



Association of
Independent
Museums

Successful Fundraising at Museums 2022

Judy Niner | Development Partners



Introduction

This fundraising guide is intended to help small and medium-sized museums to fundraise as successfully as possible.

It is aimed at anyone working in a museum, whether staff or volunteer, since there is a role for everyone in the fundraising process. It will be particularly relevant to those who have specific responsibility for fundraising strategy and implementation, and for management staff/volunteers and trustees.

What do we mean by fundraising?

For the purpose of this guide, we are defining fundraising as the creation of philanthropic revenue or capital investment. We are not therefore including activities that are better defined as income-generation, generally the sale of goods or services (including admissions). Some activities, such as membership, blur the lines of this definition but are included because of the role they can play in the cultivation of supporters.

Restricted v unrestricted funding

There is a vital difference between how funds are received by a charity. Some funds – those for which the purpose is a specified activity, item or project – are known as ‘restricted’. This means they can only, and must, be spent on the activity/item/project which the donor/grantmaker agreed to fund. Most funds from public sources, trusts and foundations and individuals who respond to particular campaigns will be restricted.

Unrestricted funds can be used in any way appropriate to the purpose and objectives of the organisation. Unrestricted income tends to come from activities such as donation boxes, membership, regular giving and legacies.

The fundraising climate

This guide is being updated in autumn 2022, with the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic still being felt and households and businesses facing extreme inflation, particularly in energy and food prices. Fundraising is competitive enough in good times, but current economic challenges may make it even more difficult to achieve hoped-for results. The temptation may be to do nothing and wait until times improve. That would be a grave mistake. Now is the time to be investing in relationships, ensuring your systems and processes for fundraising are in place, and communicating confidence in your museum’s future path.

There are very few ‘quick wins’ these days. To be successful at fundraising, you need to take a longer view and ‘engineer your luck’. Preparation is vital, and taking the time to nurture relationships essential. This guide will help you prepare your organisation so that you are in a strong position to find and grasp funding opportunities as they arise.

Despite the pandemic, according to Arts Council England’s Private Investment in Culture Survey Report, the volume of private investment income in culture remained stable between 2018-21. Individual giving and memberships increased by 6% over the period, whilst grants from trusts and foundations declined by 5% and corporate donations and memberships by 7%. The biggest decline (18%) was seen in corporate memberships. [Click here to see the full report.](#)

There is still money to be found for well governed, resourceful organisations with robust plans and projects, who build strong, respectful relationships and ask for funds at the right time and in the right way.



Getting fit to fundraise

A fundraising organisation needs to create the best possible conditions in which to attract and retain donors and grantmakers. It needs to inspire confidence and engender commitment. Being 'fundraising fit' is essential.

What do you need to fundraise?

- Effective leadership and governance structures
- A clearly articulated purpose
- A robust business plan laying out current and future aims and detailed, realistic propositions to achieve them
- A financial plan proving sustainability, or progress towards it
- External evidence to support the need for the organisation, its work and any projects to be funded
- A case for support which draws on all the information above to answer the question 'why should this museum be supported?'
- A fundraising strategy developed with professional expertise if possible
- An internal team of people, staff and/or volunteers, who have time to dedicate to fundraising and understand the roles they play
- The support of its community – especially volunteers and members who can act as advocates
- Established ways to communicate with its community and wider audiences
- Systems to manage data, track relationships and plan/monitor actions
- Financial processes to accept, monitor and report on funds received.

An objective assessment of your organisation's fundraising fitness can help you determine what needs to be put in place, or improved, before starting a new fundraising programme or invigorating existing activities. This preparation can make the difference between success and failure.





Case for Support

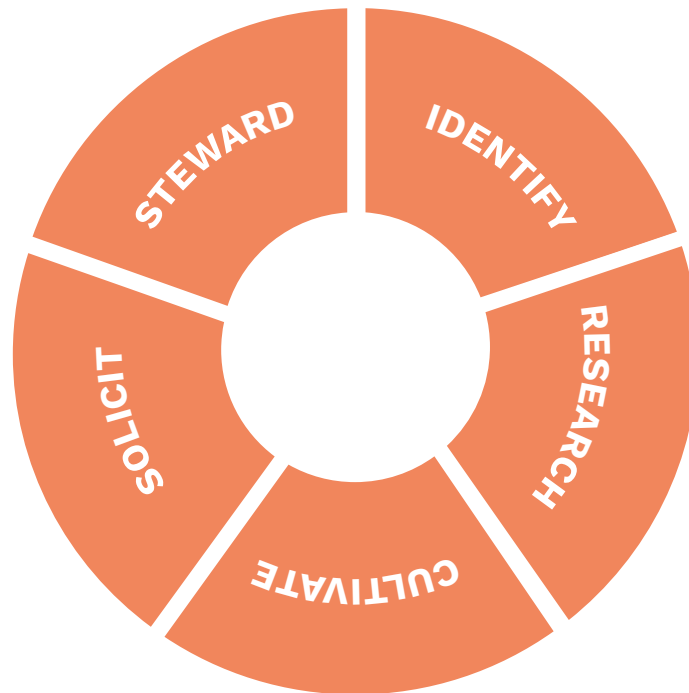
The case for support is the core document that brings together all the information required to make a compelling argument for why you need money. It explains what you need money for, who will benefit from it and how. It combines the strengths of the organisation with honest assessment of its weaknesses and provision that is currently lacking. It is an internal document, from which tailored approaches and proposals will be created for potential funders. With this document in place (and assuming it is shared with trustees, staff and volunteers) you can be confident that everyone can present the organisation and/or project consistently.

The case for support should include information from the business and financial plans, together with external evidence and relevant evaluation to back up your arguments for why the work of your organisation or the outcomes of a particular project are so important. It is important that the case for support is unique to your museum, even though there will be themes that are common across the sector.





Cultivation cycle



Whatever category of donor or grantmaker you are considering approaching, the cycle of cultivation remains broadly the same:

Identify: Gather information on everyone you think might be interested in your museum/project. Get ideas from others – trustees, volunteers, other stakeholders – and make sure your past donors are on the long-list.

Research: The objective is to whittle down the long-list by finding out more about each potential donor/grantmaker. Be quite brutal – does this person/organisation really care about what you do, or could they (usually through close contacts) be made to care? It is better to end up with a short and manageable list of potential prospects with whom you will be able to communicate, than one with loads of names that you are unlikely to be able to reach.

Cultivate: Get to know your potential funders as well as you can, and help them to understand what you do better. Find out about their motivation to care about your museum, their interests and the other things they support.

Solicit: Only when you are confident that your potential donor/grantmaker/group of donors understands and supports what you're trying to achieve (and will feel that they can play a part in making it happen) should you actually ask for money. Before you ask, think carefully about what you're asking for – are you making best use of this relationship, or would it be better to wait for a project the donor may find more attractive? Should you be waiting to make a larger request? If an ask is unsuccessful, don't give up! It obviously wasn't the right time or the right ask – try to find out why. Continue to cultivate the donor – they may need more information, or it might not be the right project/initiative for them.

Steward: Don't be tempted to think a donation or grant is the end-result. It's very much the start of the next stage of the relationship with a donor/grantmaker. You have convinced them to support you – now you need to show them that they made the right decision. Report back on progress; keep in touch; involve them. Your past donors are your best donors: Steward them well and they may become life-long supporters.

Fundraising strategy

Fundraising ideas are the easy bit! Too often, people are led by what they see another (sometimes incomparable) organisation doing rather than really analysing and focusing on the fundraising method/s that will work for them. This can waste both time and opportunity – it is vital that limited resources are used in the most effective way. New ideas can sound fun and exciting, but it is often the old and tested methods of fundraising that will work best.

Essentially, fundraising is about relationships. The vast majority of your time should be spent creating and nurturing those relationships, not asking for money. There are no short cuts. It can help to think about your own charitable giving to understand what makes you give to a particular organisation – you are probably unlikely to give (or continue to give) unless you feel confident in what your money will be spent on and how. Large charities with high profiles and well-understood charitable objectives (eg: RSPCA, Cancer Research UK, National Trust) have built up their reputations over many years but still work hard to ensure confidence in them and their missions and work, museums have to work even harder to communicate their case for support.

The fundraising strategy should answer the questions:

- Why do we need to raise funds and what for?
- How much do we need to raise?
- When do we need the funds?
- Who cares about what we do and might want to help make it happen? What funders and funding streams are available to us?
- What do we need to do to raise the funds we need in the most time and cost effective way?
- Which methods are we going to use?
- How will we prioritise to make best use of our resources?
- What do we need to invest in order to get the results we need?
- Who will do what?
- What are the major risks and how can we mitigate them?

The strategy needs to sit within a long-term context – for example, are you trying to build up an endowment to generate annual revenue or are you planning a major capital project in 5 or 10 years time? The likelihood is that you will want to continue to fundraise in the future, and that has an impact on how you go about raising funds for shorter-term projects and needs. It means investing time in relationships for the long-term and not always expecting an immediate return. It requires patience and commitment.



Photo: The Lightbox

One of the problems small and medium-sized museums face is the resource, in terms of expertise and time, available to dedicate to fundraising. The solution is to limit the range of fundraising activities/programmes that you implement. You will need to stand firm against trustees and others who, when faced with concerns about funding, want you to focus on quick wins and new ideas. These can divert your attention from the programmes that will result in a much better return on investment.

Most fundraising strategies for AIM members should prioritise:

- Trusts and foundations
- Individual giving – from major donors and from supporter groups, eg: members
- Gifts in wills
- Donation boxes.



Photo: The Red House, Britten Pears Arts

Fundraising requires time. It isn't a tap that can be

Communications for fundraising

The objective of communications for fundraising is to create the environment in which people want to give. This means making sure they feel informed, involved and valued. It is as much about attitude as the physical means of communication – an organisation that is open, transparent and keen to listen is much more likely to garner support than one which appears aloof.

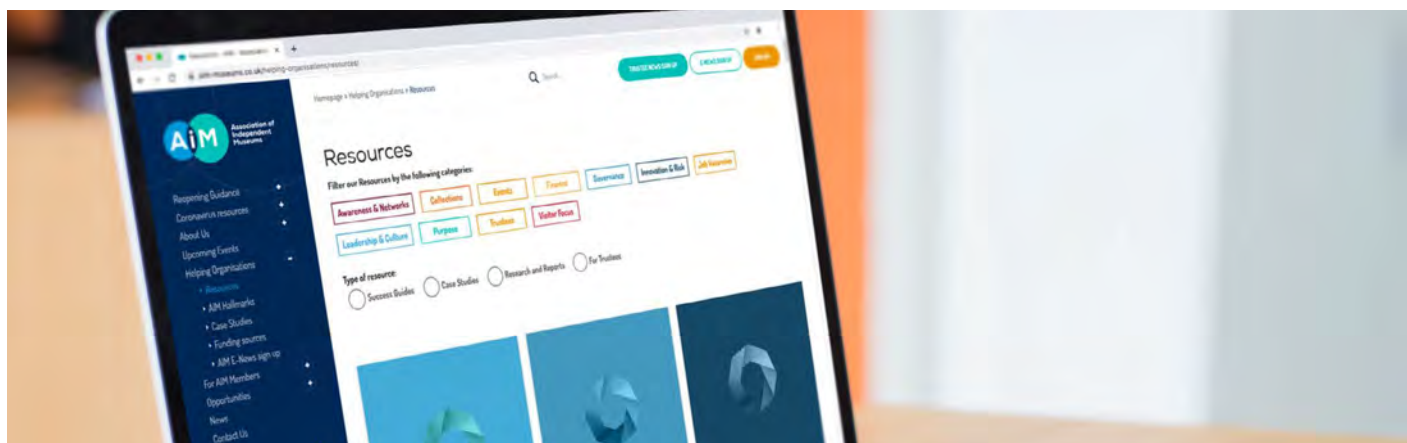
It helps to have a consistent charitable message that encapsulates why someone might want to support the organisation. This message can be used in various ways, including to encourage sales in the shop or café, Gift Aid on admission or the use of donation boxes. It helps communicate that the museum is not-for-profit and needs support, and can inspire confidence in the future of the organisation. The importance of this ‘trickle’ communication is reflected in the National Arts Fundraising School’s understanding that 50% of legacies received by charities in the UK come from people not known to the organisation – in other words, they are not members, friends, volunteers or existing donors.

Any museum wanting to fundraise must have a well-functioning, attractive website, including:

- An ‘About’ section which explains legal status and governance of the organisation, including biographies of trustees and senior staff.

- A ‘Support’ link in the top level menu leading directly to fundraising information
- Links to an online giving platform (eg: CAF, JustGiving etc) with ‘donate now’ buttons
- Inclusion of the Gift Aid logo on the ‘Support’ page (assuming the museum is registered for Gift Aid)
- Charity registration number on each page
- Opportunity to sign up to an e-newsletter
- Link to a Privacy Notice which includes the organisation’s policy for use of data for fundraising purposes.

Social media such as Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and Facebook are increasingly used very effectively in the sector. They are successful in communicating with particular demographic groups, but it’s important to remember that many of your potential donors may not follow those accounts.



Stewardship

Your best donor is your last donor. There's a lot of truth in this fundraising adage. The purpose of stewardship is to build better and closer relationships with people who have already shown they care about your organisation and what you do. These are the people most likely to support you in the future. Investment in stewardship is likely to be far more rewarding than constantly trying to find new donors.

Stewardship encompasses everything you do to nurture your relationship with an individual or organisation after they have made a gift/grant. It includes:

- **Saying 'thank you'**
- **Ensuring a gift/grant is acknowledged (eg: on a donors' board) appropriately**
- **Reporting back on the impact a gift /grant has had on the organisation and on other beneficiaries**

- **Creating opportunities for the donor/ grantmaker to get to know the organisation better, and for you to understand their interests and motivations**
- **Updating them on changes at the organisation such as new trustees and members of staff**
- **Listening to their views and thoughts about the organisation.**
- **Responding to ideas and proposals.**

Stewardship works when it's personal and tailored to the interests and motivations of each donor/ grantmaker. This personalisation can be overlooked when organisations try to herd donors into membership-style schemes and programmes. Particularly with major donors, focus on giving them individual attention.



Administration: Data and record-keeping

Good administrative systems are vital to fundraising. They enable you to account properly for everything you receive, steward people well, and pass on important information to your successors so that relationships don't leave the organisation when you do.

How you collect, use and destroy personal information for fundraising purposes needs to comply with current legislation. New rules under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into effect in 2018 and it is important to ensure you keep up to date with requirements. We recommend referring to the following sites and documents:

General information on GDPR

- ▶ [AIM Success Guide: Successfully managing privacy and data regulations in small museums](#)
- ▶ [Information Commissioner's Office: Guide to data protection](#)
- ▶ [The Chartered Institute of Fundraising: GDPR: The Essentials for Fundraising Organisations](#)
- ▶ The Data Protection Network is a very useful website. Sign up to their newsletter to receive free news, insight and how-to-guides to support your day to day data protection work.

Legitimate Interest

- ▶ [Information Commissioner's Office: Lawful basis for processing: Legitimate Interests guidance](#)

Fundraising research

- ▶ [The Chartered Institute of Fundraising: Connecting people to good causes: A practical guide to fundraising research](#)

Data Retention

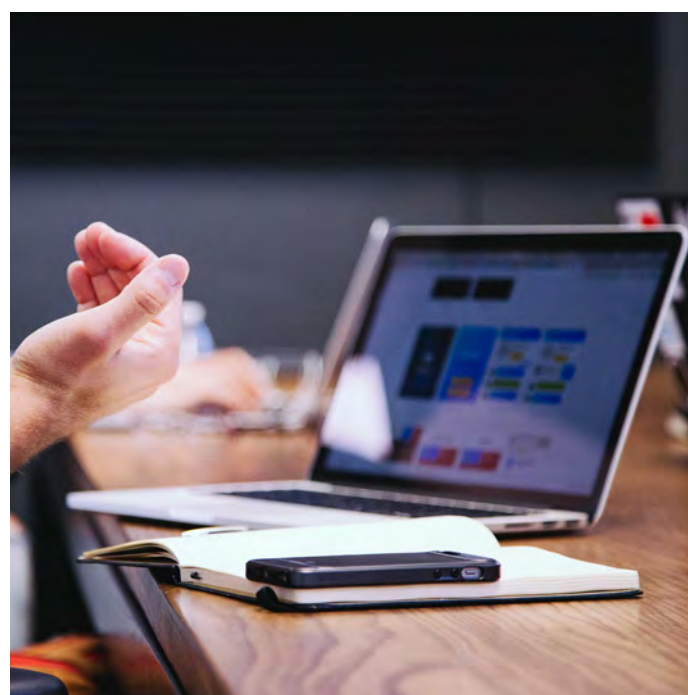
▶ [The Data Protection Network](#)

For many smaller museums, data for fundraising can be kept on Excel spreadsheets – this is often the easiest way to get to grips with information about your supporters. However, larger organisations, or those with large numbers of donors, should consider investing in an off-the-shelf fundraising database. These vary in price and functionality greatly and can be server or cloud-based. We have recently seen the following used successfully:

▶ [Salesforce](#)

▶ [Subscriber](#)

It is probably not wise to invest in this sort of system unless you have a dedicated fundraiser or fundraising team. Whatever system you use, you will need to find a way of recording communications with donors and planning future actions.





Funders

Public funders

Public funders tend to launch specific grant programmes reflecting their strategic objectives. Grants will almost always be restricted – meaning they have to be spent on the project (capital or revenue) you have described in your application. Only applications that meet the funding stream precisely will be considered, so always think carefully about this before applying and check that the funder’s demands match your own objectives. Larger grants will often require a two-stage process and can be very time-consuming.

Funders of museums and heritage include:

- [Department of Culture Media and Sport](#)
- [National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)
- [Arts Council England](#)
- [Historic England](#)
- [Museums Galleries Scotland](#)
- [Historic Environment Scotland](#)

- [Welsh Government Culture Division](#)
- [Cadw](#)
- [Northern Ireland Museums Council](#)
- [Local enterprise partnerships](#)
- [Local authorities \(eg: Section 106, Community Infrastructure Levy\)](#)
- [Regional Museum Development offices.](#)

Many (but not all) grantmakers will expect you to partially match their grant with funds from elsewhere. Also, be prepared that you may have to invest your organisation’s money in extensive preparatory work before being ready to apply for funding.

Funding streams are reviewed regularly and changes made to them. Always check on the appropriate websites and sign up for social media and email alerts to keep yourself informed about new programmes.





Charitable trusts and foundations

In 2020/21 70% of private investment in museums and heritage came from trusts and foundations. This is an extremely important category of funders and should be the top priority of most museum fundraising strategies. The total amount given has reduced slightly and, more importantly, the number and range of organisations applying for grants has increased. This means more competition – only the best applications will be successful.

Increasingly, most grants from trusts and foundations are restricted to specific capital projects or revenue activities. It is difficult to secure grants to cover core costs.

The way in which trusts and foundations give is constantly changing in response to market conditions and income. This affects not only what is funded but also methods of application and assessment. Common adjustments include narrowing grantmaking criteria, scrutinising bids and applicant finances in greater detail, taking longer to make decisions, reducing (or increasing) individual grant amounts by focusing on fewer projects or spreading the funding more widely.

For larger projects, some trusts will be concerned about an organisation's likelihood of finding match funds to reach a fundraising target. They will rarely fill the whole funding gap themselves, but realise the project will be dependent on you being able to attract other funders. Many will want to understand your fundraising plan and be confident that it is realistic. Some will not confirm a grant until other funds have been found, making it more difficult to find vital seedcorn money.

Identify

The first step is to identify which trusts might consider funding your project or organisation. To do so, you can use a subscription search engine such as the [Directory of Social Changes' Funds Online](#) or the free

[Heritage Funding Directory](#) managed by The Heritage Alliance and the Architectural Heritage Fund. Your local authority may also keep a list of possible funders in your area. Checking which trusts have funded comparable organisations can also be very helpful. The result of this identification phase should be a long-list of potential funders.

Your long-list might include some or all of the following:

- ▶ Major trusts who regularly give to museums and heritage organisations, such as:
 - ▶ [Garfield Weston Foundation](#)
 - ▶ [Wolfson Foundation](#)
 - ▶ [Esmee Fairbairn Foundation](#)
 - ▶ [Foyle Foundation](#)
 - ▶ [Pilgrim Trust](#)
- ▶ Local and regional trusts who specify geographic areas of interest, eg: the 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust – preference given to 'charities operating in the West Midlands and in particular the Coventry and Warwickshire area'.
- ▶ Trusts who fund projects that deliver outcomes to particular groups of beneficiaries, eg: the elderly, young people with learning disabilities, young carers etc. These trusts will be useful in funding your social impact, learning and community work but won't necessarily have a history of funding museums.

Research

Look at each trust on your long-list in detail and whittle them down to those who have the highest likelihood of supporting your museum/project. Quality not quantity is the best route for trusts and foundations – a few well written, well matched applications will reap much better results than churning out multiple appeals that don't resonate with the targeted funders. Take time to visit individual trusts' websites, where available, and look at their accounts on the [charity commission website](#).

You are looking for:

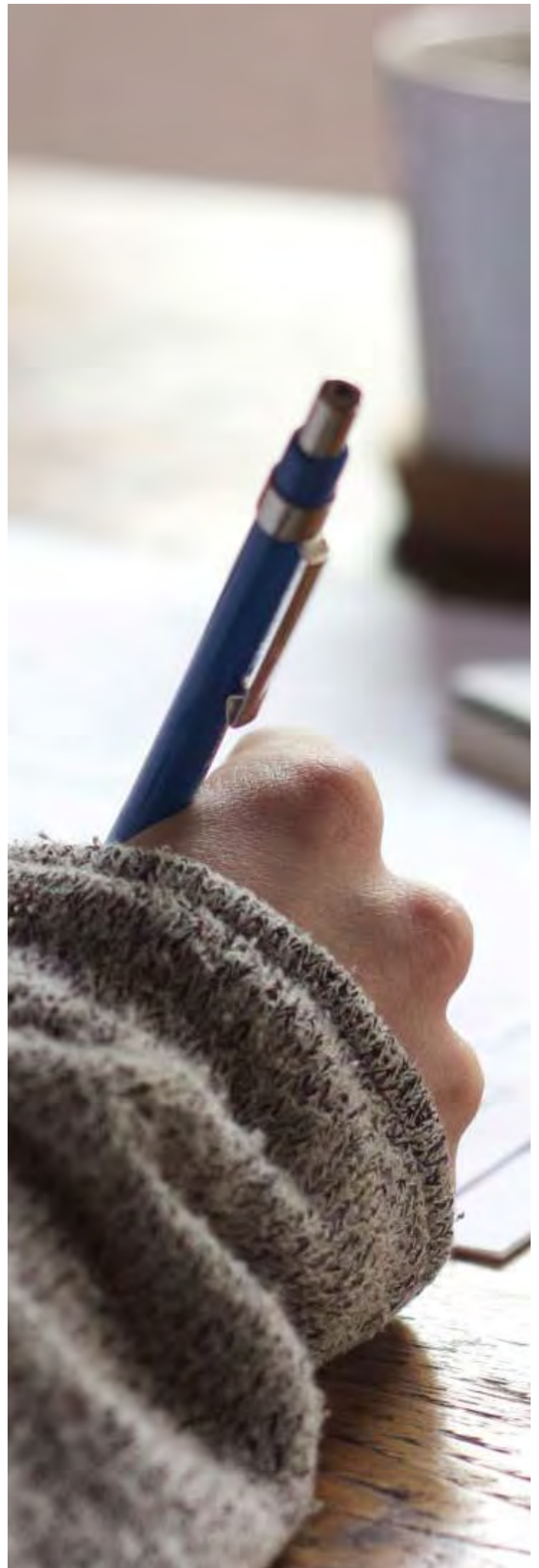
- Criteria for grantmaking
- Examples of who and what they've funded in the past
- Application deadlines and decision timetables
- Funding levels – what size of grant do they give
- Application requirements

Check their list of excluded projects or activities and whether they allow unsolicited applications. Almost all trusts exclude projects which start before the grant is awarded. Benchmark your project against similar projects they have funded to get an idea of how much you could ask for.

Cultivate

Where possible, ring the administrator to find out more or to discuss your project with them. This often elicits helpful information and also makes them aware of your project when it arrives on their desk.

Always circulate a list of the trustees of potential grantmaking trusts to your own organisation's trustees. Connections can help greatly and may mean a trust is more likely to consider your application. The link person might be able to write a covering letter, or at least alert their contact to your need and request for funds.



Solicit

To succeed your application needs to:

- Align closely with the trust's aims and criteria
- Be well written and clearly presented
- Be factual and refer to robust evidence of need
- Focus on the beneficiaries and impact of the project on them. Outcomes are really important to trusts
- Provide evidence that your organisation is able to deliver the project effectively.

Many of the larger trusts have their own application forms online which you must use when required. Others have a list of questions that they expect you to cover in the application, and the rest give very little guidance except perhaps the number of pages they are prepared to read. It is extremely important that you meet these basic requirements. Some will ask for additional documents, such as accounts.

Every trust will have different priorities and it is necessary to bear this in mind when applying – is there a particular element of your project which would be of greater interest than the whole? Are they more passionate about history, architecture, education or the local community? No two applications should ever be the same.

The length of the application will depend on the requirements of the trust and the complexity of the project you are putting forward. However, less is generally better than more.

Don't underestimate the importance of evidence. Vague references to the importance of your organisation or project won't hold much sway – trusts like to see the evidence of need, impact measurement and relevant evaluation that have led you to the plan you are presenting.

Steward

Always report back to funders on the progress and achievements of your project. This will develop your relationship and stand you in good stead for future grant requests.



Individuals

Members, friends and volunteers

Many museums have some sort of friends or membership scheme. These are low-cost programmes often based on multiple admission benefits plus additional events and possibly discounts. With more museums adopting the annual pass form of Gift Aid ticketing, the benefit of some of these membership programmes has been compromised (both to the organisation and to the member) and care needs to be taken to ensure they remain profitable and appropriate to the motivations of the members. Whilst these schemes provide museums with a one-size-fits-all channel of communication with a large group of supporters, they present a risk that such a generic approach satisfies none of them. Regularly surveying friends/members to be sure of motivations and preferences can help ensure a membership programme remains relevant to its members and worthwhile for the museum.

Higher level membership programmes, often referred to as Patrons, need to be established with great care. As described below, major donors (often the same people) need to be treated as individuals and trying to herd them into a 'scheme' may not be the best way

to cultivate relationships.

When launching a fundraising appeal, the best starting point is with those closest to you – your members, friends and volunteers. They are already committed to the organisation. However, just because they are already involved and have shown that they care about the organisation, doesn't mean they will feel minded to give to an appeal or capital campaign. You will need to ensure you bring these people with you as you develop plans for the future; that you keep them informed of progress; and that you listen to their views about the museum's direction and plans. Newsletters and virtual briefings are great ways to engage these supporters, and the occasional survey in which you investigate their motivation for support as well as their satisfaction with the organisation, can be extremely useful. Being able to talk to them individually at events is invaluable.

Don't ask supporters for money too often. In addition to friends/members subscriptions, it might be appropriate to run an appeal in alternate years.



Major donors

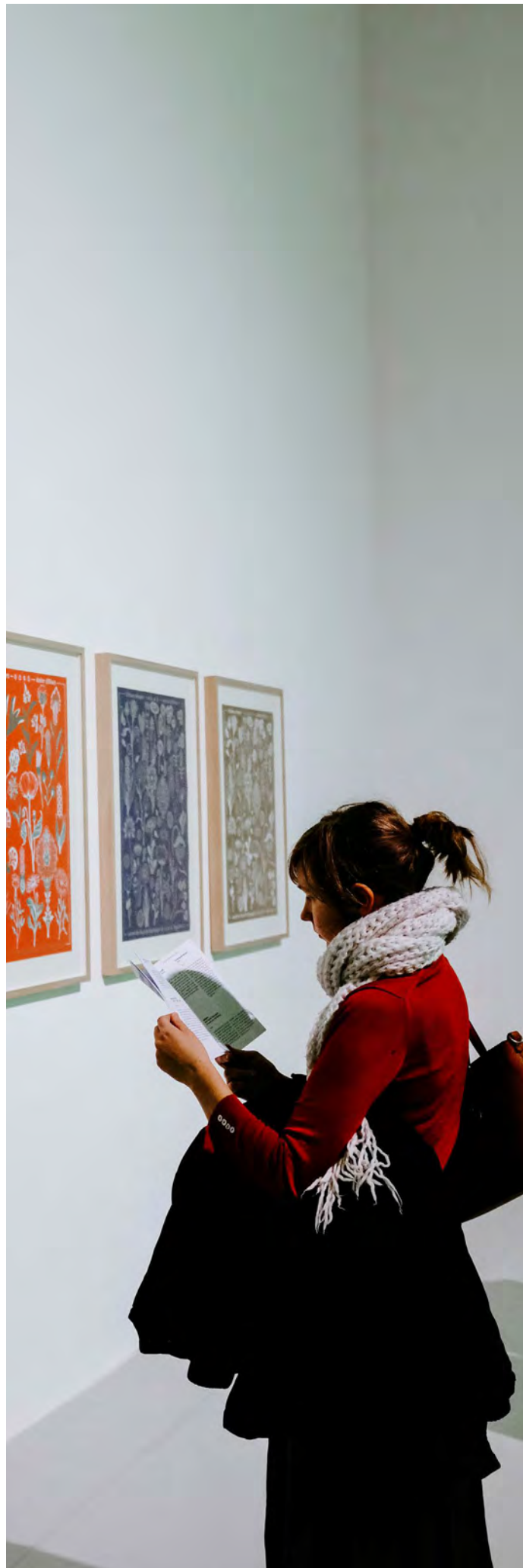
A major donor is someone who makes a sizeable gift to the organisation. They may or may not be a friend, member or volunteer. They need to have both the capacity and the motivation to give – just being rich isn't enough. When attracting new donors, it will help if there is a personal connection to the organisation – hence the important role trustees can play in introducing people. Cultivation and stewardship need to be personal and tailored to each individual to enable them, and you, to build a close relationship.

Do not rush to ask a potential donor to give their support, but allow time for the relationship to develop. You are much more likely to get a positive response, and potentially a larger gift as well. Examples of opportunities to develop these relationships include:

- Behind the scenes tours
- Opportunities to meet experts before or after a larger event, eg: a lecture
- Identifying and sharing an object or collection of particular interest to the donor, eg: local to their home
- Coffee, tea and lunch meetings.

Small, bespoke events will be much more effective than large ones which take a great deal of planning and organisation whilst rarely being conducive to getting to know people better.

Only once you understand a potential donor's motivations and interests can you consider what they might want to support and how. Asking too soon, or for the wrong thing, can destroy the relationship you've been trying to build. Be patient and invest time and thought to create the long-term supporter you want and need.



Business

There has been a steady decline in corporate giving in recent years – very few companies still make gifts to not-for-profit organisations and expect nothing in return. In general, their involvement with a museum will require direct benefit in terms of brand association, corporate social responsibility agendas or staff volunteering programmes. It is a business investment not a philanthropic one.

Corporate membership has been badly hit during the pandemic. It is not clear whether it will recover to previous levels.

Business sponsorship continues to benefit London-based museums disproportionately – it is notoriously difficult to secure cost-effective sponsorship arrangements outside the capital.

Museums most likely to attract sponsorship outside London are those with collections that align with particular industries – transport sectors for example.

For those of a more generic nature, it is extremely difficult. If you are considering including business sponsorship in your fundraising strategy, consider two questions:

- Once you have factored in the benefits (in resource and cash) you will need to deliver to the sponsor, and taken into account a realistic income, is a sponsorship likely to be profitable?
- Would the time you spend approaching, negotiating with and then delivering to a sponsor be used more profitably pursuing a different fundraising avenue?

Companies most likely to sponsor a small or medium sized museum are those that are privately owned and where the owner/director has a personal interest in the organisation. This is where personal contacts can help, for example through trustees.





Other organisations

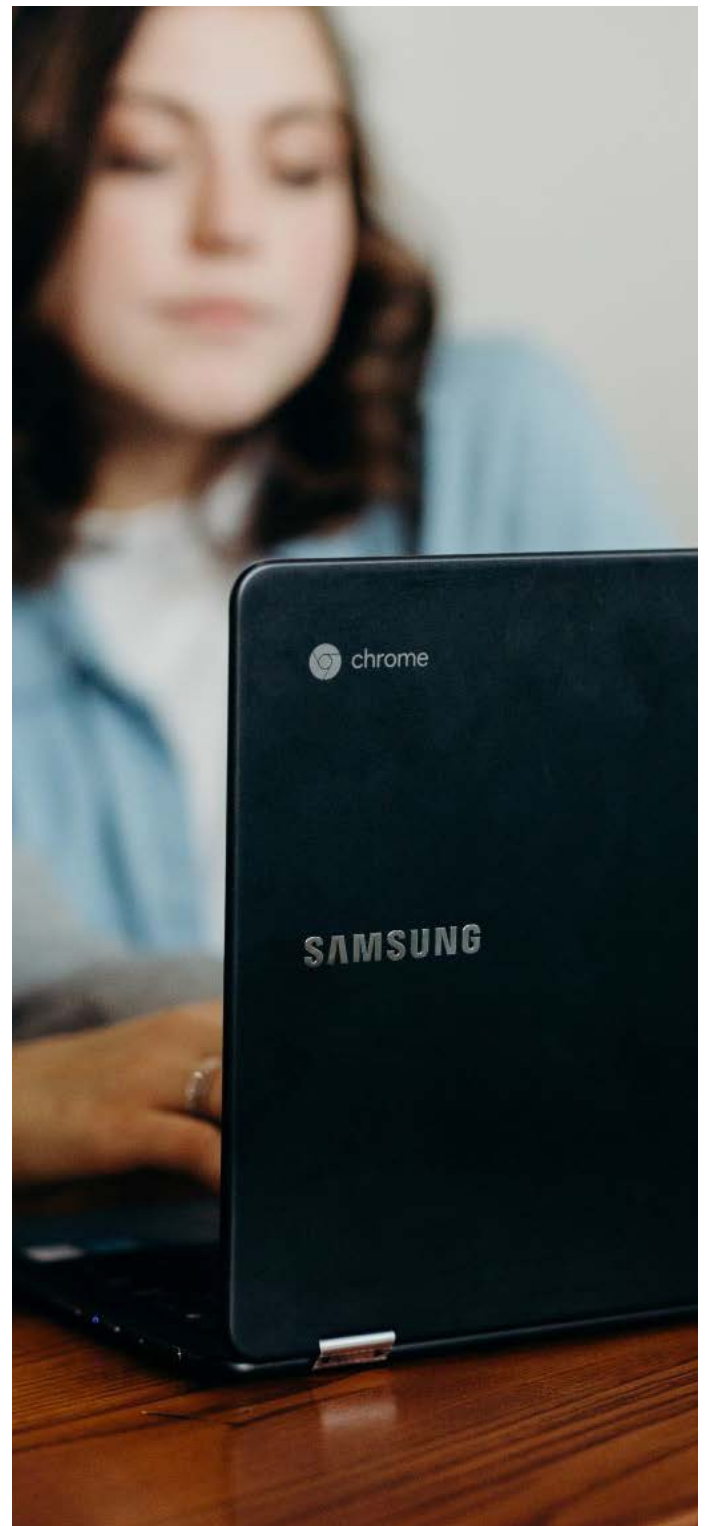
There are other grantmaking organisations you could consider, e.g.:

- ▶ [Postcode Lottery](#) – organised into separate regional trusts. Use the ‘postcode trust finder’ to locate the one appropriate for your site.
- ▶ [Landfill Communities Fund \(via Entrust\)](#)
- ▶ [AIM](#)

Social investment may also be appropriate for a project. Examples of available loan schemes, for example, include:

- ▶ [The Architectural Heritage Fund](#) which focuses on acquisition, reuse or redevelopment of buildings which are of historic or architectural important;
- ▶ [The NESTA Arts Impact Fund.](#)

Don't forget that funds from your own reserves can help you kickstart or match-fund a project. If a fundraising campaign is successful, you may be able to replace and reuse those funds as seedcorn for another project.



Fundraising activities



Gift in Wills

Legacy Foresight research predicts income to charities from gifts in wills will rise to £4.2 billion per year between 2022-26 – a 26% increase from the preceding five years. More and more charities are moving into this market which is ripe for development in the heritage sector. To benefit, museums need to offer guidance to their supporters on why and how to make a gift in their will, and use all communications channels sensitively but consistently to reinforce the message that gifts in wills are essential to the future of the museum.

It helps to have a legacy policy, approved by trustees and describing how unrestricted legacies will be allocated. It can be off-putting if a potential donor thinks their money will be spent propping up the revenue budget – indicating that funds will be allocated to conservation, acquisitions, education or a long-term invested fund to create revenue will be much more appealing.

Online giving

Every museum should have a facility for online giving. You may have a ticketing platform that enables online giving, or you may need to use one of the many web-based platforms such as:

- ▶ [Charities Aid Foundation](#)
- ▶ [Just Giving](#)
- ▶ [Donor Box](#)

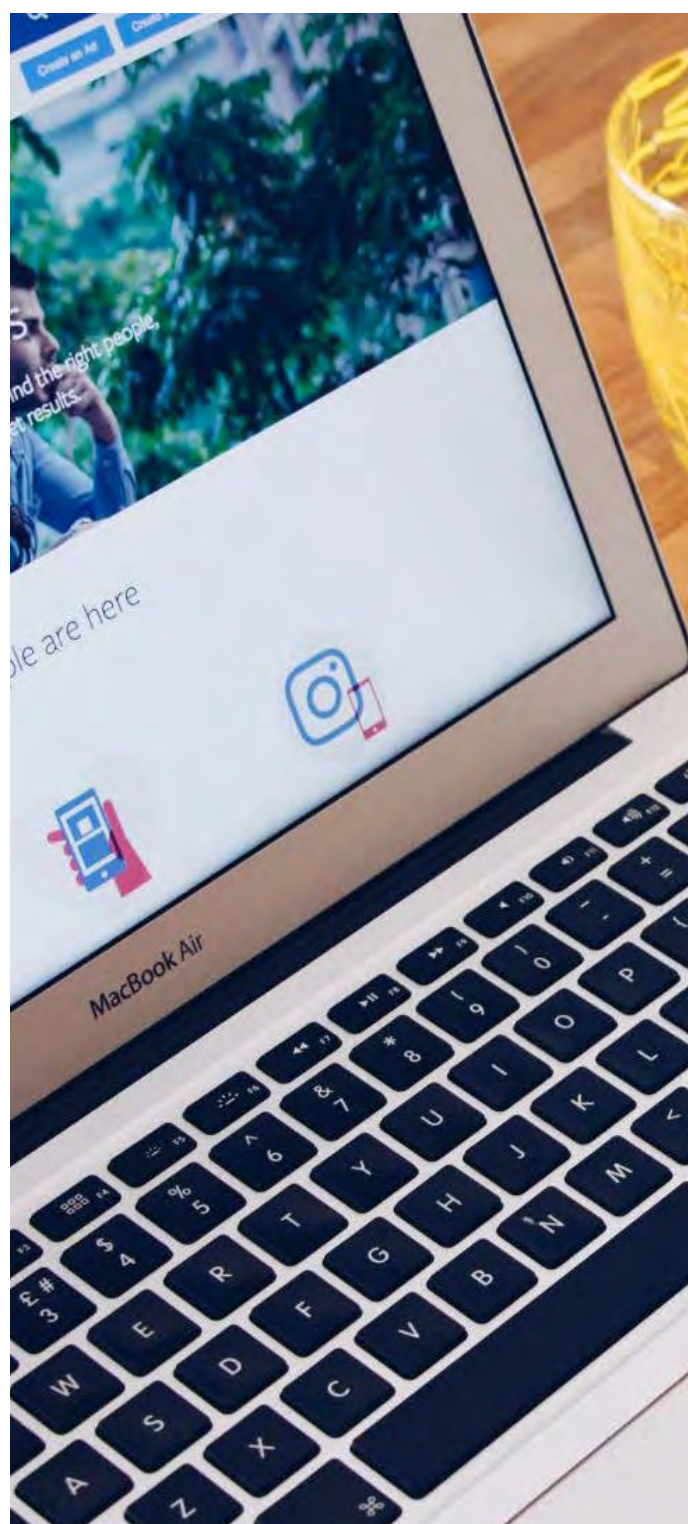
In deciding which platform to use, check the following:

- ▶ **Cost** – for smaller museums having a large standing charge is usually a bad thing.
- ▶ **Flexibility to brand the giving pages** – the more you can make the pages look like part of your own website the better
- ▶ **Capability to run different appeals at the same time and to offer one-off or regular/multiple gifts.**

Only use your ticketing system if it is set up to manage Gift Aid.

Regular giving

Gifts that you receive on a monthly or annual basis, particularly if they are unrestricted, are hugely useful because the organisation can plan ahead. Even relatively small monthly amounts can create significant gifts. For example, £10 a month over 3 years (including Gift Aid) raises £450. Don't forget to thank and steward these donors.





Crowdfunding

The loosest definition of crowdfunding just means raising funds from a large group of people, usually via the internet. This can take the form of a fairly traditional appeal to an existing database of friends and supporters via email, and social media, directing people to your online giving page to make a donation. At the other end of the spectrum it can involve setting up complex tiers of benefits and gifts which people select according to their level of support. This can be very transactional in nature. By using platforms such as the Art Fund's Art Happens, organisations hope to extend their reach – this potential has to be weighed up against the resource required to set up the campaign.

The Big Give specialises in match funding appeals. The Christmas Challenge has established itself as an interesting focus to encourage major donors to provide the initial match fund pot.

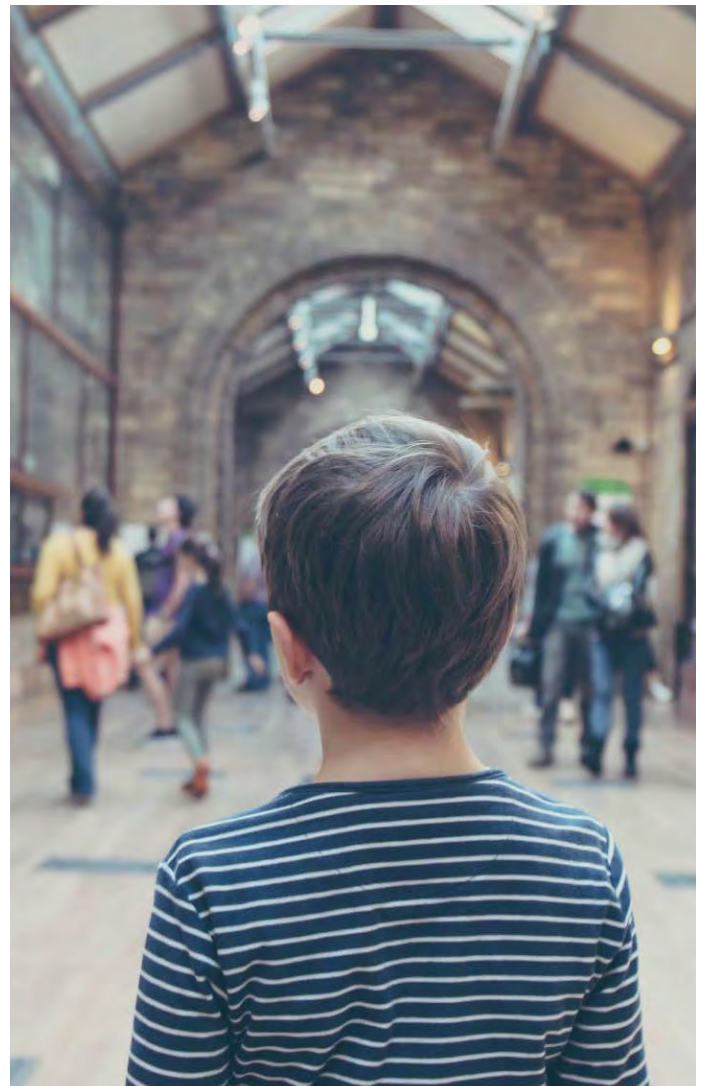
Before deciding what sort of appeal you are going to run, think carefully about your demographic. Do they need to be offered gifts and benefits in return for their donation? Or will they approach your appeal philanthropically? Think also about return on investment – fully fledged crowdfunding campaigns take considerable time to prepare, require extensive social media support and the cost of delivering benefits can eat away at the value of donations.

These appeals should only be run if they form part of your fundraising strategy. You mustn't ask your existing supporters for funding too often so don't be lured into an extra activity unless it's absolutely right for you. Sometimes it's better to say no!

- Art Fund
- Crowd Funder
- The Big Give

Other online schemes

Along with other charities, museums can sign up for schemes such as [Amazon Smile](#) and [Easyfundraising](#) whereby small sums of money are raised each time a supporter makes a purchase through the platform. Be aware that supporters can get confused and/or tired of being asked to help in different ways. Adding more options to your website or email can detract from your main fundraising activities so make sure this really is the right method for you.





Onsite and print

Donation boxes & cashless donation points

Donation boxes deliver two benefits:

- ▶ Their presence, highlighted by clear charitable messaging, helps reinforce the message that the museum is a charity or other not-for-profit
- ▶ They can attract useful unrestricted funds.

AIM has published a [Quick Guide: Donation Boxes in Museums](#) which gives detailed information on how to make your donation boxes work as well as possible. The Guide was updated in 2019 to include information on contactless giving boxes. At that time, the key operator in the contactless giving market was Good Box, and a number of museums have installed their devices. At the time of writing, the company is under administration.

Feedback from museums on contactless giving has been mixed with most saying they have been disappointed in results, particularly given the running costs of the device. It appears that in most venues cash boxes are still performing better.

Research has shown that the type and location of donation boxes makes a marked difference to the donations that are received. Despite the relatively high initial outlay, it is worth investing in a transparent box which shows the donations inside (with some notes visible at the start of every day). You can experiment with the best location, but it should be a prominent position, probably near the entrance and exit. The charitable message tells your supporters what their money will do and can motivate them to give. Training staff/volunteers to ask visitors for donations can have very positive results.

Text giving

Text giving could be considered when you are aiming to raise quite small but spontaneous donations, for example at an event. The maximum amount that can be given is usually capped because the donation is added to the donor's mobile phone bill. The process for capturing Gift Aid is complicated and the donor can be irritated by further texts or phonecalls asking for the necessary information.

If you are interested in setting up text giving, potential operators include:

- ▶ [National Funding Scheme \(Donate\)](#)
- ▶ [DONR](#)
- ▶ [Just Giving](#)

QR codes

QR codes have grown in popularity and can be used in numerous ways, including on print and display boards to direct people to fundraising pages. Some giving platforms, such as JustGiving and CAF, offer QR codes as part of their service. It is also possible to use one of the free QR code suppliers online.



Gift Aid

If you are a charity, you can apply to HMRC to register for Gift Aid. With registration, you will be able to increase the value of donations by 25%, subject to the permission of the donor and their tax status.

Original gift from donor	Gift Aid reclaimed from HMRC	Total value to the charity
£1	25p	£1.25
£25	£6.25	£31.25
£50	£12.50	£62.50
£100	£25.00	£125.00
£1,000	£250.00	£1,250.00

If you are not registered for Gift Aid, do it now! Not only will you raise more money, but you will communicate to your supporters that you are a charitable enterprise. Always include the Gift Aid logo (assuming you are registered) on donation boxes, fundraising pages on your website and any fundraising leaflets.

Gift Aid can be claimed on donations from individuals, but not from trusts or companies. You can reclaim tax on the 'gross' equivalent of all donations where your donor has provided a Gift Aid declaration. Payments made in return for goods or services (e.g. raffle tickets or event admission) do not qualify. Museums can offer the donor a modest token in appreciation of their gift, but there are limits on the value of this benefit.

If a donor is a higher or additional rate taxpayer, they can claim relief equal to the difference between the higher rate of tax and the basic rate of tax. They do this on their income tax return.

It's important to set up good systems for collecting and storing Gift Aid declarations and making regular claims to HMRC for payment. Online giving platforms do this on your behalf, but Gift Aid on donations paid to you directly will need to be claimed manually.

Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS)

This scheme allows charities to claim Gift Aid on cash and contactless donations of £30 each or less, up to a maximum total of £8,000 resulting in a reclaim of £2,000. Donor Gift Aid declarations are not required for this scheme, meaning money in your donation boxes still qualifies for the bonus.

For further information on Gift Aid visit the [HMRC website](#).

Fundraising regulator

The independent regulator of charitable fundraising in England, Wales and Northern Ireland has published a Code of Fundraising Practice. This sets out the responsibilities that apply to fundraising carried out by charities and third party fundraisers.

The code aims to:

- ▶ **Promote a consistent, high standard of fundraising**
- ▶ **Make sure charitable institutions, their governing bodies and fundraisers know what is expected of them**
- ▶ **Set out the standards the regulator uses when considering complaints**
- ▶ **Provide a benchmark for organisations and fundraisers to assess their practices against so they can identify necessary training and monitor and set policy priorities for their fundraising**
- ▶ **Develop a culture of honesty, openness and respect between fundraisers and the public.**

The following four values support all standards in the code.

Legal: All fundraising must meet the requirements of the law.

Open: Fundraisers must be open with the public about their processes and must be willing to explain (where appropriate) if they are asked for more information.

Honest: Fundraisers must act with integrity and must not mislead the public about the cause they are fundraising for or the way a donation will be used.

Respectful: Fundraisers must demonstrate respect whenever they have contact with any member of the public.

More information can be found at [Fundraising Regulator](#)

Charities can register with the Fundraising Regulator as a way of showing your supporters that you are committed to fundraising in a way that is legal, open, honest and respectful in line with the Code of Fundraising Practice. Once registered you can display the Fundraising Badge on your website and fundraising materials.





About the Author

Judy Niner, Director, Development Partners.
Development Partners is a fundraising and
business development consultancy specialising
in museums and heritage.

For further information, please visit
[*Development Partners.*](#)

