different fonts, sizes, styles, etc. Too many on one page just gets messy and unattractive.
- When trying to pack or adjust material into the fixed page size, it is very useful to remember that the space between paragraphs (individual lines count as paragraphs if text does not run over from one to another), can be altered by one point at a time. No space makes everything very cramped, but one does not have to go to Word's default minimum of 6 points.

Layout Examples

The following examples show the preferred layouts to be followed.

Patchwork Group

Thursday 6 September, 11.00 – 1.00pm

We meet at the Care Community Hub in Station Road, Letchworth.
LALG members £2, non-members £3.

Facilities are excellent including a large table to work on and tea and coffee. Please bring your own materials with you. No need to book. Just turn up.

New members welcome.

Group Contact: Zena Truscott 01462 627253; xyz@example.com

Notes

The editors will format the Group Name in the house style.

The font and line spacing will automatically be converted to the house style.

The longer lines will automatically be wrapped to the correct column width.

Gardening: Tea and Tips

We are a group of enthusiastic gardeners who visit each other's gardens to share expertise and swap plants whilst enjoying coffee and cake.

Our meetings for September are as follows:

Tuesday 4 September, 10:30am at Anne Parker's

Tuesday 11 September, 10:30am at Janet Kirtland's

Tuesdays 18 and 25 are currently vacant. Further details at our meetings.

This group is now full but to be put on the waiting list please contact:

Group Contact:

Annie Hankin 01462 685511
