



# STORY WRITING GUIDELINES

***If you would like to submit a story to Chatterbox, the following advice should help to ensure that it is acceptable for publication.***

**Be sure of your facts.** If in doubt, check them out. Don't base your story on hearsay or half-truths.

**Include full names** and other relevant personal details, such as ages, but ensure the person you are writing about doesn't mind. An 80-year-old completing a sponsored walk adds extra significance to the story, but he or she might not want to give their age away.

**Don't forget** to include dates, times and venues when writing about forthcoming events.

**Give contact details** where possible.

**Keep your story** (known as copy) **short and to the point.** 300 words is a good limit to aim for. It should begin with the most interesting point, and then flow with facts and comments (if you have any) to inform. For example, if you were writing about a special guest attending a local function, don't wait until the last to say it was The Queen!

**Always sketch in the background** to an issue – you can't assume that everyone will know what you are talking about.

**Example:** *If you were writing about Mrs Smith's party being a huge success and money being raised for charity, you include her full name, say what the party was for and give add a few details about the charity.*

**Example:** *If you were referring to the Community Council discussing the "problem" in Bloggs Road and agreeing to write to the Council, you should outline the problem and explain the purpose of the action. "Street lighting is poor, and Council asking for immediate improvements."*

**Don't miss deadlines.** You have wasted your time, and possibly held up production, if you do not get your copy in on time.

**Think pictures.** Have you a photograph, or can you get one, to illustrate the story?

**Check, and check again,** that your story contains all the right ingredients and accurate information before submitting it to the editor.

**Have fun** – and help to fill Chatterbox with stories reflecting life on the Black Isle. **You can do it.**