Funded by National Lottery Community Fund

Stonebridge City Farm Campaign Template

INTRODUCTION

"A common reason to fundraise is that donated income means you can choose how you use it, as long as you are meeting your charitable objectives and fulfilling any promises you've made to donors. Some organisations find it easier to attract donations than others. For example, if you work with children or animals. Less 'popular' or more contentious causes, such as supporting people with alcohol and drug issues, can be harder to fundraise for. That doesn't mean you shouldn't do it, but you'll need to have a very targeted plan for recruiting donors." Source: NCVO research

This Fundraising Campaign document tells the step by step approach Stonebridge City Farm took to fundraising in response to a funding crisis.

WHAT IS A CAMPAIGN?

Typically, a **campaign** is a planned sequence of activities and processes which promote an individual product, service, or resources. A multitude of channels are used and coordinated to deliver effective results. Successful **campaigns** cannot be disjointed and haphazard.

Stonebridge City Farm launched an appeal in January 2019. We approached this as a campaign, not just an appeal for funds.

We knew we would need to utilise several social media platforms, local newspapers, TV and radio as well as a crowdfunding site.

The aims were:

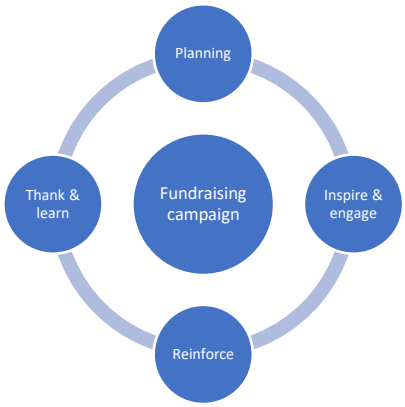
- To urgently raise £30,000.
- To correct a misconception that we are largely council funded.
- To raise our profile for future benefit.

In the end, the appeal raised £131,000. During 2019, visitor numbers grew with increasing numbers of first-time visitors and the rate of visitor donations grew by over 50%.

This campaign template is a summary of the approach we took.

There were four key phases:

1) Planning
2) Inspire & Engage
3) Reinforce
4) Thank and Learn



1. PLANNING

Set an overall goal and clear campaign objectives
In our case, the Trustees and Manager set a financial target to raise £30,000. We could justify this figure; it came from our cash flow forecast and was the amount required to see us through the winter months.

We made sure we could accurately present the facts and justify the target figure – we knew we would be challenged.

Preparation is essential
Get everything ready before you launch. What is the best way to communicate with people? How many people will you reach? Who are you trying to reach? What resources do you have and how can you increase them? Social media sites and website should be set up months before. Press releases, FAQ's agreed before launch.

A compelling message
Is it important to other people (not just you)? What is the impact of your work, why is it essential? Evidence your impact with clear outcomes. What is the tone of your message, soft or hard? Do not be afraid to ask!

We deliberately used strong words and phrases such as 'urgent' and 'possible closure'.

How will you launch?
Have you built your supporter base on social media? Do you know your TV, radio, and newspaper contacts? Does your press release have a strong message and is it supported by an information sheet with frequently asked questions? Are you ready for the difficult questions (costs, staffing levels etc)? Distribute flyers and posters, both paper and online.

Interviews with our local TV, radio and newspaper gave the campaign a flying start – we raised £15,000 in the first week!

Is the internal team ready?
Does everyone know what is going on? Communicate frequently with progress updates.

We saw this as a team effort; therefore, everyone should know the facts and how things are going.

Make donating easy

Multiple ways to donate. Are they simple? Crowdfunding site (lots of choice), existing giving sites, by text, BACs, cash, and cheques - all methods will be used. Explain and publicise. Promote Gift Aid – an extra 25%!

Our donations came via all the different methods, not just the crowdfunding site.

Trusts/Foundations and other funders
Some might get nervous – communicate with them, tell them what you are doing. Some potentially large funders walked away and waited to see if we would survive. Are there additional applications you can make and how will you identify them?

Get quick momentum
Are there supporters willing to give the campaign a strong start? Can trustees donate? Personal communication with key supporters.

Positive behaviour
What behaviour are you showing? Is it positive and determined? Set activity and outcome targets. Lead by example.

2. INSPIRE and ENGAGE

Multiple pieces and methods of communication
Prepare and schedule them before you start. Use different forms, not just words. What about videos, photographs, and sound? Strong, frequent, and coherent messages.

We even had teams of people distributing leaflets and posters to shops, cafes, and local businesses.

What is important to the public and your supporters?
Use strong and clear language. Be prepared to ask. Keep everyone updated. Stay 'on message'. Ask them for feedback.

Frequent social media posts
Don't rely on a few posts. Check the analytics – what works best and when? Mix up the style of social media posts, don't rely on one style throughout.

We could see that early evening social media posts generated the most reaction.

Don't forget your website
Update it and post news of the campaign's progress.

Fundraising activities
Encourage supporters to fundraise for you. Suggest ideas and support them. Publicise what they're doing to encourage others.

3. REINFORCE

Momentum will probably drop
It's quite possible that you'll see an initial wave of enthusiasm then responses might slow down. How will you maintain the interest? What have you planned to reinvigorate the campaign? TV, radio and newspapers make an impact

What is working?
What channels of communication seem to work best? You can quantify social media responses. Where is your initial support coming from? Build on it.

We started to post videos – two of them were viewed over 25,000 times. One was recorded on a phone and the other was made by a supporter.

Maintain the communication
Emphasise your public benefit. Keep asking. Regularly demonstrate what different people and groups are doing to help.

Explain how it makes a difference
If you have raised part of what you want – what difference will the remainder make to you? Bring your work to life – describe real examples. Explain what you will do with the money and what it will achieve – impact.

Provide updates and continue to ask.
Don't be afraid to ask and keep asking. If your cause is strong, people won't mind.

4. THANK and LEARN

Maintain your records
Who donated? What prompted them? Get to know and understand your audience, this information will be useful in the future. A spreadsheet will do.

Say thank you
Thank every donor that you can. Certificates, letters, social media posts (with their permission). Remember, some people and groups may want anonymity. Local TV, newspapers and radio do like a success story.

Analyse
What worked best? Did the money come from individuals or groups? Which giving platform worked best? What could you have done better? What can you carry forward?

In the end, our donations were received from over 1500 individuals, groups, schools, colleges, businesses and trusts.

Future Fundraising
Review and redefine your future fundraising strategy. Essential to have a plan.

Resource
Social media and video were used to add energy to the campaign after a couple of weeks – the video was viewed over 25,000 times on Facebook and made for us (free of charge) by a supporter.

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