
Factsheet:

Raising money locally and organising an event

SCOTTISH
MUSEUMS
COUNCIL



Raising money locally is an important part of your fundraising strategy. It

- provides you with much needed money over and above grants and sponsorship
- cements a relationship with your supporters and your local community
- will also raise your profile and provide good public relations opportunities.

If you are planning to organise an event, the main priority of which is to raise funds as opposed to improving the profile of the museum, a committee or organising group is vital. An appeals committee is the best long-term solution so that you can plan a strategy and know who has which responsibilities and at what point their services are required.

It is also important that staff and volunteers comply with legislation regarding working with adults at risk or children where applicable.

Organising an event

Charity events are now so popular that there is a temptation to have an event simply for its own sake. It is important from the outset to identify exactly what you are aiming to achieve and to keep these aims in mind when planning and executing the event. Events take up an enormous amount of time and energy, so be sure before you begin that all this effort would not be better spent otherwise.

Make sure that any event or activity that you are organising fits into your overall strategy. Would it be better to approach a local company or a trust for the money? You must be sure that an event will be the most appropriate solution to your financial and/or publicity requirements. Once you have decided that running an event is appropriate, you can go into more detailed planning of the event itself - all the time bearing in mind your strategic aims and objectives and assessing all your plans for the event in that context.

Consider your target audience. Is the kind of event you are planning to run appropriate for your audience? Is it the kind of event they are likely to want to take part in and support? Are you trying to attract a new audience? Is the kind of event that would be attractive to the new audience the same kind of event you would normally run? Would running something completely different isolate your existing audience?

Once you have an appropriate event, you must then make sure that it is practicable. Do you have adequate resources within your staff, volunteers, friends, etc to run the event? You must be realistic, particularly about the time required to plan, organise and execute the event.

Be aware of your responsibilities

There is a plethora of licenses and permits for which you may need to apply when running events. Always check with your local authority and the police **before** you embark on an event. Sometimes the laws relating fundraising can seem quite complicated and put people off organising such things. The following simple guidelines should help keep you on the right track.

Public entertainment licences

A Public Entertainment Licence is required when two or more people are performing or dancing. Ask the venue before you hire it if you are not using your own museum space. For events in non-licensed venues, e.g. for a ceilidh, you can apply for a temporary Public Entertainment Licence. Apply three months in advance. Phone the local council and ask for advice from someone in the licensing section. There is likely to be some sort of charge though this will vary from council to council.

This is to ensure the safety of equipment and fire provisions. For outdoor events, local authorities will generally not be interested unless music is the main attraction.

Liquor licenses

If you wish to sell alcohol, you will need a license. If you use a venue which is already licensed, you won't have any problems (ask your venue). If you need a license, you will have to apply to the local Magistrates Court at least one month in advance giving details of the event.

Street collection permits

Apply to your local authority for a permit and comply with the following regulations

- you must be over 16 to collect
- you must not annoy or obstruct people
- collectors must stand at least 25 metres apart
- a list of collectors and box numbers must be kept.

Lotteries

Small lotteries, raffles, tombolas, etc. are exempt from the Lotteries and Amusements Act providing that

- they are not the main attraction of an event
- the whole activity takes place during the event and on the site of the event
- the lottery or raffle must not be advertised outside the premises; tickets must be sold during the event, not before or after. If you wish to sell tickets over a period of time before or after the event, you will need to register with the local authority and a charge will be made
- the draw must take place during the event, not after
- you cannot offer cash prizes and the prizes should not exceed £50 in total value
- all profits must go to the charity involved
- there must be no element of private gain (profits to an individual or commercial enterprise) involved in the event from the event.

Competitions

Any activity in which the outcome is decided by skill or judgement is a competition. There are no limits on the amount of money taken or the value of the prizes. A draw is classed as a competition if there is some element of skill, for example, a tie-break question.

Public areas, footpaths and rivers

These areas will be covered by bye-laws. Ask your local council before you use these areas. For example, a raft race might require permission from the local River or Waterways Authority.

Stages

If you are erecting any kind of structure, for example a scaffolding stage, use a professional company to build it so that the onus for safety is on them.

Food and Safety Act (1990)

This Act applies if food is being sold by an organisation 'in trade', for example at a charity shop or Women's Institute market. If food is being sold regularly in a commercial fashion - on a market stall, for example - you are obliged to register with the local council and those preparing and selling the food will need to undertake basic training in food hygiene. Groups organising occasional cake stalls, coffee mornings and the like are not covered by this Act. For further information, telephone Food Sense on 0181 694 8862 for a copy of *The Food Safety Act, 1990* and *You - A Guide for the Food Industry*.

Inflatable "castles"

At present there are no laws covering this area but please bear in mind the following

- the castle should be tied down with guy ropes
- an adult should be present within the castle to help children
- restrict the number of children and ages
- only use the castle when fully inflated
- check that the equipment is insured by the hire company.

Points to consider when organising an event

Using an organising committee

Make sure each member of the committee has a clear understanding

- of what they are supposed to be doing
- that they do not overlap (unless they are required to)
- that they are fully informed as to the requirements and progress of the event
- that they are comfortable with, have time for, and are enthusiastic about their role.

Planning

Give yourself a long lead-in time.
Start planning the event as far ahead as possible.
Make several checklists and write everything down.

Prepare a detailed budget

Make a list of all the things that are needed for the event. What can you borrow or try to get donated? One of the easiest ways of losing money for your project is to organise an event which has high cost commitments.

You will want to minimize any financial risk from the event. Budget carefully and put a contingency figure in your budget for unforeseen costs. Insure against rain if you are holding an outdoor event.

Publicity

Good publicity is essential to the success of your event. Depending on the primary purpose of your event, i.e. promotion of the museum to improve its profile and/or to raise money, you should consider

- posters
- handbills
- local and national newspapers
- radio and television
- any free publicity you can get.

Write an exciting press release with an interesting angle. Use celebrities or "wacky" photo opportunities. Local radio stations often have "What's On" slots which are free. Free newspapers may also be able to help with this. The important thing is to use the mix of publicity opportunities to get to your target audience.

After the event

Hold a debriefing session. Take note of any feedback received from those attending. Learn from the experience. Look closely at any problems which arose. Write a brief report on the whole event for future reference. Send a report and any photographs to your local paper.

Above all, do not forget to thank everyone involved from your volunteers to any sponsors. You may need to enlist their help again.

Prestige events

This is a broad category of events which can include premieres, gala evenings and charity balls. The main shared characteristic is a necessity to have a committee to sell the tickets. The profit lies not primarily in ticket sales but in the advertising carried by the souvenir programme, tombolas, raffles etc. If not carefully managed, these can very easily lose money.

Prestige events tend to have high fixed commitments; e.g. room hire, catering, entertainment and programmes. You should budget so that the revenue from ticket sales will cover the cost of your event. For this reason, you must be certain that you will sell all the tickets. One way of doing this is get firm undertakings from the members of your ticket committee to sell a certain number of tickets each and to guarantee the cost of any of their quota which are left unsold. This is asking a lot of the people concerned but, if you have the right people on your committee, they will be able to do this.

The organising committee for a prestige event is extremely important. The key appointment will be the Chairperson. He/she does not have to be someone who knows how to run an event, but someone who has leadership qualities and the good management sense to link the commercial needs of the event to the requirements of your project. Members of the committee should have a breadth of experience: for example, an accountant may be extremely useful to guide you through VAT etc.

An accurate **budget** is essential if you are to run a profitable event. At an early stage, you will need to make an assessment of all the likely costs and potential sources of income. Make sure you include a substantial contingency figure in your expenditure. Aim to offset costs by attracting sponsorship and donations.

The **promotion** of the event is very important. Identify your target market. Try to get media coverage from an early stage. Involving celebrities will attract attention and may allow you to charge more for your tickets. Talk to your local tourist board, local enterprise company etc.

Events are ideal vehicles for **sponsorship**. You should have a clear idea as to how much money you are seeking from a sponsor and what benefits you are able to offer in return. One of the key items that can carry a sponsor's message, and those of other advertisers, is the souvenir brochure. Almost any event needs a brochure, which should be glossy and of high quality, contain details of the programme, pictures of the patron and celebrities, the names of all committee members and of course advertising. It is important to have a rate card, giving advertising rates for full page, half page and quarter page and premium places. Check with the organisers of other recent events to find out what their rates were, and pitch your rates at current levels. Sales of advertising space can generate a significant income and then further income can be generated from sales of the programme.

Knowing your target audience will help to achieve advertising sales. The companies to whom you wish to sell advertising space should have the same target audience as you have targeted.

With careful planning, you can ensure that names and addresses of all those who attended, or helped with the event are recorded. This can provide a mailing list for donations or for future events.

Useful publications

PASSINGHAM, S, ed.

Tried and tested ideas for raising money locally. 3rd ed London, Directory of Social Change, 2003.

GILCHRIST, K.

Promoting your cause. London, Directory of Social Change, 2002.

GRAY, J & ELSDEN, S.

Organising Special Events. London, Directory of Social Change, 2000.

This is one of a number of related factsheets written for the Council's member museums covering aspects of fundraising. For full details of titles available, contact the Council's Fundraising and Development Adviser.

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