# INNOVATION IN FUNDRAISING

## SHARING LESSONS AND TALES OF SMALL CHARITIES' EXPERIENCES

Kathryn Welch

# "THOUGH SHE BE BUT LITTLE, SHE IS FIERCE"

*- William Shakespeare,*
*A Midsummer Night's Dream,*
*Act 3, Scene 2*

A tribute to the many small organisations featured in this report, who are achieving far greater impact than their limited size might suggest. Their energy and dedication is truly awe-inspiring.

# CONTENTS


INTRODUCTION 1

SECTION 1: INDIVIDUAL ACTION

**Chapter 1: DONOR CARE** 4
Case study: Scottish Opera 5
Case study: Stockholm's Blood donor centre 6
Case study: St John's Church, Edinburgh 7

**Chapter 2: EVENTS** 9
Case study: Comas 10
Case study: Scottish Love in Action 11
Case study: The Rock Trust 13
Case study: Church Fundraising 14

**Chapter 3: CREATING TANGIBLE GIVING OPPORTUNITIES** 16
Case study: Glasgow Women's Aid 17
Case study: Jane Austen's House Museum 18

**Chapter 4: CROWDFUNDING AND REWARD-BASED GIVING** 19
Case study: The Kiln Rooms 20
Case study: Joanne Garner Jewellery 21
Case study: Anonymous arts organisation, England 22
Case study: The Art Fund 23

SECTION 2: STRUCTURAL CHANGE

**Chapter 5: MICRO-GRANTING AND COMMUNITY GIVING** 26
Case study: The Soup movement 27
Case study: The Funding Network 28
Case study: The Awesome Foundation 29

**Chapter 6: MATCHMAKING AND NETWORKING** 31
Case study: Venture Trust and the Guardian 32
Case study: Shelter from the Storm 33
Case study: The Media Trust 34
Casre study: Small Charities Coalition 35

**Chapter 7: COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION** 37
Case study: Aberlour and The Lens 38
Case study: A shared charity resource hub 39
Case study: Stirling Tool Shed 40

Concluding thoughts 41
Credits and thanks 42
Further reading 43

# INTRODUCTION

## KATHRYN WEICH

In the autumn of 2015 I attended an events fundraising seminar at a major conference. The speaker leading the session was excellent, their event had clearly been a huge success, and they shared the learning from their activity generously and freely. Yet I left that session feeling rather less inspired than I might have expected. The speaker that day represented a major, internationally-known organisation, with access to significant pool of contacts and resources that had contributed to their event's success. As such, the success they'd achieved was scarcely conceivable – let alone replicable - for the type of organisation I'd chosen to fundraise for.

That's not to say, of course, that there aren't significant challenges in fundraising for brand-name organisations, nor to suggest that particular seminar wasn't of interest and relevance to many. Rather, it's important to recognise that the challenges facing small charities are different to those faced by national or brand-name organisations, and that fundraising for the former is not simply a 'scaled down' version of the latter. Furthermore, my experience is that the fundraising stories of small organisations are less well-told, their experience shared less frequently, and their successes celebrated less widely across the sector.

***A recent study by TSB found that half of adults (52%) say they feel local charities play an important role in their community, yet only one in 10 (13%) people can name at least two local charities in their area, and only one in 10 (14%) help their local community by fundraising for local causes.***

The most common reason people gave for not donating to a local charity is not knowing enough about them (50%). In the same research, half (51%) of small local charities said that the high number of large national and international charities presents a challenge to their fundraising.

From my own time fundraising within small and medium-sized organisations, I knew there was a wealth of thoughtful, clever and inspiring activity being championed by my colleagues across the sector. I knew too, that sharing the lessons we've learned from our fundraising practice had significant potential – in helping us all to progress further, faster and more effectively than we might individually, and in conserving and prioritising our resources for greatest impact. As such, the rationale for this report emerged: ***to find, collate and share experiences of innovation in fundraising, with the aim of sharing learning across the sector.***

In developing the fundraising strategy for my own organisation, I want to know what's going on in the sector - who's tried new things, what they've learnt, what's working and - vitally - what's not. I want the nuts and bolts of brave fundraising practice to give me the best opportunity of working out whether something new is going to work in the context of my own organisation. They must be relatively easy to manage within a fundraising team of not-quite-two people, have limited set up costs, and not rely on access to an enormous database of donors who will give at the drop of a hat. Most importantly, of course, there must be a pretty good likelihood of success: more money, more contacts, more profile, more influence.

If that sounds broadly like your situation too – then this report is for you. Over the past eighteen months I've collected what is essentially a collection of conversations. I've asked what, why, how much and what-on-earth-were-you-thinking. I've collected stories of failure, overwhelming success, surprising turns of events, and unforeseen consequences. They've been eye opening, insightful and honest. I hope the following stories offer inspiration, encouragement, and the odd words of wisdom.

## THEY'RE STORIES FROM THE FRONTLINE OF FUNDRAISING, WARTS AND ALL.


## A FEW WORDS OF THANKS

My unmitigated and wholehearted thanks to the many fundraisers and organisations who've allowed their tales to be told within these pages. It is only thanks to their honesty, their thoughtfulness and, most of all, their commitment to raising more money for the organisations they unfailingly care deeply about that this report exists at all. If this report has taught me anything at all, it is that in their (our!) hands, the future of fundraising looks very promising indeed.

Kathryn Welch

# SECTION 1: INDIVIDUAL ACTION

The research for this project took the form of many hours of interviews, informal conversations, telephone calls and cups of coffee with individuals and organisations all over the UK (and a few beyond). My intention was to gather the best of replicable fundraising by small organisations – those light on resource and big on impact. These ideas are gathered, collated and shared here as part one of this report.

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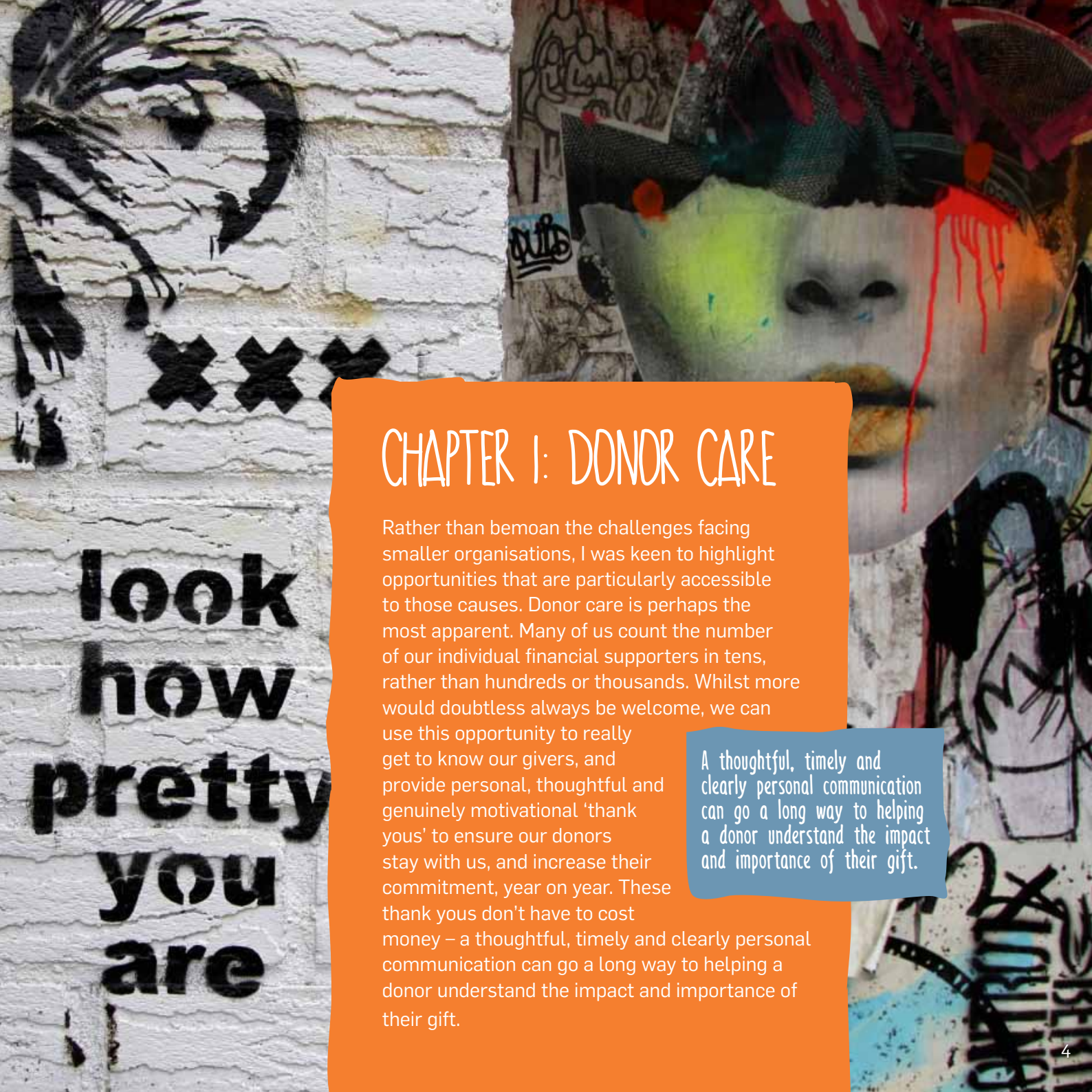
Throughout those conversations, we inevitably strayed into reflections on the funding challenges that face even the brightest and most innovative of organisations. Some of these challenges – the cuts in funding (especially from the public sector), the recent damage to the reputation of fundraising, the increasing need to tender for projects on a 'piecemeal' basis – will be familiar to many and are outside the remit of this report.

Others challenges, however, related to issues such as lack of public awareness of small charities, struggles with the costs of engaging with the media and / or individual givers, and the perceived 'easier ride' associated with fundraising for cute, fluffy, or generally appealing causes. These issues are tricky, certainly, but are perhaps less entrenched - and less political – than those in the first category. As such, the second part of this report gathers examples of innovative practice in tackling these issues – giving a voice to less well known causes, bringing local people together to support local projects, and sharing power a little more equitably across the sector. These sorts of projects represent a real opportunity for influencing the future of the sector, and I encourage you to seek them out, give them ago, lobby for more of them or, indeed, found your own.




# CHAPTER 1: DONOR CARE

Rather than bemoan the challenges facing smaller organisations, I was keen to highlight opportunities that are particularly accessible to those causes. Donor care is perhaps the most apparent. Many of us count the number of our individual financial supporters in tens, rather than hundreds or thousands. Whilst more would doubtless always be welcome, we can use this opportunity to really get to know our givers, and provide personal, thoughtful and genuinely motivational 'thank yous' to ensure our donors stay with us, and increase their commitment, year on year. These thank yous don't have to cost money – a thoughtful, timely and clearly personal communication can go a long way to helping a donor understand the impact and importance of their gift.

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# CASE STUDY: SCOTTISH OPERA

They are special and thoughtful, and created especially with the donor in mind; they remind the donor of the work they have supported and of Scottish Opera.

*Scottish Opera. KK Dundas*

**Scottish Opera use their costumes, resources and skills to create unique, money-can't-buy thank you presents for their donors.**

At Scottish Opera we are fortunate to have a range of creative artisan expertise to hand, in our costume, set construction, paint workshops and props making departments. This behind-the-scenes work is endlessly fascinating to our supporters. Occasionally we ask our technical teams to create bespoke gifts for major supporters so that they can own a 'money-can't-buy' memento of a production or project they have supported. This stewardship approach is successful for various reasons: the gifts are talking points that donors can discuss with their friends, in turn promoting the expert skills at Scottish Opera to others; they are relatively cheap to create, essentially staff time only; they are special and thoughtful, and created especially with the donor in mind; they remind the donor of the work they have supported and of Scottish Opera.

## FOR EXAMPLE:

**• We fashioned ladies' scarves from off-cuts of the material which formed the Queen of the Night's dress (The Magic Flute 2012). This dress was exceptional - hugely dramatic and with hundreds of LED lights sown into it; it is a dress that will be remembered.**

**• After our recent Theatre Royal capital campaign, our carpentry workshops created fountain and ballpoint pens for major donors, using the same birch timber cladding used by our joiners on the Theatre Royal interiors and presented in leather pouches, using the commissioned 'Theatre Royal Claret' leather which lines the staircase interior.**

**• Following our recent new commission, The Devil Inside, we are creating mini-versions of the score especially for supporters of the new piece, to be hand signed by composer and librettist, Stuart MacRae and Louise Welsh.**

# CASE STUDY: STOCKHOLM'S BLOOD DONOR CENTRE

**People who donate blood at Stockholm's Blood donor centre receive a 'thank you' text when they give blood, and get a second message when their blood makes it into somebody else's veins. The messages are a huge hit on social media, and have attracted significant press coverage too.**

*Twitter feedback on Blodcentralen Stockholm's SMS thank yous*

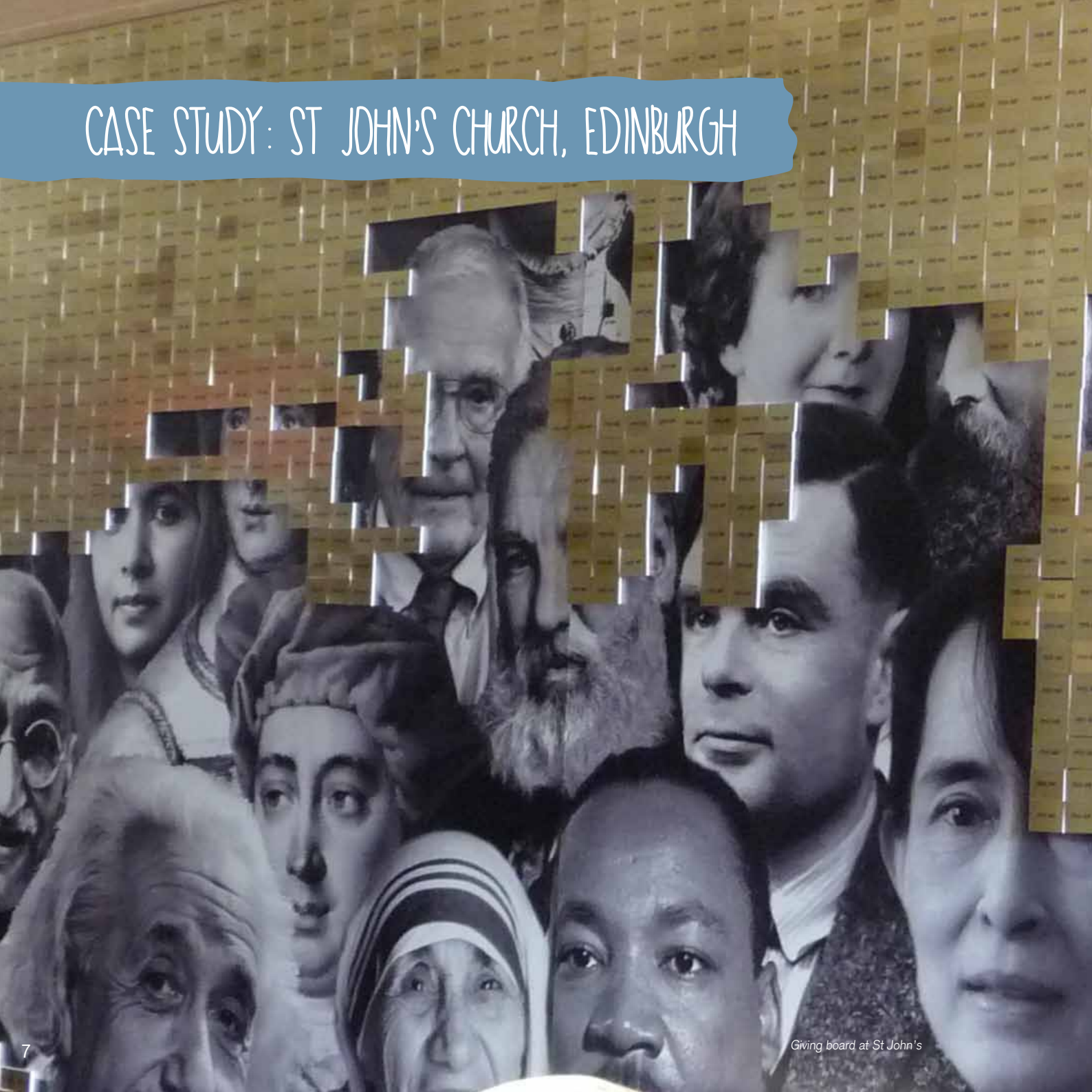
We try hard to keep our blood donors active and have found a great appreciation of our feedback SMS. The first 'thank you SMS' was sent in Stockholm in September 2010 and so far we have sent 360,000 thank you SMS's. At the present they are used by at least one other county (Dalarna) and several other regions in Sweden are about to start using them.

The system is based on the unique number of the blood bag, which is connected in our system to the donor. A SMS will be sent to the donor the same day as the system registers that the bag of erythrocytes is being used for transfusion. In this way, we thank the donor for saving a life. This will also remind the donor, between donations, of their identity as a blood donor and their altruistic participation in society. We have found that the donors share the picture of their thank you SMS on social media, thus spreading the positive message of blood donation to new groups.

Above all we believe it makes our donors come back to us, and donate again.

At the present, we do not have any research or publications on how the implementation of the thank you SMS has influenced the donor loyalty, although we have a distinct impression of that this is the case. We get a lot of visiblity in social media and traditional media thanks to the SMS. But above all we believe it makes our donors come back to us, and donate again**.** It's a great feeling to know you made such a big difference and maybe even saved someone else's life.

# CASE STUDY: ST JOHN'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH



*Giving board at St John's*

**As well as thanking donors appropriately, sometimes the key to success is simply taking time to understand who your prospective donors are, and creating a giving opportunity that aligns with their interest:**

St. John's is based in the heart of Edinburgh, part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. As a result, many of our visitors are from other countries. The majority come to admire our beautiful interior and architecture. Their relationship with St. John's is fleeting; they leave having taken a photograph, or perhaps having bought a small souvenir. Our plan was to create an activity that would appeal to the many thousands of visitors St. John's receives annually. In particular, the aim was to break down the current barriers we face to communicating with, building relationships with and fundraising from new audiences.

Our members were keen to have something that would show the progress of our appeal. We also wanted something visually striking and simple to understand. However, rather than a thermometer, our aim was to produce a visual that had a strong element of participation.

We created an interactive board, featuring forty faces who 'changed the world'. It was designed to encourage engagement with new audiences, raising financial support for our appeal and building awareness of our outreach and social justice work. The finished interactive board is 4m by 2m. It has a striking black and white visual of the forty faces gathered together. The entire board is covered with 15,000 small, 'gold', magnetic bricks with the motto 'peel me'. Visitors are encouraged to pay £1 per brick to reveal the faces they like.

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The interactive board has helped us reach out to those outside our usual circles and congregation. It engages a wide audience of people and addresses some of the myths, uncertainties and concerns some may have about church. Financially, the board is raising an average of £100 per week from visitors; over £2,000 since it was unveiled earlier this year.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- **What resources does your organisation already have?**
- **How could you give donors an extra insight into your work?**
- **What would really excite your supporters?**
- **What level are your donors able to give at? How might you tailor your ask to their circumstances?**

# CHAPTER 2: EVENTS

When it comes to running successful fundraising events, smaller organisations frequently face challenges related to a smaller network of supporters, lack of access to corporate sponsors, and prohibitive costs associated with running a large-scale or high profile event. My own experience as a fundraiser highlighted that fundraising event 'success stories' tend to showcase the work of very large or high profile organisations, whose networks and resources enable them to run hugely successful events that are, nevertheless, very difficult for smaller organisations to emulate. The examples of Comas and SLA in this chapter highlight significant events-based successes of two small but mighty organisations, whilst a competition hosted by Ecclesiastical showcases some practical and manageable fundraising events that are easily-replicable outside the church sector and were, I felt, deserving of a wider audience.

# CASE STUDY: COMAS

**Edinburgh-based Comas is a social innovation charity using community development to help people find the solutions they need.**

Our biggest challenge for Comas is that our own communities are financially poor, so no matter how much effort we put into a fundraiser or how well we do it, available cash from them is limited, and in any case we want to make them better off, not take money from them. Even when community members do a sponsored event their own networks are also poor. Yet when we try to do activities for a broader appeal to a wider public, people's response is that they haven't heard of us, so they won't support us.

Our approach at present is to start with an idea and do it small, to grab the 'territory' so that we can build it year on year, and to have maybe 5 or 6 events that are then ours to run annually. Each year, the event itself can get better and bigger – and raise more money – without it being necessary to know what charity is behind it. People participate because of their interest in the event, not their interest in the charity (although I feel a bit sad about that!) So this year we did two events – MSP Masterchef, and the Comas Zombie Chase. Both events we just about got away with by the skin of our teeth (in terms of our skill and the time to invest in it), but people who came along really enjoyed them and their feedback will become the marketing material for repeating the events next year, along with evidence for a pitch to potential sponsors. We did of course try to get sponsors the first year, with no result. But we decided that doing nothing was not an option, so we just ran these events with no budget and our imaginations.

> It may seem self-defeating, but the smaller an organisation, the harder it is to involve and communicate with a wider network of people interested in helping us.

This means we are really just trying to run events like a commercial enterprise, without necessarily trying to promote our charity as the main reason to participate. However, as a small charity we can't always make things super-glossy and we do need people's 'forgiveness' to help them enjoy giving money to something a bit amateurish, by knowing 'it is for charity'. Our Zombie Chase, for example, was clearly not what some parents had expected – they obviously thought it would be done up with special effects and thrills. But the parents who sat down to watch their kids run round and round chased by zombies, screaming and laughing their heads off, really appreciated it and had a good time. Of course, we learned a lot and will do it better next year. We couldn't get the costs sponsored and so we had to invest in tents etc which came off the fundraising total. But, we are now the Edinburgh charity that does a Halloween zombie chase. The territory is hopefully ours. And hopefully the funds raised year on year will grow.

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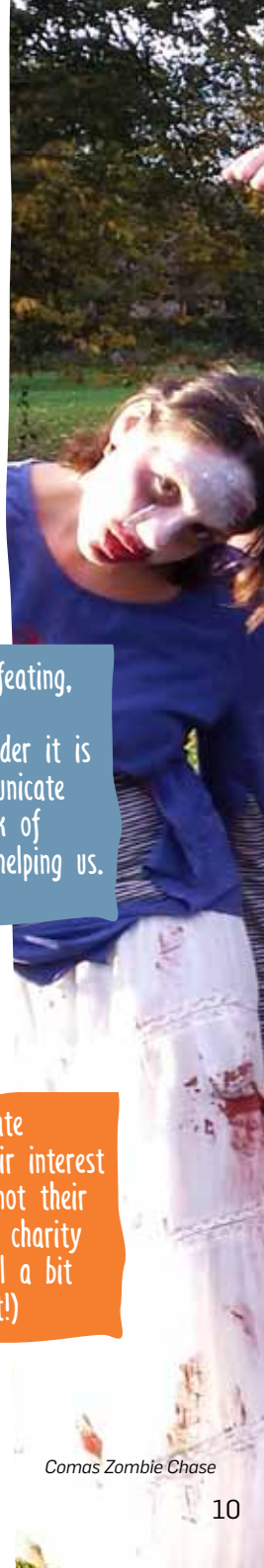

*Comas Zombie Chase*

# CASE STUDY: SCOTTISH LOVE IN ACTION

**Scottish Love in Action – SLA – is an Edinburgh-based charity that transforms the lives of destitute children in India. They do this by funding a children's home and school in south east India, enabling the children they support to live independent, poverty-free lives. In Scotland, the entirety of the charity's operations is run by a staff team of two, supplemented by the efforts of a huge network of volunteers. SLA raises over £400,000 each year, primarily through a combination of individual donations and a successful events fundraising strategy:**

*"Our spectacular Fireworks Extravaganza, with over 4,000 paying guests, and another sold out Ladies' Cinema Night at the Dominion Cinema were highlights of this year's fundraising efforts".*

SLA's Ladies' Cinema Night – now in its 9th year – raises c.£4,000 for the charity each year. Tickets for the event, held in one of Edinburgh's loveliest cinemas, are sold via a network of 15 or so volunteers as well as online through SLA's website. Volunteer ticket sellers are typically well connected within the target demographic (mostly women with primary-age children), and ticket sales are overseen by a volunteer co-ordinator who liaises directly with the SLA staff. Held once per year (in February / early March, to coincide with Valentine's Day), the event has become a regular date in the diary for many attendees. As well as a fun evening of film, fizz and themed canapés, attendees are given a brief presentation about SLA, sometimes being asked to participate in a text donation for a particular project or regular donation, and go away with a real understanding of the impact of SLA's work. As such, the event is important in terms of donor development, as well as generating healthy income in its own right.

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Around the time of the launch of the Ladies' Cinema Night, SLA also trialled a 'guys' evening' of comedy and curry. Whilst this concept worked well for those who attended, the event was not championed by a core group of ticket sellers in the same way as the Ladies' Night. As a result, ticket sales were slower and the event has not become established in the same way.

SLA's annual Fireworks Extravaganza is by far its biggest event of the year. 2,500 guests attend each of 2 shows – held on the closest Sunday to bonfire night, raising close to £20,000. The event was developed 6 years ago following an extensive feasibility study, and is only possible thanks to the support of a local school for the use of their grounds and stadium. The event also relies on a huge volunteer input – some 150 volunteers help out on the day, and many more are involved throughout the planning stages.

SLA believes that the key factor in the popularity of the Fireworks Extravaganza is that people are actively looking for a fireworks show at that time of year – SLA are filling a clear gap in the market and demand for the event is already established. As such, attendees are primarily attracted to the event itself, rather than attending in support of SLA, although the income generated is vital for the charity.

The event also gives SLA an opportunity to send information on their cause to attendees, produce a souvenir programme, and sometimes run a text donation campaign on the night. The event is also a vital source of new contacts for the charity, although they recognise that many event attendees will not go on to support SLA in other ways. Vitally, the event offers an appealing opportunity for volunteers, many of whom do look to increase their (financial or other) commitment over the longer term.

*"SLA is extremely lucky to have a tight-knit core of long-serving Trustees, Staff and Volunteers, many of whom have been lending their support and guidance since our beginnings in 2000".*

Last year, SLA looked to launch a second major event in their annual calendar. After conducting a feasibility study and securing support from key contacts, a day-long festival of literature was identified as a prospective option, and tickets went on sale in early 2015. It later became apparent that Edinburgh is a crowded marketplace in terms of cultural activity, and an aspiration to solely sell tickets online proved less effective than SLA's traditional approach of using personal networks of ticket sellers and champions. Although tickets for the event sold well enough to cover its costs, the decision was taken not to go ahead with the festival. Running successful fundraising events is not easy, even for a charity with as established a track record as SLA!

SLA have identified two factors in developing a successful fundraising event:

1. **The event should meet an established need for the attendees. Like the fireworks extravaganza, it should align with something that people want to do anyway, so that demand is already in place.**
2. **Events should utilise help from volunteers wherever possible, especially for smaller scale events. This makes the events much more manageable for a small organisation, and has the added benefit of providing a development opportunity for some of the charity's supporters.**

SLA is extremely lucky to have a tight-knit core of long-serving Trustees, Staff and Volunteers, many of whom have been lending their support and guidance since our beginnings in 2000.

Vitally, the event offers an appealing opportunity for volunteers, many of whom do look to increase their (financial or other) commitment over the longer term.

*SLA's Fireworks Extravaganza*

# CASE STUDY: THE ROCK TRUST

The Rock Trust have organised a postcard art exhibition and auction in Edinburgh every two years since 2007, hosted in venues including the Traverse Theatre, Castle Fine Art on Multrees Walk, and Summerhall. Each year, up to 250 exclusive pieces of postcard-sized artwork are exhibited, donated by artists from Edinburgh, Scotland the UK and even further afield. Over the years, postcards have been donated by artists such as Callum Innes, John Byrne, Alexander Miller, Peter Howsen, Stephen Mangan and Kate Downie.

This event forms one of the Rock Trust's biggest fundraising events. The postcards are displayed publically and in an online gallery, where members of the public pick their favourite and make a bid before closing time. When the exhibition closes, the postcards are awarded to those making the highest bid, with the donations typically totalling around £12,000.

The exhibition also plays an important role in raising awareness about the Rock Trust and its work supporting young homeless people. The postcard auction has become well known across Edinburgh, and the calibre of artists involved attracts art-lovers who may be new to the work of the Rock Trust. Vitally, the event is relatively low-cost to run, although significant time is invested in contacting artists to secure their support. The long-running nature of the event has been important in building awareness and ongoing support, and many artists – and bidders - have been involved year after year.

# CASE STUDY: CHURCH FUNDRAISING

Ecclesiastical, a church insurance company (stick with me here...) run an annual competition to find and share excellent fundraising ideas.

*"We know that churches provide a unique and valuable focus for local communities, and are often at the heart of finding solutions for the challenges faced by their communities. This year, we would like to find those churches who work tirelessly every day to bring communities around them together*" - Ecclesiastical

As a fundraiser who's moved between the arts, youth work and education sector, I believe there's much to gain by sharing ideas across and between sectors. Churches typically have a local focus and a small but loyal group of 'supporters', making them not unlike many small charities in terms of their fundraising opportunities. The ideas that follow represent a few of those shortlisted in Ecclesiastical's 2015 competition, and more can be found via the links at the end of this report.

## ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY, - WORM CHARMING COMPETITION

In what is fast becoming a village tradition, on the second Saturday in June, hundreds of people gather on the village green, frantically jumping up and down, competing to be Champion Worm Charmer.

The competition is simple: teams of four pay £5 to rent for half an hour a patch of ground, three metres square, out of which they attempt to charm as many worms as possible.

Most use the traditional method of banging a fork stuck in the ground; the unlucky worms mistake the vibrations for a mole, and make their way to the surface, where they are caught in a jar to be counted by the judges.

The whole community gets involved, including schools, businesses, and youth groups. A wildlife officer is on hand to look after the worms' welfare, and every worm is put back once the sun has gone down and the birds have gone to roost.

Before then, the worming committee will have awarded the two trophies: one for the most worms caught, and one for "Big Jim" — the fattest, juiciest worm caught on the day.

The Wigan Warriors Rugby League captain, Sean O'Loughlin, came along to last summer's event with his family. The church reports: "*Despite possibly being the strongest and fittest contestant on the field, unfortunately he was beaten by an eight- and an 11-year-old.*"

## ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, CHARDSTOCK - PAPER PLANE COMPETITION

St Andrew's, Chardstock, in Devon, had been awarded a grant for essential repair work, but the Parish Church Council needed to raise an extra £30,000 to cover its share of the costs.

The organisers had the idea of making the most of their church building, and, in particular, its high ceilings and 22-metre-long aisle, from the chancel steps to the back of the bell-tower.

And so the idea of 'The Great Chardstock Paper Plane Competition' was born.

During the Chardstock street fair, people were invited to come inside the church and have a go. The interest that the event generated was overwhelming. "*We had over 140 contestants,*" one of the organisers, Tim Purrett, says. "*And many came back time after time.*"

Most contestants made streamlined aerodynamic planes; a few simply crushed their paper into a ball and threw it. Every entry was valid, as long as it was from a single piece of A4 paper. Some planes faltered or hit columns; some even flew backwards.

"*Our winning plane flew an incredible 18.2 metres down the length of the aisle, then hit the bell-tower screen,*" Mr Purrett says. All through the day, there were spectators watching from the sidelines, or the "airfield" as it became known.

"*What is even better is that many said they would be coming back next year to try and better their previous throws,*" Mr Purrett says.

## ST PAUL'S CHURCH IN WALTON-IN-GORDANO - GREAT MOUSE HUNT

In 2014, St Paul's, Walton-in-Gordano, in North Somerset, urgently needed to raise funds to pay the next year's bills.

'CM' ('church mouse') is the knitted mascot of St Paul's, and spearheads much of its fundraising activity. The Great Mouse Hunt involved children from an infant school nearby, who were invited to colour in an outline of CM. St Paul's received 100 colourful mice, 24 of which were then hidden in gardens around the village.

Many families took part in the hunt, paying an entry fee to see how many mice they could find. There were also refreshments on sale, and stalls in the church to raise extra funds.

Thanks to CM, the Parish Council now has enough money to take it to the end of the year, and to pay the Parish Share for 2016, too.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- **What's more important - raising money or raising awareness?**
- **Will your event be linked to your cause? If not, how will you ensure attendees know who you are?**
- **Is there an existing need /desire that your event could meet?**
- **How will you get people involved? Are you targeting new or existing supporters? If the former, how will you reach them?**
- **What plans do you have to follow on from the event to keep attendees engaged?**

# CHAPTER 3: CREATING TANGIBLE GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

For many, unrestricted income is the holy grail of fundraising, and one of the main factors in choosing to pursue individual giving over, say, grant-based fundraising. In contrast, however, many individual donors prefer to understand exactly where and how their donation will be used, and tend to respond more positively to tangible giving opportunities. This chapter maps the challenges and opportunities faced by organisations who've given their individual givers a very clear sense of control over how their money is used.

# CASE STUDY: GLASGOW WOMEN'S AID

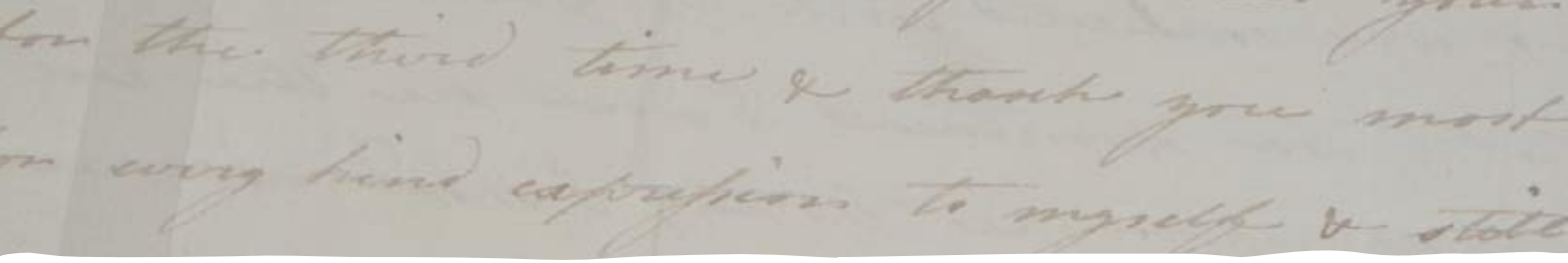
**At Glasgow Women's Aid, the role of fundraising is divided between support workers and those in HR and finance roles. Despite (or perhaps because of) this, they are able to generate significant income each year, including via their popular Amazon wish list.**

An Amazon wishlist – similar to a wedding registry and free to set up - was the brainchild of the charity's support workers who hoped that individual gifts might help them to furnish a refuge. Later, and with some significant local press coverage, the list was extended and now provides the organisation with a regular supply of Christmas presents for those supported by the Women's Aid, and materials for play therapy and art therapy.

Donations via the wishlist are sporadic, and seem to respond well to Facebook mentions. Glasgow Women's Aid have found it a good means of reminding existing supporters about their ongoing need for support, and for encouraging people to continue to give on a regular basis. They've also noticed an apparent trend of their appeals travelling by word-of-mouth; a number of workers at the same company donated at a similar time recently, and this has helped the charity proactively develop relationships with companies they wouldn't otherwise have known had an interest in the cause.

"*The Amazon wishlist is helpful in increasing awareness of the range of services we provide, and it's great for helping donors feel engaged with what they're giving. We don't always have the resources to do as much promotion with the list as we'd like to – but that's the nice thing about it; the more effort you put in, the more donations you get out*" – Susan Jack, Glasgow Women's Aid.

It's great for helping donors feel engaged with what they're giving.



# CASE STUDY: JANE AUSTEN'S HOUSE MUSEUM

**In 2015, Jane Austen's House Museum in Hampshire set out to raise £10,000 via a crowdfunding appeal on JustGiving. The money they hoped to raise would be used, alongside a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Collecting Cultures programme, to buy a rare letter written by Jane Austen's only sister Cassandra.**

The appeal was launched in April 2015, and closed at the end of July having reached the target for donations, through a combination of many small gifts, fundraising activities by groups connected with the Museum and with Jane Austen, and through a final large donation from an individual.

*"Keeping the Appeal in people's minds was a balancing act between keeping it top of mind and not talking incessantly about it to the exclusion of everything else that we do at the Museum. It was however clearly obvious what a difference Social Media made to the response of the public.*

*I think the very personal nature of the item we were trying to buy certainly made a difference and some of the responses to it were quite emotional. It certainly touched the heart of the final large donor. We know that it is the very personal attachment to Jane that makes items potentially successful for us to have a public appeal.*

I think the very personal nature of the item we were trying to buy certainly made a difference and some of the responses to it were quite emotional.

*If we had just had a grant to buy the letter I don't think the staff and volunteers at the museum would feel as connected to the item – it would just be something else in the collection - but having done the appeal we feel that we helped make it possible"*

As to learning points, the museum recommends training for everyone in organisation, to ensure that whoever takes a phone call from a donor is prepared and ready. Planning the campaign thoroughly in advance of the launch was felt to be very important, as was maintaining a regular presence via press releases and social media.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- **How important is unrestricted giving to your organisation? Are there opportunities for donors to directly support aspects of your work?**
- **What implications would that have for your ongoing individual giving? Can you plan to progress donors from one type of giving to another?**
- **What really motivates your donors? Would a tangible giving opportunity bring in new supporters, or lever additional gifts from your existing donors?**
- **How will you drive interest in the appeal? What implications does this have for social media, publicity and staff time?**

# CHAPTER 4: CROWDFUNDING AND REWARD-BASED GIVING

At the end of 2015, Suzanne Mawson and Ross Brown, two lecturers in Entrepreneurship, published *Crowded out: how crowdsourcing for startups turned into business as usual.* Looking at business start-ups of all kinds, the study highlighted both the potential and the limitations of crowdfunding:

*"Some of our findings confirmed what is already known – that it is filling the funding gap for young start-ups who no longer consider banks as a source of early-stage growth capital. Indeed, many start-ups are attracted to the speed with which they can raise funding and like the lack of strings attached. There are also important intangible benefits to firms from the process, such as... media exposure.*

*However, some other findings were unexpected. Contrary to the idea that crowdfunding is a transaction between firms and the 'crowd', seamlessly brought together through the internet, we found that deals were often driven by pre-existing networks of investors. Roughly around two-thirds of the crowdfunding campaigns in our study were 'pre-seeded' and backed by business angels (professional investors), with the crowd playing a 'supporting role'.*

*These professional investors are investing heavily in businesses that they know of and which are often located nearby to them; the crowd then 'herd' towards firms who obtain pre-seed funding. So in many cases, equity crowdfunding isn't really a new or 'alternative' source of funding, but rather a repackaging of more traditional start-up funding".*

This context is important to charities in helping consider whether a crowdfunding appeal should be considered as a means of generating additional income from an existing donor base, or as an opportunity to attract new donors. With this question in mind, a number of individuals and organisations shared their crowdfunding stories.

# CASE STUDY: THE KILN ROOMS

**The Kiln Rooms is an open access ceramics studio in Peckham Rye, London, providing professional development for members and a range of classes for all. In June 2015 the Kiln Rooms ran a project using the platform Crowdfunder to fund the set up costs of their studio, as well as to raise awareness and build an audience for their memberships and classes. Support from 89 backers helped the appeal raise £20,000 in 42 days, against their initial target of £6,000.**

The Kiln Rooms founders were aware that the nature of the ceramics community in London – a small and close knit group – would help them to quickly spread word of their project amongst their word of mouth contacts.

Good rewards were key – the founders were keen that the rewards be valuable, appealing items that offered good value for people's investment. As such, they decided to treat crowdfunding not as a philanthropic act, but took a business-minded, commercial approach – treating crowdfunding essentially as a way of encouraging customers to place pre-orders, get a good deal, and be in at the beginning of a facility they wanted to see in their community.

The Kiln Rooms estimate that they knew personally around 60% of those who supported the project, with the remaining 40% people who heard about the project through word of mouth and social media. The rewards appeared to be an important driver (relatively few people chose lower level donations with less valuable rewards), and the organisers estimate that less than 25% of the donations they received would have been secured without the incentives of the rewards.

The Kiln Rooms found that crowdfunding really forced them to get ahead of the game in terms of PR, website, social media – generally 'getting out there' – at a time in the organisation's development when it would otherwise have been easy to focus on the practicalities of the building work. Now they're up and running, they are positioned well for growth, with an established community of followers and attendees in their investors, right from the day they opened their doors.

*The Kiln Rooms*

*Joanne Garner*

# CASE STUDY: JOANNE GARNER JEWELLERY

**Joanne Garner is a jeweller based in Scotland. In 2015 she used crowdfunding platform Indiegogo to raise £4,530 from 116 backers (128% of her target) to take up a Masters place to study Jewellery and Metal at the prestigious Royal College of Art in London.**

I tried crowdfunding because basically, I had run out of options. I had spent quite some time on funding and scholarship applications without any success. Crowdfunding had been in the back of my mind as an option, and I knew that if I could really harness some of the power of my own creative networks then it just might work.

I think at first people supported the project because of the personal connection. My friends and family all know my track record and how hard I work so they were keen to help me make it happen. For a crowd funding campaign to work though you have to move beyond the people you know. I think people supported my campaign in part because of my reputation in Scotland and also because it's a worthwhile cause. Some people also said that it was because the understood the enormity of the opportunity and that they would have loved to have done it themselves.

> The rewards were crucial. They were the real success of my campaign.

The rewards were crucial. They were the real success of my campaign. I had beautiful hand made products by fellow crafts people from across Scotland. Some very established people got in touch wanting to donate things to me. It was incredible. Having all these people on board as donators of rewards also meant they were on board and sharing the campaign with all their social media networks so it broadened the net. Adding rewards in throughout the campaign also helped to keep the momentum going and keep some of the excitement up.

I'd definitely recommend telling as many people about your crowdfunding campaign before you launch as you can. Hitting the ground running is so important. It was an almost full time job for the 40 days I had it running. I wrote and sent out several press releases and was contacting people asking them to tweet about or share my campaign constantly. I think having a breadth and depth of people on your side and willing you on is a big help.

> It was an almost full time job for the 40 days I had it running.

Because I had so many amazing products on offer some people did start to treat it a bit like a shop and forget the cause. That was more of a nuisance than anything else though and thankfully didn't get in the way of the overall campaign.

The thing with crowdfunding is the work doesn't end at the end of the campaign, you have to post the rewards out and keep in touch with everyone if you want to make the most of the networks in future. It definitely helped a bit with profile raising and contacts. I've also had prospective RCA students come to me and say they saw my campaign and that it has inspired them to apply for their MA.

> I didn't realise quite how much people believed in me but they really really went for it. It was an incredible experience.

# CASE STUDY: ANONYMOUS ARTS ORGANISATION, ENGLAND

We were approached by [a crowdfunding platform] who promised a great deal of PR and promotion with their large database since we already had other plans to approach our donor pool for another project. However, they eventually expected us to do much more than agreed, and their slow donor stewardship lead to bad feeling with donors.

## MY TIPS WOULD BE:

- **Manage an appeal yourself so you can control the database and stewardship**
- **Be ready to launch a massive and continual social media campaign to keep the gifts coming in**
- **Really stop to consider whether you have a database large enough to support the endeavour**
- **Decide if this is the best use of your time, and/or if it achieves other benefits such as PR**

# CASE STUDY: THE ART FUND

**To provide an alternative perspective on what makes a crowdfunding campaign likely to succeed (or otherwise) Kerstin from the Art Fund shared her experience:**

*"Crowdfunding is inevitably a lot of work, so it's a waste of resource if not executed as part of a donor cultivation plan. It's about relationships, audience and profile... if you 'just need the money' there are probably easier ways to get it!"*

If you just need the money there are probably easier ways to get it!

## THE FOLLOWING FACTORS ARE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN:

- Great communicators, with regular time to commit to crowdfunding
- An approach that sees crowdfunding as part of an audience development plan, with a commitment to getting key messages out regularly.
- A project that appeal sto givers, ideally one which is very tangible and offers some opportunity for public involvement.
- Great rewards, which can help extend the audience beyond those who give for purely philanthropic reasons, and can tempt donors to give more.
- Preparation. A six week campaign is ideal, and it's vital that key messages and intended audiences are planned in advance. Make sure everyone in your organisation is aware of the campaign and sure of how to handle calls from donors!
- Think about the amounts requested (both the total goal and the level of individual rewards), and match them to the audience, so that each person's donation feels proportionate and sensible.

## AND A FEW WORDS OF CAUTION:

- Small or new organisations may struggle to establish the reach they need for a successful campaign. Crowdfunding is best considered as an opportunity to maximise gifts and connections from your existing contacts, not to build a network from scratch.

- Publically promoting a project via crowdfunding is a very public form of fundraising; akin to launching a social media page for the first time. You should be prepared that members of the public may get in touch to tell you things you weren't expecting, or may respond negatively to your project.

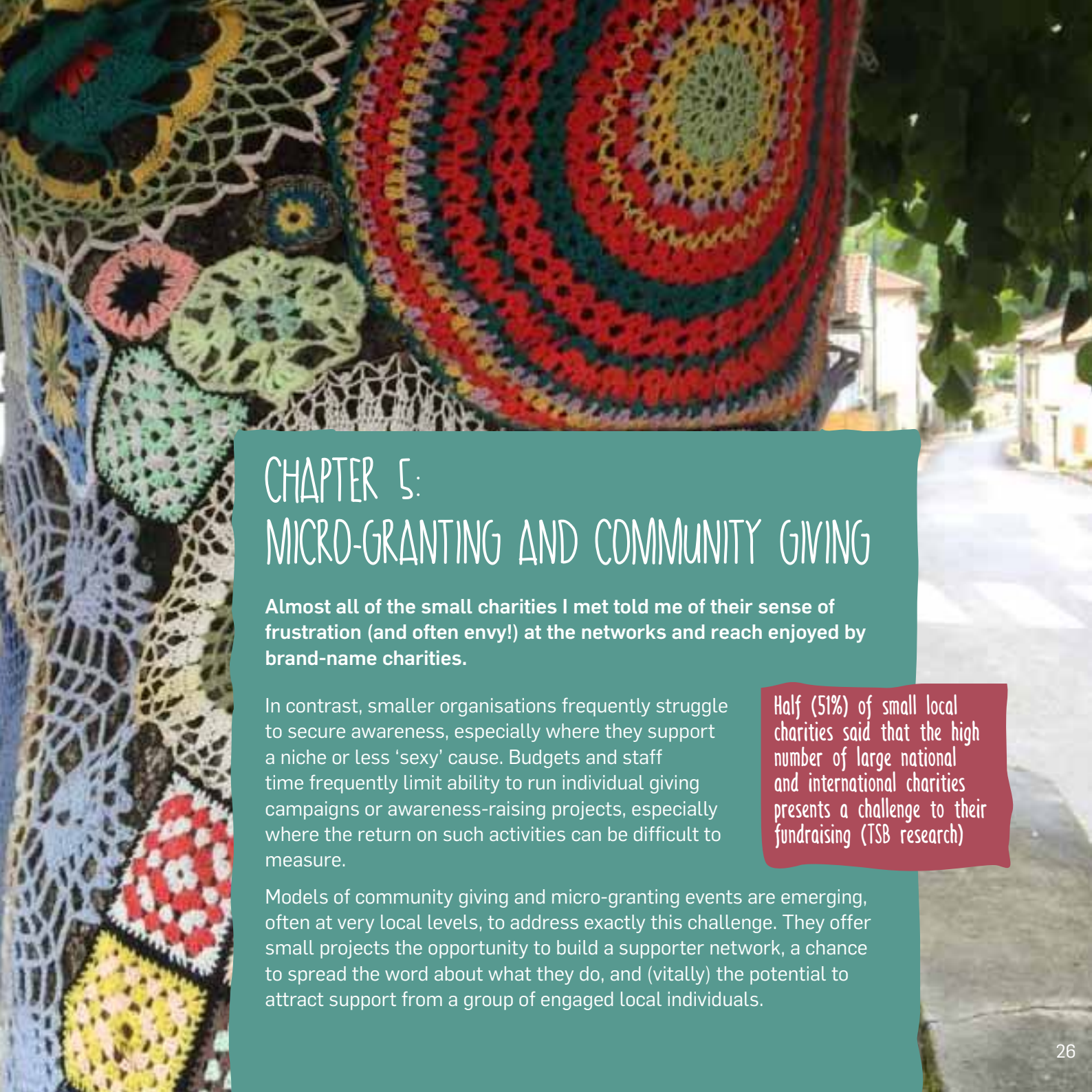
## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- **Who is likely to give? How can you match the donation requests and the total scale of the project to their ability to give?**
- **What rewards will you offer? How can they be used to encourage people to give, give again, or give more?**
- **What control will you have over donor records? What long term plans can you make to encourage their continued involvement in your organisation?**
- **How will you drive and maintain interest in your campaign?**

# SECTION 2: STRUCTURAL CHANGE

Over hours of discussion and hundreds of cups of coffee with the 20+ organisations and individuals who've contributed to this project, a number of structural issues emerged again and again. Such issues present challenges or obstacles to small organisations' fundraising that are difficult to tackle at an individual or organisational scale.

Since this project focused on smaller-scale charities with limited resources, it's natural that many organisations interviewed felt that they struggled to address deep-seated issues in the sector on an individual basis. As such, the second part of this project has become a manifesto for change, highlighting some innovating funding solutions that actively address the challenges facing small charities. This will be of interest to grant makers, sector bodies and community builders, but also to anyone with an entrepreneurial spirit and a determination to make an impact. Like the ideas in section 1, they're simple ideas that have typically been launched by an individual or organisation, and offer some replicable models and inspiration for making a real change in the sector.



# CHAPTER 5: MICRO-GRANTING AND COMMUNITY GIVING

**Almost all of the small charities I met told me of their sense of frustration (and often envy!) at the networks and reach enjoyed by brand-name charities.**

In contrast, smaller organisations frequently struggle to secure awareness, especially where they support a niche or less 'sexy' cause. Budgets and staff time frequently limit ability to run individual giving campaigns or awareness-raising projects, especially where the return on such activities can be difficult to measure.

Half (51%) of small local charities said that the high number of large national and international charities presents a challenge to their fundraising (TSB research)

Models of community giving and micro-granting events are emerging, often at very local levels, to address exactly this challenge. They offer small projects the opportunity to build a supporter network, a chance to spread the word about what they do, and (vitally) the potential to attract support from a group of engaged local individuals.

# CASE STUDY: THE SOUP MOVEMENT

Detroit Soup was founded in the Mexicantown neighbourhood of Detroit in February 2010. It emerged from a desire to empower and connect the community while exploring new art practices and creating opportunities for local creatives. Since then, Detroit Soup has raised more than $100,000 (£63,900) for community projects in the area, and the Soup concept has spread worldwide, with over 130 Soups registered at the time of writing.

The concept is simple; for a donation $5 (or £5) attendees receive soup, bread and a vote, and hear presentations from projects to improve their neighbourhood - ranging from art, social justice, social entrepreneurs, education, technology and more. Each presenter has four minutes to share their idea and answer questions from the audience. Attendees eat, talk, share resources, enjoy art and vote on the project they think benefits the city the most. At the end of the night, ballots are counted and the winning project goes home with all of the money raised to make their idea reality. Winners come back to a future Soup dinner to report their project's progress.

It emerged from a desire to empower and connect the community while exploring new art practices and creating opportunities for local creatives.

In Scotland, Edinburgh Soup was founded by Phil Bolger and Robert Peacock in 2015, and has so far funded a social innovation charity, a community café and social enterprise and a befriending service. Stirling Soup followed suit in May 2016, with diners choosing to donate £630 to Stirling Citizens for Sanctuary at the inaugural meeting.

*D.A.N.C.E inc, funded by Brightmoor Soup*

*The Funding Network*

# CASE STUDY: THE FUNDING NETWORK

**Charities with an income below £1 million make up 96.8% of the sector yet only share 20.4% of the income generated. The Funding Network (TFN) not only multiplies the impact of donations through collective giving but also works to increase the share these smaller organisations receive and enhance their ability to create change.**

Billing itself as "the friendly Dragons' Den for charity", the Funding Network specifically aims to support small-scale projects that are difficult to fund. A members' organisation for people who want to make a philanthropic impact, the Funding Network holds regular events to bring like-minded people together with a philanthropic purpose to support causes they care about. It gives people the opportunity to pool their time and resources to fund charitable projects that catalyse social change.

At a TFN event, each charity has up to 6 minutes to pitch and 6 minutes to take questions. This is then followed by TFN's signature live crowdfunding session, during which around 100 potential donors pledge funds – usually starting from around £100. The pledges are tracked live and often raise many thousands of pounds.

> The live events give charities the chance to pitch 'face to face' with a group of engaged, socially-minded people with the intention and the capacity to give.

Since its inception in 2002, The Funding Network has raised over £8 million for over 1,200 projects. The live events provide a social aspect for their membership, and give charities the chance to pitch 'face to face' with a group of engaged, socially-minded people with the intention and the capacity to give. Matched funding initiatives, pitches by celebrities and corporate donations give both parties the opportunity to get more from the events. A number of charities have used funding from the Funding Network to pay for 'proof of concept' of new initiatives that would be difficult to fund elsewhere, and some have been able to lever significant extra funding as a result.

## THE FUNDING NETWORK'S IMPACT REPORT FINDS THAT:

- **62% of funded projects report that TFN funding has enabled them to leverage additional funding from other sources.**
- **51% of TFN members continue to support projects and charities they meet through TFN**
- **67% of members support more small charities as a result of their involvement with TFN**

# CASE STUDY: THE AWESOME FOUNDATION

*Liverpool MakeFest, funded by the Awesome Foundation*

The Awesome Foundation is formed of 73 local chapters across the world. Each chapter is made up of 10 'micro-trustees' who each donate $100 per month (or its local equivalent – it's £50 in the UK) to make no-strings-attached grants to local projects. The trustees are social minded individuals, looking for ways to aggregate their giving and to find effective ways of supporting projects that are underserved by traditional philanthropy or arts funding.

> *Often, the process of applying for a grant or fellowship to fund a small, interesting project was long and laborious. It was much easier to get a lot of money from organisations than it was to get a small amount. Usually, grants were very mission-oriented and forced applicants to disguise their project in order to affiliate it with that mission.*
>
> *The foundation adopts an open and lightweight funding structure. It takes 10–15 minutes to complete an application form via the Awesome Foundation website, detailing your project, why it's awesome and how you would spend the money. And that's it. The foundation skips the arduous questionnaires and the legal and organisational checks required by traditional grant-making bodies, and simply choose a favourite applicant to fund each month.*
>
> - Random Acts of Awesome, the Ethos Paper, 2015

Like Soup, Awesome Foundation grantees are trusted to spend the money in the way that best suits their cause. The application process is quick and straightforward, the trustees open-minded as to the types of cause they'll support, and projects are valued for their ability to spread fun and happiness, as well as for their potential to address a social issue or local need.

In Boston, MA, artist Hansy Better Barraza created 'The Big Hammock' project with support from the Awesome Foundation:

*There is a rich cultural history of hammocks within the arts, as a woven net or fabric cloth, they are simple in gesture, form and execution. Situating a hammock within a public park can elevate the social implication of that object. The Big Hammock is intended to serve the community as a simple lounge space as well as a sculptural expression. The Big Hammock created new ways to interact with and admire the urban and historical setting, complementing the greenway as space of public leisure.*

In June 2016, the Liverpool Chapter of the Awesome Foundation funded Liverpool MakeFest: a festival celebrating all things 'makey' in the north-west, showcasing things people have made, projects people are working on, inventions, gadgets and hands-on activities including, coding, hacking workshops and demonstrations.

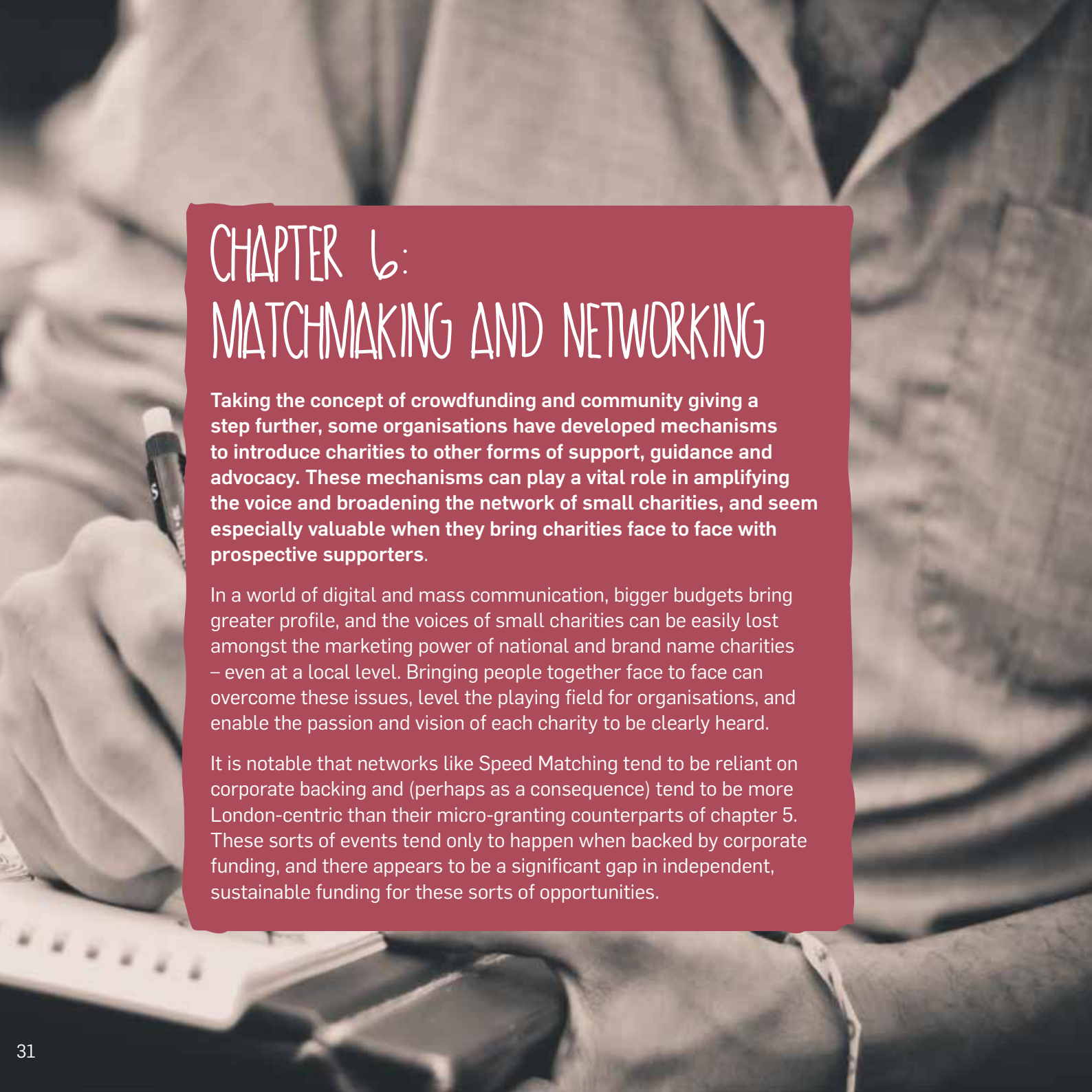
*It's a place to see how science, technology, engineering, arts and crafts are shaping our world... a place where science fiction meets science fact... a place to get you thinking and learning about cool stuff you could make yourself and maybe inspire a few budding young entrepreneurs!*

The trustees are social minded individuals, looking to find effective ways of supporting projects that are underserved by traditional philanthropy or arts funding.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- **How might individuals better connect with small local projects in their region?**
- **How might we bring individuals together to maximise and amplify the impact of their giving?**
- **How might small projects access flexible pots of funding to kickstart their ideas, without being unduly restrictive or admin-heavy?**
- **How can great ideas that answer these questions be replicated across the world?**

*The Big Hammock*



# CHAPTER 6: MATCHMAKING AND NETWORKING

**Taking the concept of crowdfunding and community giving a step further, some organisations have developed mechanisms to introduce charities to other forms of support, guidance and advocacy. These mechanisms can play a vital role in amplifying the voice and broadening the network of small charities, and seem especially valuable when they bring charities face to face with prospective supporters**.

In a world of digital and mass communication, bigger budgets bring greater profile, and the voices of small charities can be easily lost amongst the marketing power of national and brand name charities – even at a local level. Bringing people together face to face can overcome these issues, level the playing field for organisations, and enable the passion and vision of each charity to be clearly heard.

It is notable that networks like Speed Matching tend to be reliant on corporate backing and (perhaps as a consequence) tend to be more London-centric than their micro-granting counterparts of chapter 5. These sorts of events tend only to happen when backed by corporate funding, and there appears to be a significant gap in independent, sustainable funding for these sorts of opportunities.

# CASE STUDY: VENTURE TRUST AND THE GUARDIAN

**Shelter from the Storm and Venture Trust shared with me their examples of a significant piece of media coverage that was transformational in expanding their reach and bringing in new support. Both small charities with limited resources for PR and communications, articles in AA Gill's Times column and the Guardian Christmas Appeal, respectively, helped them reach significant numbers of new supporters.**

Venture Trust, a charity which runs personal development programmes for young people from difficult and disadvantaged backgrounds, was selected as one of the charity beneficiaries of the Guardian's Christmas Appeal. The Guardian and the BBC are unusual in providing a clear application process for charities seeking support, via their Christmas Appeal and the Lifeline Appeal, respectively. For Venture Trust, this was an opportunity to tell more complex stories about the individuals they work with, and to reach a wider national (and international) audience than would usually be possible.

These sorts of opportunities can help to create more equitable access to the press for charities of limited resources or niche appeal

These sorts of opportunities can help to create more equitable access to the press for charities of limited resources or niche appeal, and are valuable in offering a more in-depth opportunities to present complex stories – helping charities to navigate the risks of over simplification and headline-grabbing. Although Venture Trust saw limited success in translating one-off gifts into regular donations, a small number of significant donors and long-term relationships were secured.

*Slice of home: AA Gill at Shelter from the Storm, in King's Cross; right, with the Blonde and founders Sheila Scott and Louie Salvoni*

PHOTOGRAPHS: RICK PUSHINSKY

# Crumbs of comfort

AT A SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS, AA GILL FOUND ORDINARY PEOPLE PREPARED TO DO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY — AND HAD ONE OF THE YEAR'S MOST MEMORABLE MEALS

## CASE STUDY: SHELTER FROM THE STORM

*"Being quite stubborn, I get fed up of being encouraged to 'dumb down' our story of how we work and what difference we make, and wish that the general public was more tuned in to the 'harder to sell' issues. I think we need a better alliance with the mainstream media on providing the back story to charities, not just the cute, the quirky or the shocking" – Ruth Campbell, CEO of Comas*

Shelter from the Storm, a free shelter for homeless people in London, received £65,000 in direct donations following AA Gill's significant article about their work. This overwhelming success (for an organisation with just 3 members of staff) compares with a previous social media campaign by Shelter from the Storm, which encouraged Tweeters to sleep in an unusual place and take a selfie, making a £10 donation on JustGiving, which is enough to support a guest in the shelter for a night. The #Bedless campaign had a serious awareness message about the extent of homelessness, and raised a comparatively modest £2,500. The campaign was listed as one of JustGiving's 'Five best charity online campaigns of 2014', which in itself perhaps tells an important story about the financial impact of social media campaigns.

These sorts of opportunities can help to create more equitable access to the press for charities of limited resources or niche appeal

# CASE STUDY: THE MEDIA TRUST

The Media Trust's mission is to work with the media industry to empower charities and communities to have a voice and be heard. Within their remit of providing training and offering subsidised consultancy and film-making, the Trust offer a 'speed matching' service; free networking opportunities where representatives from not-for-profit organisations get to meet face-to-face with media professionals looking to volunteer their time. Operating much like a speed dating service, each volunteer spends 5 minutes with each charity before moving on, with volunteers and projects 'matched' via a checklist completed by both parties.

Designed to benefit organisations who struggle to find the budget, resource and / or expertise to manage their own own media, speed matching can help with projects as diverse as branding, press, web and film, as well as broader projects such as media strategy and guidelines. As well as offering direct content creation support, the Trust hopes the matching service helps to develop the internal skills within charities too, supporting their sustainability long after the volunteer may have moved on. These speed matching events are attended by hundreds of charities each year, frequently in London but also in Glasgow, Bristol, Manchester and other UK cities.

Much like Soup events, the Media Trust reports that charities benefit more widely than just finding a volunteer; the format of the evening essentially enables ideas and suggestions to be gathered over the course of the event – a phenomenon called 'crowdsourced expertise' by the Media Trust.

*Trustee Speed Recruiting*

*Speed matching*

# CASE STUDY: SMALL CHARITIES COALITION

The Small Charities Coalition has developed the speed matching concept to help small charities find new trustees, especially 'high calibre' professionals from world-class companies. Each event brings together 10-15 professionals with an interest in trusteeship, and a similar number of small charities. The prospective trustees aren't told in advance which charities will be present, with the Small Charities Coalition finding that it helps individuals come with a more open mind to the opportunities they'll be presented with. In particular, they find this approach helps to level the playing field for less 'sexy' causes, and can lead to meaningful connections being forged with projects that may never have been on an individual's radar.

*"When people can see the passion of the charity founders, they often connect with less obvious causes they wouldn't have expected to"* – The Small Charities Coalition.

These events report a very high 'match' rate, with 60-70% of people who attend going on to take up a trustee position, and very high satisfaction rating from trustees and charities alike.

However, the preparation and follow up associated with the events makes them relatively expensive to host. This has meant the events typically take place only when backed by a company, who value the opportunity to encourage employees to connect with local projects. Naturally, this poses limitations in terms of the pool of both charities and prospective trustees who benefit from these sorts of events.

This approach helps to level the playing field for less 'sexy' causes, and can lead to meaningful connections being forged with projects that may never have been on an individual's radar.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- **Which stakeholders are able to bring together charities and those who may offer support to them?**
- **How might these initiatives be sustainably funded and nationally-accessible?**
- **How might other national local media outlets replicate the example of the Guardian, and use their reach to provide opportunities to under-the-radar charities?**

# CHAPTER 7: COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION

**For artists and very small organisations, fundraising opportunities can be limited by access to physical resources – especially when it comes to events fundraising. Whilst some organisations are able to attract business sponsorship to cover the costs of running event for others, events such as community fairs and craft stalls underpin much local fundraising activity.**

For events that may generate a few hundred pounds in profit, costs of basics such as stall hire and tables and chairs can take a significant proportion of the income; even more so when larger costs such as security, lighting, PA systems and marquees may be involved.

The Gathering 2016 – the third sector conference hosted by SCVO – provided a forum for sharing ideas about how charities might work collaboratively to share resources and maximise the impact of fundraising events.

*The Lens*

# CASE STUDY: ABERLOUR AND THE LENS

**The Lens is a partnership between charities, grant makers, the Scottish Government and businesses. First developed at Aberlour Children's Charity, The Lens is designed to help create a culture of intrapreneurship and innovation by bringing together investment, competition and coaching to help charities improve their service delivery.**

I first came across The Lens back in December 2015 at an Aberlour event where, with support from The Lens, the charity brought together staff and service users from across the organisation, and invited them to pitch for funding to improve services. For the organisation, the event was an opportunity to hear from a wide range of voices from across their 700 or so staff, and to hear new perspectives from frontline and service delivery staff. For the pitchers, it was a chance to secure investment – set aside within Aberlour's budgeting – to make a real impact on the future of the organisation.

> We can all learn, perhaps, from the concept of inviting those on the edges of our projects to share their insights and ideas.

For smaller organisations – of course – this formal process of ideas gathering is less necessary; if you sit across the room from your only colleague you're unlikely to need to hold an event to gather their suggestions. But we can all learn, perhaps, from the concept of inviting those on the edges of our projects to share their insights and ideas. Whether from service users, customers, supporters or audience, being open to ideas from those outside our usual circle can be illuminating.

It will be worth, too, keeping an eye on The Lens as it develops and becomes more established. As it grows, there may well be opportunities for smaller organisations to become involved in a collaborative effort – sharing ideas between organisations, developing concepts together and perhaps even pitching competitively for investment in their ideas

# CASE STUDY: A SHARED CHARITY RESOURCE HUB

In February 2016 I convened a workshop at The Gathering – Scotland's largest event for charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations. Over 100 fundraisers attended this workshop to share ideas and discuss challenges, and much of their feedback has found its way into this report. One popular topic discussed the challenges fundraisers faced in events fundraising, where probative outlay was required in order to get small scale fundraising events off the ground:

> *"One thing that would help small charities is a 'hire' service to help people run events without high initial outlay. For example, we couldn't find any other organisation or scout troop able to lend us a marquee, we also had to hire a genny and lighting".*

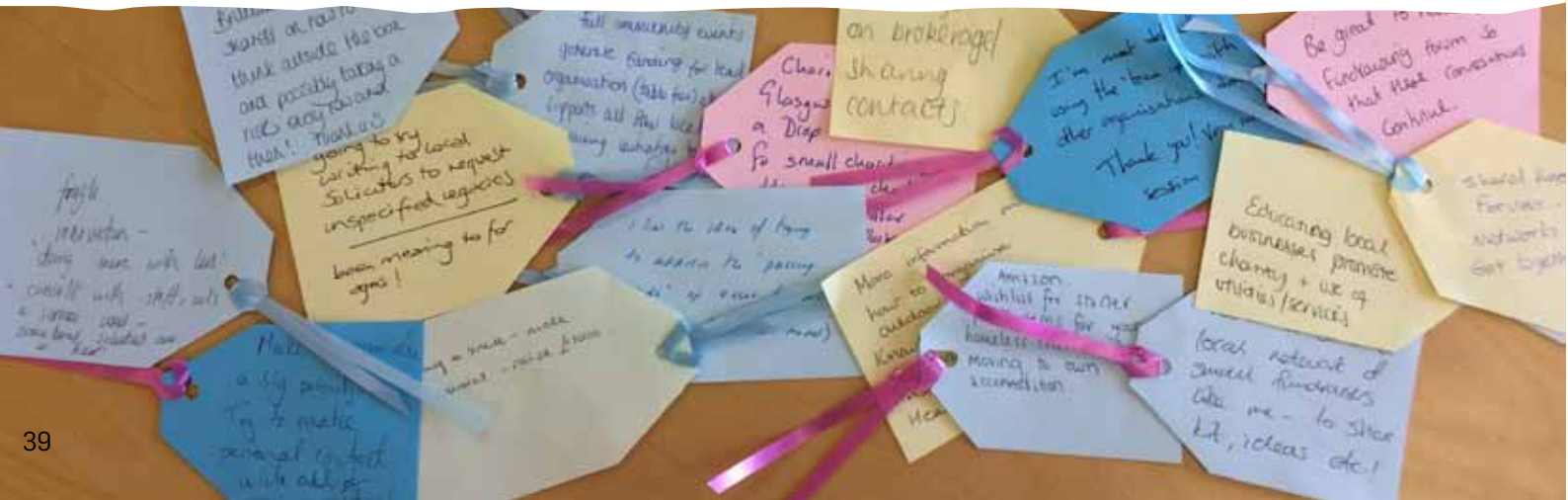
Unsurprisingly, fundraisers were also quick to highlight simple structural changes that would make a significant impact in overcoming these issues:

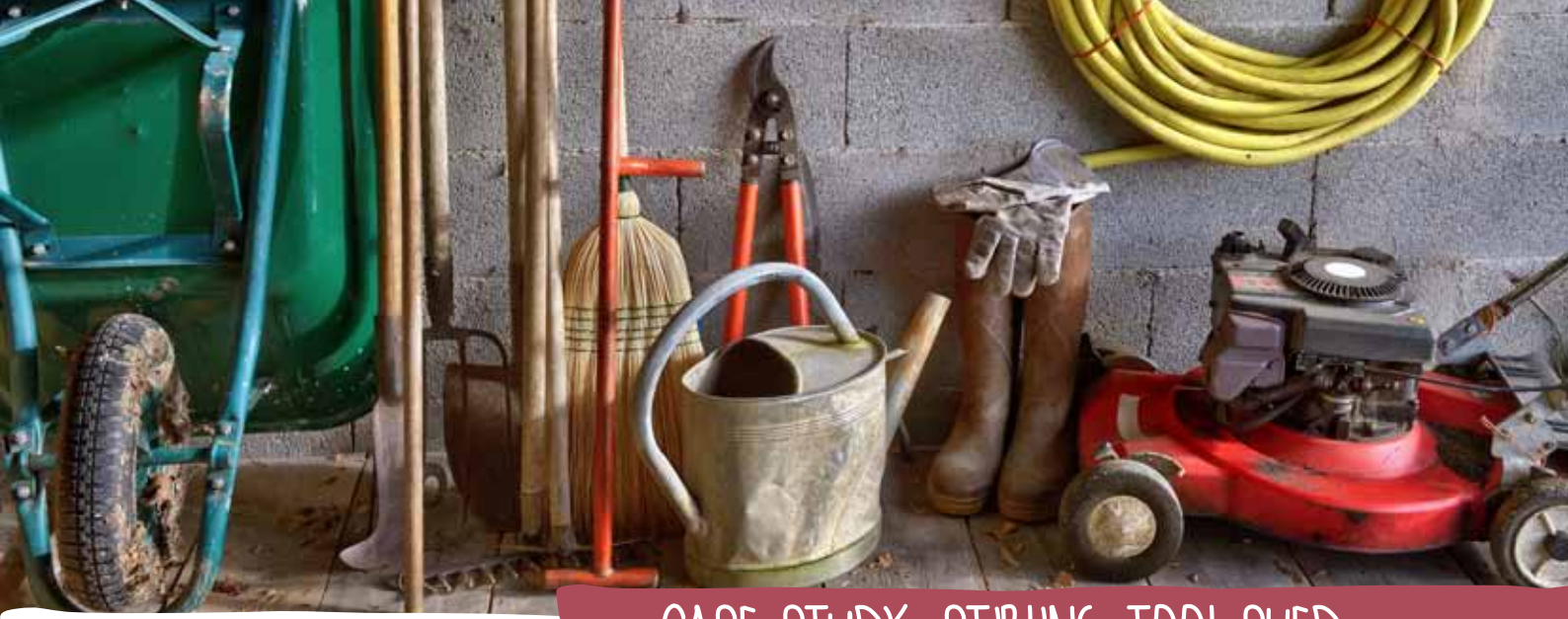
> *"If there was a funder who would invest, say, £10k in a small charity 'events kit' with everything needed to run a small event for say up to 500 people, then small charities would have fewer headaches and more profits".*

This type of investment has the potential to make a real impact, with disproportionately significant benefits for the smallest charities and individual artists:

> *"This would make the cost of running events cheaper, and therefore help you raise more money – or this access to resources might simply mean you can tackle more ambitious events than you currently are able to do".*

The establishment of Scotland's first Tool Libraries has the potential to offer a similar solution for charities, as addressed in the next case study.





# CASE STUDY: STIRLING TOOL SHED

The Tool Shed is a free community resource in Stirling, lending everything from drills to sewing machines, spades to food processors. The project is run by Transition Stirling, funded through the Climate Challenge Fund managed by Keep Scotland Beautiful. The Stirling Tool Library joins a network of similar tool libraries worldwide, and notably the Edinburgh Tool Library, which was the first of its kind in the UK.

Individuals and groups can sign up and access a library of tools and equipment for a range of activities including DIY, gardening and home hobbies. In addition to learning new skills, having fun and meeting new friends, the aspiration is that participants will be doing their bit for the environment by reducing waste and their carbon footprints.

To borrow tools, individuals simply become a member of the tool library, which is free, and are asked to pay a one-off £10 deposit the first time you borrow a tool. This sort of shared resource hub has significant potential for small charities, avoiding the costs associated with purchasing or hiring equipment for events, and thereby significantly increasing the fundraising potential of small-scale events.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- **What opportunities are there for charities and others to share physical (and other) resources?**
- **How might ideas and projects be 'crowd sourced' from other organisations, and from service users, donors and other interested parties?**

# CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The compilation of this report has genuinely been a joy. It's been a pleasure and privilege to meet so many inspiring individuals, discover a wealth of impactful and passionately-run projects, and to hear so many ideas for developing both organisations and the sector as a whole.

Inevitably, this project can only scratch the surface – I came away from each meeting with a purse full of business cards and a notebook crammed with suggestions for more people to meet. If there's one lesson I've learned, it is that fundraisers are unfailingly generous with their time, ideas and expertise, as well as being open to new ideas and keen to learn from the experiences of others. My mantra throughout this project has been that whilst none of us has all the answers, collectively we have a wealth of experience, ideas and expertise. Ideas that didn't take off at one organisation could transform another, whilst the stories of one organisation's struggles and failures could help another avoid potential pitfalls. I hope this report is the starting point for an ongoing series of conversations between fundraisers, and that the practice of sharing experiences helps many more organisations to spark an idea that goes on to enhance their own work.

I hope too that others across the sector may take from this report a wider understanding of the challenges and experiences unique to those fundraising within smaller organisations, and that those experiences are more widely recognised, discussed, championed and supported.

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| | |
|---|---|
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# FURTHER READING

Some further resources that may be useful:

**Chapter 1: Donor care**

- TSB research on local charities:
  http://www.tsb.co.uk/news-releases/your-local-charity-is-struggling-to-get-its-voice-heard/#
- NCVO almanac on trends in charitable giving, 2016:
  https://data.ncvo.org.uk/category/almanac/voluntary-sector/sector-overview/

**Chapter 2: Creating tangible giving opportunities**

- Glasgow Women's Aid Amazon wishlist:
  http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/registry/wishlist/?ie=UTF8&cid=A00IROZ0HFY5C

**Chapter 3: Crowdfunding and reward-based giving**

- 'Crowded out: how crowdsourcing for startups turned into business as usual', by Suzanne Mawson and Ross Brown:
  https://theconversation.com/crowded-out-how-crowdsourcing-for-startups-turned-into-business-as-usual-52029

**Chapter 4: Events**

- Resource packs from the shortlisted entries for Ecclesiastical's Church Fundraising Idea of the Year competition:
  http://www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/news-and-faqs/useful-information/fundraising/index.aspx

**Chapter 5: Micro-granting and community giving**

- How to set up your own Soup: http://detroitsoup.com/startasoup/
- A map of UK Soup events https://www.mapcustomizer.com/map/UK%20Soups
- The Funding Network – 10th anniversary impact report: https://issuu.com/eugenieharvey/docs/tfn_impactreport_final_web
- The Awesome Foundation: http://www.awesomefoundation.org/

**Chapter 6: Matchmaking and networking**

- BBC Charity Appeals: http://www.bbc.co.uk/charityappeals/appeals
  and BBC Community Doorway volunteering scheme (Hammersmith & Fulham, Westminster, Salford and Greater Manchester, and Birmingham)
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/responsibility/community_affairs/community_doorway
- AA Gill article about Shelter from the Storm: http://sfts.org.uk/crumbs-of-comfort-aa-gill/
- Venture Trust coverage in the Guardian Christmas Appeal:
  https://www.theguardian.com/society/2010/nov/28/venture-trust-christmas-appeal-2010

**General resources**

- Profiting from Creativity: Exploring ways to bring creative industries in to the sustainability mix for community venues. By Community Ownership Support Service, in association with Voluntary Arts Scotland.
  http://www.dtascommunityownership.org.uk/sites/default/files/ProfitingfromCreativity.pdf
- Culture Counts: The Culture Counts toolkit enables everyone to become an advocate for culture. It gives you tips and ideas on how to make the case for Culture with your local politicians and Councillors as well as raising the profile of your own work.
  http://culturecounts.scot/

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