

Ideas for a Fundraising Event

1. Collection

The easiest method of asking for gifts is through a collection at a Music Sunday service. If at all possible, get an envelope and pen into everyone's hands for filling out their Gift Aid information before the collection. This has the added benefit of allowing RSCM to thank the donors directly and to ask if we may list their names in the Annual Report. We now thank donors of any size of gift. Great oaks from little acorns grow!

When submitting the split proceeds of the collection, remember to send a copy or scan of the envelope (see separate downloadable templates for Gift Aid envelopes), and ensure that the amount submitted is written on the outside.

2. Music Marathon and Sponsored Sing

This is what it sounds like: a lot of people or groups performing one musical piece after another. While you could go all out and collect sponsorship for the marathon, the slightly easier route that Peterston-super-Ely St Peter's took in 2009 was to open the church from 9.00am to 9.00pm and charge a £5 admission that allowed people to come and go. They contacted local media and put flyers and posters around their village and in surrounding towns. They also recruited musicians outside their church and choir, with the result that they had 150 performers and 200 individuals involved. Money was also raised from selling refreshments throughout the day.

Use the separate downloadable Gift Aid sign-up sheet to easily collect information from donors, and benefit from the extra 28p for each pound collected.

An alternative approach is to collect sponsorship for individuals or the whole choir taking part, being sponsored per hymn, psalm or anthem. See the downloadable sponsorship form template on the webpage, which can be adapted for your own use.

3. Concert

In 2009, St Paul's Church, Craig y Don, Llandudno held a music weekend in their church as part of a wider event happening in the town. The programme for Saturday afternoon consisted of:

- 12:00 Syrinx, a recorder consort
- 1:00 Mountain Oyster Band (folk group)
- 2:00 African Drums demonstration
- 3:00 Organ recital
- 4:00 Recital by *Amici del Canto*, a local choir

This varied mix of musical content in short programmes was ideal for people popping in and out of the church between attending other events nearby.

Alternatively, you could take advantage of the full range of musical talent in the church by putting on a more ambitious concert. As well as including the church choir and pieces from your music group or organist, you'll be surprised how many hidden talents are waiting to be discovered!

You can download from the webpage the programme from a Music Sunday concert in 2010 by St Martin's Church in Heaton, Yorkshire.

You can keep it simple by having a suggested donation upon entry or a collection following the concert, but selling tickets in advance will mean that your audience is more likely to turn up!

Concerts are a wonderful opportunity to bring people into church who would not otherwise attend services. See the separate downloadable advice on publicising your event and getting coverage about your concert in the local media.

4. Cheese and Wine Evening

Much of the advice that follows has been adapted from an article by Eric V Orange on www.localwineevents.com.

The idea of a Cheese and Wine fundraiser is similar to the coffee morning, except that you are offering a more upscale event with tastings of (preferably local) wine and cheese.

To begin with, an ideal wine and cheese/food event should involve key people from these segments of your local food/wine businesses:

- A local retail wine shop
- Local cheese shop/bakery/restaurants
- Any food or wine-related purveyor that you can tap (for example: bottled water supplier)
- Several local wine wholesalers
- Several local wine suppliers

A Word of Caution: There are laws and regulations regarding use of alcohol at events. Get in touch with your local council and ask whether you need a drinks licence. It should be quite simple to arrange, so long as you remember to do it in advance.

Next, approach your local retail wine shop, especially if you are a customer of theirs. Perhaps someone in your organisation has an inside contact. Because local wine shops are customers of the wholesalers and suppliers, they can influence them to help support your event. Ideally, that means the wholesalers and suppliers send the wine/drink products as a donation (free) AND a representative to pour and present the products to your attendees.

Try to get a written statement from merchants of the value of products donated so that the RSCM can credit them for an in-kind gift and list them on our website as donors.

Keep in mind that a retailer may be more likely to help if:

- It's a good cause
- It's good timing
- It's good for their business

If you cannot secure a retail wine shop, the next step is to try the suppliers and wholesalers directly. You will need to work hard to sell your particular fundraiser over the myriad of others who call looking for donations. Often, budgets set aside for such expenditures tend to dwindle to nothing by the end of the year, so making contacts early in the New Year can offer you a better chance.

Do not expect one company to support your entire event, though it's not unheard of. Rather, secure small amounts from as many suppliers and wholesalers as you can. One mistake often made is to make do with the first connection and unintentionally exclude participation from other area suppliers and wholesalers. A significant benefit with having a greater number of industry insiders aware of your event is that it can create impact for overall buzz and attendance of the event.

Other resources and helpful tips:

Local vineyards: In these days of global warming, English wine production is on the rise, both in quantity and quality. A local vineyard is likely to be open to offering something, provided the demographic of your attendees is in line with those desired by the winery.

Attend other events: Look at similar events nearby and contact the host. Ideally, it would be best to attend their event and schedule a meeting with the host shortly thereafter (keep in mind that it is usually too hectic to have their attention before or during the event). If you are traveling, check the www.localwineevents.com schedule for that area to see if there are any events to attend.

Venues: You probably have a built-in venue at your church or cathedral, but sometimes, thinking outside the norm can have a good impact. Interesting events can take place in museums, aquariums, theatres, concert halls, steam trains, mansions, farms... The more unique (within reason) your venue, the more buzz you are likely to create.

Food: Canapés or buffet, provided and served by a local caterer or restaurant.

Wine tables: The wine tables will almost all need ice buckets to chill the whites. You will probably also need to supply waste disposal and glass-washing facilities.

Money/expenses: You may have to put some money down or make purchases prior to the event before you sell a single ticket.

Income: How much you charge has a direct effect on the turnout to your event. Even in support of a worthy cause, people want to know that they get at least a modicum of value for their money.

Also, the entrance price will be a determining factor in the type and number of attendees. Be aware that with a low price, you're apt to get a lot of people at your event, so you should plan your supplies accordingly. As you raise your entrance price, the crowd will be inclined to pay more attention to quality instead of quantity. The downside is that as the price goes up, you will have fewer attendees.

Do not collect Gift Aid information for a cheese and wine event, even if it is presented as a “suggested donation”. However, *any additional funds raised during the event will be eligible for Gift Aid*, making every £10 donated worth £12.80, divided between RSCM and the hosting organization. Be sure to have either Gift Aid envelopes or the sign-up sheet available (see separate downloadable templates).

Quantities: Most bottled wine is sold in 750ml bottles. That can equal about 5 or 6 glasses per bottle, or about 12 tasting portions. If guests are drinking by the glass with food (as opposed to sipping multiple tastes), allow 2 to 2½ glasses per person in the first hour and 1 to 1½ glasses for the second hour. After the second hour, it will probably be one glass or less per hour per person.

You will need both red and white wine for certain, and you may wish to include champagne and/or other sparkling wine. If you plan to serve other beverages such as beer, you'll need to plan quantities for those as well.

Selling tickets: A major event would need advance reservations; in the Music Sunday context it should be sufficient to ask people to RSVP (so that you can plan your food and drink supplies) and pay at the door.

Insurance: Make sure your venue has the correct cover for this event.

Volunteers: The more volunteers you recruit, the better. The ideal would be to have enough people to rotate shifts, allowing those on off-time to also enjoy the event. Volunteers can help refill ice buckets, clear waste and refill water jugs.

Don't forget to provide feedback on your event to help others next year (see separate downloadable feedback form).

5. Barbecue

Adapted from www.faithclipart.com

Take advantage of good summer weather with a barbecue! It can be great fun, and an easy way to provide a good, low cost meal for a lot of people.

Allow plenty of time when planning your event, and make sure you have enough volunteers to help with setting up, cooking, serving and clearing. Members of your congregation could be asked to each bring a covered dish or a dessert, in addition to the main barbecued fare you'll be providing.

A lovely riverside piece garden might be perfect for an event like this, so it's worth asking around to find someone willing to allow the church to use their property for a Saturday afternoon. And some musical entertainment would be ideal – especially for a celebration of Music Sunday!

Make sure that there's a clear chain of communication between you and your volunteers. It will help to have a master list of what everyone is bringing or contributing.

Think about your budget, and how much you'll be able to spend while still turning a decent profit. Consider contacting local shops, department stores, and party planners who might be willing to donate food, drinks, plates, napkins, cutlery, tables, chairs, cooking equipment, and just about everything else you'll need to make sure everyone has a fantastic time. Depending upon the intended location of your

barbecue, it's also a good idea to arrange for a tent to be set up, so that there is shelter from the sun (or rain!).

If you receive help from local businesses, be sure to publicly thank them for their support. Arranging for charitable contributions will help keep your costs low, increasing the profitability of your fundraising.

Is there another high-traffic event going on in your town about the same time you'd like to hold your barbecue? If so, consider co-ordinating your fundraiser with that gathering - it's often possible to pick up foot traffic from nearby events, and that means more money for your Music Sunday.

Try a quiz at £1 per play (there are lots of websites where you can find quiz questions) or a raffle (see www.raisingfunding.co.uk for rules on running a raffle) for more fun, and more opportunities to raise money.

6. Coffee Morning

Adapted from www.ideasfundraising.co.uk

Coffee mornings are a great British tradition. Large or small, they are the perfect activity for conversing, mingling, and raising money for a charitable cause.

Finding a venue:

One of the great things about holding a fundraising coffee morning is that your event can be any size you like. Choice of venue plays a big role in this, so you will need to decide where you'll hold your coffee morning before you proceed with planning.

Fundraising coffee mornings are commonly held at homes or in the workplace. These places offer a cosy setting, along with easy accessibility for those attending. Homes and most offices also have kitchens and seating areas for your guests.

If you're planning a larger coffee morning, you can also investigate spaces within your local community. As your event is being held during the morning hours, community halls and businesses may let you use their space for free or for a reduced rate. In fact, a local business may benefit greatly from having so many guests come into their shop at a typically slow time for sales!

If you do decide to hold your coffee morning in a community area, you will need to visit the premises beforehand to determine how many people the space can accommodate and ensure it's appropriate for your coffee morning.

Planning your coffee morning:

Once you've chosen your coffee morning venue, choose a date that is far enough in the future so you can make adequate plans; this will also ensure that more people are able to plan ahead and attend.

Coffee mornings can be very basic set-ups, or you can choose to optimise the event for additional fundraising. Initially, all you need is a facility to make and serve coffee, and a collection box for donations (and don't forget the Gift Aid envelopes and pens (see separate downloadable templates).

You should plan in advance whether you're going to sell coffee for a fixed price or accept any donation as a goodwill gesture. Determining how much it actually costs to make a cup of coffee is instrumental in making this decision.

Also, make sure you collect donations in a prominent place. Don't be ashamed to ask for additional donations or talk about your fundraising cause; that's why people are there!

Additional fundraising opportunities:

Although you can raise a decent amount of funds by holding a basic, no-frills coffee morning, you may also wish to take advantage of additional fundraising opportunities, such as selling cakes and biscuits or holding a raffle or contest (see separate download with rules on running a raffle).

You can double or triple your fundraising during a coffee morning by holding additional activities. The longer people linger at your coffee morning, the more money you'll raise for your charitable cause!

Publicising your coffee morning:

How, and to what extent, you advertise your fundraising coffee morning depends primarily on your choice of venue.

For a smaller gathering, like in a home or small office, you can simply invite people by word of mouth or by sending invitations. However, you should ask people to RSVP for a home or office coffee morning, so you don't under-prepare for the number of guests who will attend.

For a community coffee morning, you'll need a bit more publicity. Make signs to advertise your event, with the date, time and location displayed prominently. Also, ask permission from local businesses to leave fliers on the counter for interested parties. You can even go door-to-door or make announcements at other local events, such as bingo or school recitals, to publicise your event. (See the separate downloadable advice on publicising an event for more ideas.)

On the day:

Be sure to arrive at the venue early to set up chairs and start making coffee. It's inevitable that some people will arrive ahead of schedule!

It's a good idea to have someone positioned near the door to recommend donations and inform people of other events taking place (such as cake sales or contests). Remember, you will need to set your own policy about minimum donation amounts; however, most people who come to a coffee morning understand the process and are happy to contribute without prompting.

Once your event is in full swing, all that's left to do is mingle, keep the coffee pot brewing and tell people about Music Sunday and why you are raising money.