

Toolkit: photographic displays



Description

This is a photographic display of images of the park which have been brought in by people in the area, or anyone who has a memory of the park. You can also incorporate photos from local archives.

It would ask people to send in photos of the park, from any period in its history, including recent events. Images could include those of past events or significant times in the park's history, as well as those images with more personal significance, of people's families and friends using the park.

This would result in a photographic display on the day of the event, with the possibility of extending it as part of a museum or gallery display. There could also be a competitive element to encourage people to take part.

How to do it

Generate interest and promote the competition at least one month before the date of the event

Contact local schools, clubs and societies.

Promote in local media such as local papers and radio asking for photo contributions.

Work with the local authority culture or museum department and the local history section of the library.

Contact local businesses for sponsorship or to offer a prize.

Collect the photographs

Ask people to send photos (with name and address on reverse) to a main contact person in the local authority or Friends group.

Ask people to include a 50 word description of the photo and its significance.

Set a deadline and decide on a judging panel if you are holding a competition.

Decide on the winner and notify before the event if necessary.

Decide on the practical display methods

Find a display venue (e.g. within a museum, gallery, cafe or outside within the park).

Obtain display boards, mounting material and lamination material if necessary.

Assemble the display

Mount the selected images on display boards and label with information if necessary.

Decide on winners if it is a competition. Will this be judged on the day or decided before?

If taking place indoors, put the display up a few days before. It may have more impact to unveil the exhibition on the morning of the event and then leave it up for a period after the event.

If taking place outside, put up on the morning of the event.

Take down the display

If the event is semi-permanent, work with the local authority.

Take down the display boards.

Return the photographs to entrants if necessary.

Promote the winner in local media.

Tips and issues to consider

Make it clear that you will not be able to return photographs if this is not possible (there are cost implications if posted). Ask for return addresses if you will be returning them by post, or specify that a name and address should be written on the reverse of the photo. This will not be an issue for digital images. Photographs will often have great personal significance and will be valuable to the owners who may not want to part with originals.

Consider taking scanned copies for ones that need to be kept (this may impact on the quality of the images). Consider whether you can come to an arrangement with a local photographic shop to do this (they may do this through sponsorship of the exhibition). People will then be able to take in their photographs to a central point and will be able to keep the valuable original.

Alternatively, this could be carried out by the local authority through their museum service if they are willing to act as a central collection point. Once they have been scanned on to a CD, they could then be printed by a local photographic shop.

Whoever is collecting the images (a local photo shop or the local authority) will need to take responsibility of photograph release forms. As well as collecting contact details of the person submitting the photo, these forms will contain tick boxes asking whether they are happy for the image to be displayed publicly and to be used for other purposes (such as promotional material about the park or the Friends group).

Make it clear that the photographs will be on public display and people should not submit them if they do not want the people in the photos to be seen by the public.

Ask whether people will agree to their photographs being used for other purposes, for example for Friends promotional material. This could be a condition of entry or could involve the entrants ticking a box.

Consider displaying the images through a computer projection (if they are stored on a CD). This could create a constant loop or slideshow of different images which can be displayed during the event. This will require a projector and room or marquee.

Consider asking people to collect photographs the following day from a collection point in a museum or council offices.

Make it clear that not all images entered will be displayed (unless this is possible).

Make it clear that you will not display any images which may cause offence to viewers.

Make it clear that the decision of the organisers is final, in terms of deciding a winner (if necessary) and which images are displayed.

Make sure the quality of photographs is sufficient (e.g. in terms of composition but specifically in terms of image quality and size). Consider specifying a minimum size of photograph for hard copies, and in terms of resolution for digital images. Larger images will require higher quality photographs. However, the quality of some older photos will be lower. Some images of low quality will still have a great deal of personal meaning, and could also still have a great deal of value for inclusion within the exhibition.

Consider whether you will accept both digital and conventional photographs. If digital ones are submitted who will print these out and how will this be funded?

Consider whether one display and one competition is sufficient, or whether adult, amateur, professional and childrens categories would be more appropriate.

Consider whether you would also like to include paintings, postcards or newspaper cuttings within the display, or as a separate strand.

Consider a specific theme for the types of photographs, or whether the park in general is sufficient (e.g. sport, events, architecture, children etc.)

Useful organisations to work with

Local photographic shops to get sponsorship or a prize for the winner (e.g. vouchers or a camera) or to use as a partner in the exhibition (e.g. to scan and collect photographs from entrants).

National photographic companies for sponsorship or promotion.

Local or regional amateur photographic clubs to get promotion or further involvement and help, such as supplying archived images. A member could also run a workshop on photography.

Local history societies to provide interpretation of the photographs (a member could provide information about the displays in person).

Local schools, linking in with the national curriculum and the history lessons. They could contribute photos and use the display as part of their work.

Photography departments of the local papers, colleges, libraries or museums. They could supply archived photos for the display or could run a workshop on photography, or hold a 'career in photography' lecture.

Other event ideas to link to

Mobile phone photo competition for children and young people who can send their photos to a central number and have them put up on a website or linked to the main display on the day. You will have to consider whether you want to be seen to encourage children to use mobile phones, which is potentially a controversial issue.

Displays in museums (to be developed as a semi-permanent home for the display). They can also be linked to general interpretation boards within the park.

Talks, seminars, lectures, workshops about the park. The photographs could be used as topics for talks. Workshops on historical or landscape photography could be run by a local amateur photography society.

Tours of the park. This could involve tours visiting sites from some of the photographs.

What to do if it rains

Hold the display in a museum, shop, cafe or building adjacent to, or within, the park. This will also mean that there is a possibility of extending the duration of the display. This will need to be planned in advance.

Hire a marquee or gazebo to provide cover (the local authority may be able to help or supply equipment).

Mount the photographs in waterproof casings or lamination.

What to do next

Make the display a permanent feature of a museum or gallery local to the park.

Develop a website about the park with the photos on. This could also be linked to an existing website (e.g. local authority-run or one by the Friends group). Make sure that none of the images are copyrighted.

Use the photos for interpretation material about the park, e.g. leaflets, websites or interpretation boards.

Where to get further information

Mounting material and display boards

Hobby Craft - a national chain of arts and crafts stores (www.hobbycraft.co.uk)

Craft Arts - an online crafts store - www.craftyarts.co.uk

Internet Stationers - www.internet-stationers.co.uk

Local arts and crafts shops

Photographic information and supplies

Amateur Photographer Magazine - www.amateurphotographer.com

Better Photos - <http://betterphotos.cjb.net>