

Scotland's **GARDENS** Scheme OPEN FOR CHARITY

Putting up your Road Signs

Good placement of road signs can make a big difference to your number of visitors. A number of volunteers have reported that it really boosts visitors to post road signs and banners early in the week to catch the eye of passing traffic. This makes sense because we know that our visitors are often local. This article includes suggestions from one of our Garden Owners as well as tips on Council rules about placement of signs.

We have done a little detective work about what is, and isn't, allowed in terms of placement of signs along the roads. The way it works is that the Scottish Government rules what is allowed on main "trunk" roads. Individual Councils are in charge of smaller local roads. We sampled a few councils and found that they are reluctant to provide general guidance, but will happily respond based on a given date and road, which is not especially helpful for our purposes. (If you do decide to ring them, it would be the Roads Dept.) But what we could ascertain is that they tend to apply their rules more liberally in the case of charity events.

- They like A4 sized signs
- They don't like to see signs on lampposts (that said there appears to be a separate department for lampposts)
- They want signs removed promptly after the event.
- They don't want to see signs that might distract the driver.

Following is an account by one of our Garden Owners of their success using signs to promote their Snowdrop opening this year.

To abuse the 19C adage about voting in elections: sign early, sign often. We put our signs up on the Wednesday before our Sunday opening. I think as early as possible in the prior week is ideal. Marketeers always say messages have to be seen 2 to 3 to 4 times before they are acted upon. And ideally across different channels so in this context that probably means the SG guidebook, other print, digital, and road signage.

Our property has a major A road 2 miles to our east. This has lots of traffic but it is going fast. The signage here needs to be big, so this is our place for 2 banners. I also place 2 of the small signs way ahead of the junction, perhaps 600m, in each direction, and one on the junction itself. There is another smaller A road 2 miles to our west, with less traffic, so this gets another banner and a small sign.

We then marked all the local roads using all the remaining small signs. On both the banners and the smaller signs, we taped SUNDAY printed on white paper in Calibri with font size of 185, ie as big as A4 paper would allow.

This year we saw a significant increase in people responding that they saw the opening 'online' following the road sign prompts. The signage remains a key part of the marketing armoury. (Simon Dessain, Lawton House)

Please note, we are ordering more signs and banners which say "Garden Open Sunday" and "Garden Open Saturday". We are also ordering A4-sized signs, in series, that can be placed along the road verge at ground level. These will be printed as "Garden Open", "For Charity", "This Sunday (or Saturday)", "2-5pm". This selection would be mixed/matched depending on need. All new signs and banners will be yellow with black writing. Garden Owners, let your District Organisers know if you are interested in trying these signs. Districts, contact Hazel for further information.