



Fundraising ideas

This sheet aims to help you work out the best strategy for raising money for your group.

We also have the following information sheets: *Event planning checklist*, *Planning a funding application*, *Writing a funding application*, *Fundraising from local businesses* and *Fundraising from trusts*. We also have a list of other people who can help with fundraising ideas and information.¹

Why raise money?

Fundraising is always more successful if you know what you are raising the money for, and have a clear idea of how much you need.

Raising money can tend to become an end in itself – if you don't have a specific reason for raising money, it might be a good idea to think about whether you need to do it at all. Sometimes having money can cause problems for a group as well as solve them.

Before you start trying to raise money for a project, an event, or general running costs for your group, you need to break down the likely costs to form a budget.²

Keeping accurate accounts³ can help you work out how much you have spent on similar activities in the past. If you need the money to start something new, make sure you have done some research to find out how much each aspect of the project will cost.

Using your budget, you can arrive at an overall fundraising target. This will help you decide best how to raise the money. You will also need a target figure and a specific budget for each fundraising activity.

Fundraising techniques

Once you have an overall fundraising target, you need to think about how to raise the money. There are several ways to do this:

- ◆ Selling badges, cards, t-shirts or other merchandise
- ◆ Collections, donations and raffles
- ◆ Applying for grants or awards

¹ <http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/service/fundraising-ideas-and-information/>

² See our information sheet, *Budgets for community groups*

³ See our information sheet, *Your group's money*

- ♦ Organising your own fundraising events

Which route you decide to take depends largely on how much money you have to raise, and how many people you have available to do the work.

You may choose to combine several approaches. Some grant-giving bodies are much more likely to help you if you can raise some money yourselves.

Selling badges, cards, t-shirts or other merchandise

You can design and make your own badges, stickers or cards (e.g. Christmas cards) at quite a low cost and sell them to supporters to raise money. The Resource Centre has badge machines you can use, and advice about designing your badges and sticker-printing facilities. You could also use our print room to print your cards.

Some groups also print t-shirts⁴ and information booklets, record CDs or DVDs, or make earrings and other items to sell to supporters.

You can also have items made, such as baseball caps, pens, or key-rings.

Before doing this it is worth thinking about where you are going to be able to sell your products, and who you are going to sell them to. Are you going to have a stall at your own, or another group's, event? Are you going to rely on personal contacts? Some supportive shops may take some to sell – but they may ask for a percentage of any money you take in for doing this.

Remember that, whatever you are selling, you are likely to end up with some left over, so allow for this when you decide on a price.

Collections and donations

There are many ways of collecting money from supporters, but there are often rules and regulations that affect how you carry them out.

Here are a few ideas:

Collections

If you are having a stall at an event it is always useful to have a collection tin for members of the public to make small donations to your group.

You can also organise a street collection. You will need a permit from the local council for this. See our information on *Licensing and regulations*⁵ for more details. You can make your collection more imaginative and appealing to the public by dressing up, having musicians or performers with you, having information about your group available, or having stickers to give to those who donate.

If you are having a collection at your own event, or a larger event, you could:

- ♦ Have large labelled buckets

⁴ <http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/service/t-shirt-printing/>

⁵ <http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/licensing-and-regulations/>

- ♦ Have groups of people shaking blankets
- ♦ Use a paddling pool or water feature to make a 'wishing well'
- ♦ Create a 'Coin Painting'. As people donate coins a group of 'artists' could create pictures on the ground or on a large board, using the coins.

100 Club

100 members pay £1 or £2 per month into the club. Each member is allocated a number, and each month one or two numbers are drawn to find the winner. 50% of the cash collected would go to your organisation, and the rest would be used for prizes. It is a good idea to have quite a small regular prize, then larger prizes (e.g. £100) once or twice a year.

Raffles

You could hold a raffle at an event, or even on the coach if you are going on an outing. For this kind of raffle you can buy books of cloakroom tickets from a stationery shop. Alternatively you could hold a draw over a longer period, and print draw tickets. You can ask local businesses⁶ to donate prizes, for example, a box of chocolates, a meal for two, a food hamper, or a haircut.

Membership

You can ask supporters of your group to become members, and charge a small membership fee. This can give your organisation a small regular income, and lead to members identifying more closely with you. You could have a small fee for individuals, and a larger fee for other organisations. You could print membership cards, where you record members' payments, and the date their membership expires.

However, asking people to pay for membership might deter some of them from getting involved, so discuss this carefully before you go ahead with it. Membership fees are probably more suited to sports, arts or social clubs where there is a clear benefit to being a member.

Standing Orders

You could ask supporters to pay a monthly Standing Order directly from their bank account. You just need to give supporters your group's bank details (account name, number and sort-code) so that they can ask their bank to set up the standing order. Ask them to tell you that they have done this, so you know where the money has come from when it appears in your bank account!

People often get confused between standing orders and direct debits, so it is useful to remind them that they control the standing order - they can contact their bank to amend or cancel the standing order whenever they like.

Payroll giving

Payroll Giving enables employees to give to any UK charity straight from their gross salary (before tax is deducted), giving immediate tax relief on those donations. This means that £10 donated each month costs only £8 for employees paying standard

⁶ See our information sheet on *Fundraising from local businesses*

rate tax (£6 for higher rate taxpayers). For more information, see our list of other people with information about alternative funding models.⁷

Gift Aid

Charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) can claim the tax back when people make donations to them using Gift Aid. Therefore, if somebody makes a donation of £10 to your charity, you will receive £12.50.

To use Gift Aid you need to register with HMRC, ask all donors to sign a Gift Aid declaration unless it falls under the Gift Aid small donations scheme, and keep accurate records. See information about Gift Aid.⁸

Community shares

If your group wants to raise money to, for example, save your local pub or community building and run it yourselves, a way of doing this is through community shares.⁹

Online donations

There are several websites¹⁰ that provide a service for collecting donations for charities and CASCs. If you are not a charity you will not be able to register as a 'Not-for-Profit' organisation, and will have to register as a Sole-trader instead.

Fundraising appeals

It is possible to raise a lot of money with a well thought-out fundraising appeal, and it can be useful to combine this with other fundraising activities. For example, if you organise some fundraising events such as a music night, a pub quiz, or a sponsored walk, you will send out a clear message to your supporters that you are aiming to raise a lot of money. You may then receive some individual donations from people who cannot attend your events. If you combine this with a well worded appeal you will probably get more donations.

A good appeal will give clear information about why you need the money, what you will use it for, and how people can make donations. For example:

- ♦ Our monthly running costs for room hire, refreshments and transport are £160. We are asking 80 people to make a monthly donation of £5 by standing order to cover these costs. We can then concentrate on providing fun, interesting and stimulating activities for the children.
- ♦ Each meal provided by our Meals on Wheels service costs £6.50 (for the ingredients, kitchen facilities and transport costs). A donation of £52 would provide an elderly person with a hot meal twice a week for 3 months.
- ♦ The cost of redecorating our community room is £1,500. We plan to do the work in November so the room is ready for the children's Christmas party and pensioners' Christmas lunch in December. We have already raised £900 during

⁷ <http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/service/information-about-alternative-funding-models/>

⁸ <http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/service/information-about-gift-aid>

⁹ <http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/service/information-about-alternative-funding-models/>

¹⁰ <http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/service/fundraising-ideas-and-information/>

the year at our fetes, jumble sales and bingo nights, and are asking for donations to make up the difference. We really appreciate all donations - please give whatever you can.

You could send your appeal to members and supporters by post or email, distribute flyers at events, or get it published in local newsletters, newspapers or on the local radio.

Pledge fundraising

Pledge fundraising is when you ask people to make a promise of a donation, and you collect this donation at a later date.

This kind of fundraising is for a specific appeal or project, with a set target amount you want to raise. Generally, pledges are made so that donations are only actually collected once you are sure you will collect as much as you need. So, if you need £2,000 to buy a new minibus, there's no point in anyone making a donation until you have commitment from enough people to know that you will be able to buy the minibus. Only then do you actually collect money.

To do this, you could use **pledge cards or forms**. People use these to write down their contact details and the amount of money they pledge to the group or project. They then hand this in to you, and you can contact them to ask for their donation once you have received enough pledges.

It is important that you clearly state what the money is for, and that it will only be used for that purpose, e.g. buying a minibus. You can include wording to allow you to receive the donation even if you don't reach your target, by saying that the donation will be used for a similar purpose unless the donor declares otherwise - i.e. they do not want to donate to you group unless you use their donation to buy a minibus.

When collecting people's contact information:

- ♦ keep them safe and secure, in line with the Data Protection Act
- ♦ Make it clear why you are collecting this information (e.g. so that you can contact them in future for them to make a donation)
- ♦ only ask for details you actually need
- ♦ get rid of the details once they are no longer needed
- ♦ don't pass the information on to any other organisation

Crowdfunding¹¹ is a form of pledge fundraising, but via the internet. There are websites where your group can set up a crowdfunding page, and collect pledges of donations from people online.

It's a good idea to have a few target contacts for this kind of fundraising - people you know who will: a) have the money to donate; b) be sympathetic to your cause.

Remember that people tend to donate to projects and groups that they are familiar with and they recognise, or are located in their local communities.

¹¹ <http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/service/information-about-alternative-funding-models/>

Applying for grants or awards

This involves writing convincing applications to grant making trusts, your local council, businesses, or the lottery. Although this may appear to be the easy option, it can be very time consuming, as you will need to:

- ♦ do some initial research to find suitable organisations to apply to
- ♦ collect information about your group and activities for the applications
- ♦ prepare budgets
- ♦ plan ahead as many funders consider applications on a 3 monthly or 6 monthly cycle.

For more help with applying for funding, look at our information on *Planning a funding application*, *Writing a funding application*, *Fundraising from trusts* and *Fundraising from local businesses*.

Organising fundraising events

It is possible to raise significant amounts of money through sponsored events, fetes, fayres, or social activities such as quiz nights or musical performances. Some groups have raised many thousands of pounds by organising a series of well-planned events. However, it is also possible to lose money if an event is badly organised or not publicised effectively. Look at our *Event planning checklist* to get you started.

There are so many different types of events that you could organise, that it is worth considering whether you want to use a tried and tested idea, or try something more imaginative to catch people's attention.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- ♦ Sponsored activities such as a walk, fun-run, litter pick, abseil, etc
- ♦ Doing something people will pay for, such as car washing or bag-packing at supermarkets
- ♦ An event you will charge entry for, such as a musical performance or karaoke night
- ♦ An activity people pay to take part in, with prizes, such as a quiz, race night or bingo
- ♦ A fair or fete with fun activities, a raffle, plus food and/or drink sales to make money.
- ♦ A jumble sale
- ♦ An unusual activity, such as a mystery tour or treasure hunt.