The Community-Building Newsletter Outline

A free template from NVS | Make It Work Monday

A newsletter builds community when readers see themselves in it, hear from each other, and are invited to take part. This outline turns a one-way update into a two-way conversation: every issue features your community, asks for their voice, and gives them a way to connect.

Use it as a starting point, not a rulebook. Your organization's priorities come first. Pair it with the Gift-First Newsletter Outline: the gift gets people opening, the community keeps them belonging.

Before you write

Answer these five questions first. They take ten minutes and shape every section.

1. **Who is the community?** Donors, volunteers, clients, neighbours, staff? Name the groups who should see themselves in this issue.
2. **Whose voice is in it?** Pick at least one person outside your staff to feature or quote.
3. **What did readers send last time?** Replies, poll results, photos. Plan where you'll share them back.
4. **What's the invitation?** One way readers can take part this month: reply, vote, share, show up.
5. **How will you close the loop?** Decide now how next issue will report what readers said or did.

The outline

Seven sections, in reading order. The whole issue should take three to four minutes to read.

#	Section	What it does	Length	Tips
1	Warm opener	Speaks to readers as members, not a list	2–3 sentences	Use "we" and "our community." Sign with a real name.
2	You said, we heard	Shares back what readers sent last issue	2–4 items	Poll results, a reply, a reader's photo. Proves someone is listening.
3	Community spotlight	Features one donor, volunteer or neighbour	150–250 words + photo	Let them tell it in their own words. Ask permission and let them review it.
4	Impact story	Shows what the community made possible together	150–200 words + photo	Credit the group: "Together, you…" One story beats five statistics.
5	Ways to connect	Invites readers to meet and take part	3–4 short items	Events, volunteer shifts, online groups. Dates in bold, one link each.
6	Your turn	Asks for the reader's voice	1–2 sentences	One question or quick poll. Make it easy to answer in a reply.
7	Sign-off and teaser	Closes warmly and builds anticipation	1–2 sentences	"Next month we'll share your answers." This keeps the loop going.