Chancellor of the Exchequer Upper case C and E. Subsequent mentions: the Chancellor.

Channel tunnel Upper case C, lower case t.

cheddar, cheshire cheese Lower case.

Chief Constable Upper case Cs for a particular Chief Constable, lower case for a meeting of chief constables.

Christian Upper case C, though unchristian is lower case.

Christmas day Upper case C, lower case d.

churches Full name, upper case, eg Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church; then Sacred Heart, or just the church if it is the only one mentioned in the story.

citizens advice bureau Lower case, no hyphen or apostrophe.

city centre Two words, no hyphen.

CJD Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, but not normally any need to spell out. You may refer to it additionally as “the human form of BSE”.

clichés Some say “avoid clichés like the plague”, but opinions vary. Keeble (2001a: 117), for example, advises reporters to avoid saying that so-and-so is “fighting for her life” when a hospital reports her condition as “critical”, on the grounds that it is a cliché. Maybe it is, but isn’t critical also a cliché? At least fighting for her life gets a bit closer to the drama of the situation. Clichés are hard to avoid completely, they change over time, and they do sometimes convey just the right meaning in a minimum of words. As a rule of thumb (cliché alert!), whenever you are tempted to use a cliché in your copy, stop and ask yourself if it really is the best way of expressing precisely what it is you want to say. Some particularly tired words and phrases are listed in Box 12.1, but you’ve probably got your own pet hates (is that also a cliché?).

company names Use spellings, upper or lower case letters, and apostrophes as the companies do themselves, even if they are ungrammatical or annoying.

conman, conwoman Both one word.

connection Not connexion.

BOX 12.1

NAMED AND SHAMED: A CLICHÉ TOO FAR

a big ask
a bridge too far
acid test
after the Lord Mayor’s show
as so-and-so looks on (in picture captions)
at the end of the day
baby-faced assassin

back to square one
baptism of fire
between a rock and a hard place
bitter end
blaze of glory
bombshell
brutal murder

bubbly character
budding (in stories about young people)
bull in a china shop
burning issue
chickens coming home to roost
closure (as prerequisite for moving on)

(Continued)
clutch defeat (or victory)
from the jaws of victory (or defeat)
cold comfort
crack troops
cyberspace
drop-dead gorgeous
early doors
elephant in the room
end of enigmatic
enormity
fairytales ending
fairytales romance
fears are growing
first the good news . . .
fit for purpose
flash in the pan
flushed with success (in stories about toilets)
genuine six-pointer
get figure
gobsmacked
goes without saying
hardworking families
high-level summit
high-speed chase
his/her indecision was final
hit the ground running
hopes were dashed
horns of a dilemma
I have to say
iconic
in our DNA
interesting to note
ironically
is the new black
is the new rock’n’roll
it has to be said
it remains to be seen
jaw-dropping
kept himself to himself
kick-start
last but not least
leave no stone unturned
legend
level playing field
LOL
mass exodus
mega
meteoric rise
morning after the night before
move on (following closure)
must-win
named and shamed
national treasure
OMG
only time will tell
personal demons
pillar of the community
purrfect (in stories about cats)
pushing the envelope
quiet confidence
raced to the scene
revellers
rich tapestry
rich vein of form
ripe old age of
sea change
simple as
speculation was rife
stakeholders
step change
step up to the plate
storm in a D-cup (in stories about bras or breasts)
strut their stuff
sweet smell of success
SW19 (in tennis stories)
take the bull by the horns
taken its toll
the devil is in the detail
the last taboo
the silent killer
the small matter of thinking outside the box
to be fair
to die for
too close to call
top-level summit
torrid time
tragic mum (or tot, or whoever)
tsunami (except when it actually is one)
tucking into festive fare (in picture captions)
unfriend
untimely death
up in arms
veritable feast
wake up and smell the coffee
wake-up call
war of words
wardrobe malfunction
who knew?