



Countryside Jobs Service

Focus on Fundraising & Promotion

**In association with the
Environmental Funders Network**



Environmental
Funders Network

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Relevant Writing

By Hugh Raven, John Ellerman Foundation

It troubles me when I hear grant-making colleagues comment that the worst applications they receive are from environmental NGOs. Arts ones are generally better, though suffer from arts-speak; health can be over-technical. Education bids need to show the applicant is well educated. Social welfare applications vary, as you might expect. Occasionally an environment application is very good. Far more often, it isn't. It pains me, as an environmentalist, to admit we often don't show ourselves at our best.

So I thought I'd suggest some tips – Raven's Rules for Relevant Writing, if you will. I hope you find them useful.

1. Read the guidelines.

Don't waste your time, or the readers', with applications to organisations that have already said – albeit implicitly – they won't fund you. Check the website too, and see what else they fund. If the guidelines rule out unsolicited appeals, save your energy and don't send one. Likewise capital projects. If the foundation only supports work at a national scale, don't submit for routine work on a county basis. London is London – it isn't England, still less the UK. Interpretations of 'national' will vary, but if in doubt, address and explain it in your application. Read the preferences and exclusions in detail: they will not have been dreamt up overnight, and will be carefully crafted to save potential applicants time.

2. Be clear about what you want to achieve.

Most foundations these days obsess about outcomes, and many think hard about what that actually means, and how it can be measured. I'm guessing very few have cracked it, but they will want to know that you're thinking about it too. More workshops on climate change is not an outcome. An outcome is lower carbon emissions and energy bills.

Some things are very hard to measure – changing public opinion, for example, is notoriously difficult to prove. But you can at least show you've tried your best.

3. Take care how you write it.

If you don't know the difference between principals and principles, they're and their, don't presume that your readers won't either. They probably will. Look it up. Don't use jargon. Avoid basic errors. Don't say it's unique, critical, or innovative, unless it is. I've been amazed to see how many applicants mis-spell the name of the organisation to which they're applying. See it through their eyes: if they work for, say, the Porcupine Foundation, they don't need to be particularly prickly to be dismayed if you call it procupine. When you think you're finished, get someone outside your organisation to look it over. A fresh pair of eyes is usually helpful.

4. Pay attention to the numbers.

Few grant-makers are trained accountants (though some are), but all will know the basics of reading a statutory return, and will have read enough spreadsheets, management accounts and budgets to know what stacks up and what doesn't. Make them easy to understand, and explain apparent anomalies. Be sure to understand them yourself, so when questioned, you know what you're talking about. Be clear about your reserves – and if you've got three years' unrestricted funding in the bank, you'll struggle to raise more.

5. Show you can work with others.

If you can demonstrate you complement the work of similar organisations, it will help: get them to send you a supportive quote. Better still, append helpful letters on headed paper to your application from organisations that might be expected to be rivals or competitors. If you can't, consider how you might develop a partnership – and put it in the bid. It's not essential, but it casts a constructive light.

6. Tailor the bid to the funder.

Make sure you're familiar with the funder's process, and how much information they require and when. If stage one required two pages, don't send four. Check out their average grant size, and unless you've very good reason, don't depart too far from that figure in your bid.

7. Be available and responsive.

You've got to hope your application is going to be favourably received. Even the best-written ones often leave questions begging. So be around to give a timely response. Don't submit the week before you go off on sabbatical – or if you do, make sure a colleague is very well briefed. Few things will irritate a grants assessor more than not getting an answer to legitimate follow-up questions.

8. Don't overdo it.

Foundation staff, in my experience, are usually (but not always) courteous, attentive, and good at their jobs. They want to develop a friendly relationship with you on a professional basis. They don't want to be your best mate, and certainly don't expect to be hassled. Respond to their questions, then leave them alone. The telephone is often the best means of first contact, then e-mail, unless the 'phone is what they suggest. Email is flexible and less time-sensitive, so you and they can answer when it's convenient to do so. Don't send too much information: excess is as burdensome to them as too little.

We need more funding for the environment, but we can do a lot better ourselves. I hope these tips are useful. Please think about them when you're preparing your bids. Good luck.

Hugh Raven chairs the Environmental Funders Network. He's a trustee of the John Ellerman Foundation, and co-owner of Ardtornish Estate.

Find out more about the network on www.greenfunders.org

The article first appeared on the Environmental Funders Network Blog

www.greenfunders.org/blog

These are changing times in the countryside sector, and meetings or consultation events need good facilitators. Facilitation brings many benefits: genuine participation by everyone and time spent fruitfully and enjoyably. Mandy facilitates a wide range of events, and has an inclusive, adaptable, well-organised style.

There are also times when you, as an individual, could do with input for yourself. You may be lacking in direction or self-belief, feel overwhelmed by work, or want to explore new possibilities. Mandy's coaching style is insightful, warm and sensible, and may be just what you need. For a no-obligation chat, call Mandy on 07979 454428 or email mandy@mandysims.com. www.mandysims.com

Mandy Sims

Coaching, Training & Facilitation

Fundraising, is it just asking for the money?

I have the dubious honour of being the first ever professional fundraiser employed by a National Park. The Yorkshire Dales NPA had the foresight in 1995 to see that any organisation whose ambition was always going to be greater than government funding needed to professionalise and diversify its funding options.

The impact was profound, with the establishment of the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust a separate but supportive charity, fundraising to support the Park objectives of conservation, and community development. A grant of £4m from the Millennium Commission kick started this charity which invested in a professional fundraising team that has now raised over £27m through lottery grants, support from the corporate sector, charitable trusts and is



Ingleborough (Picture courtesy of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority)

benefitting from having a well developed public fundraising programme and legacy campaign which will ensure the long term sustainability of this charity, independent of any statutory grants, impacts of Brexit or government whims.

Because of this experience I was asked to go and speak to over twenty different local authorities, National Park authorities, AONB and conservation charities in the next three years who wanted to look at how they could establish a fundraising operation. Interestingly despite traumatic cuts in funding that has been going on for nearly 10 years the number of protected areas and National Parks actually running a professional fundraising operation has hardly changed and is incredibly low. Despite the fundraising success of organisations like the Wildlife Trusts, and Canal and Rivers Trust and some of the national conservation organisations the statutory agencies and local authorities still struggle to grasp the concept despite the fact they may be conserving or protecting the country's most popular and well loved and visited landscapes, wildlife, fauna, forests, fells, lakes, coasts and mountains.

Previously I ran the fundraising training courses at Losehill Hall, then owned by the Peak District National Park Authority before their lack of funding led to its closure. I worked with Mandy Sims one of their lead trainers over a period of nearly ten years up to its closure in 2010. Somewhere in the region of 200 fundraisers from environmental and conservation charities, local authorities and other organisations, spent 3 days learning the basic fundraising skills necessary to put together a Fundraising Strategy and deliver it successfully. The crucial elements of this were identifying the main aim of the organisation, the key areas that would ensure this aim was met, qualifying what funding was needed to do this and identifying the potential funding sources, building relationships and influencing the potential donors, and then finally actually asking for money.

The intention of this process was to ensure that delegates were aware that fundraising is a long term professional activity that requires investment of both money and staffing. Not something to be tacked on to someone else's job or just a matter of finding a few sources of money and sending off an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Limestone pavement (Picture courtesy of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority)

Since those far off days a huge amount of change has happened. The lottery funds are still major sources of grants but austerity and Brexit have already had serious impacts on sources of funding.

The transformation of digital technology has had a major impact on fundraising models and techniques and also the concept of how to go about campaigning. Just look at organisations like 38 Degrees, generating hundreds of thousands of new supporters who they ask for money every week through email contacts at virtually zero cost.

It was originally web sites that were thought to be the magic solution to fundraising. Just put up some great

photos, some well written text and a button to click on and the money or new members would come rolling in. Then it was Facebook and Twitter that the amateur fundraiser was convinced would enable them to bring in the money. No? Well what about Justgiving.com, text fundraising, crowdfunding?

The crucial missing factor here is that these are just different methods of asking and if you haven't done the preparation work before hand it makes no difference which method you use it is unlikely to be successful in providing long term sustainable funds or significant amounts for capital appeals.

What's more asking for the wrong amount of money from the wrong person at the wrong time for the wrong project in the wrong way can cause serious long term damage to the organisation.

Some conservation organisations have been dependent on membership fees to fund their operations, sending out paper newsletters three times a year providing membership cards, reminder letters for late payers, admin costs increasing with NMW, pension and postage costs. Dropping the paper newsletter for ten "mailchimp" e-news can save thousands but can alienate the older supporters who either don't use email or dislike reading newsletters online. It can also remove the opportunity to include well crafted traditional fundraising asks.

38 Degrees, the Labour Party, Government Petitions have shown the power of engaging younger people in various causes, a completely new method and new audience perhaps for your organisation? But how to do this and would it work for you. Have you got a social media and on line marketing plan? Have you got a comprehensive fundraising strategy that the senior leadership team have signed up to? Have you got someone working for, or with, you who is a professional that knows who to ask, when to ask, what to ask for?

If you are floundering with your fundraising, it may be time to get some advice from someone who can look at your organisation and put together a plan that can deliver long term sustainable funding. What you shouldn't do is sit back and hope that the government is going to come over the hill with large amounts of money to rescue your organisation. You know this isn't going to happen!

Richard Witt
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Every year, £175,000 is available through the Yorkshire Dales National Park's Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) to help fantastic projects get off the ground in the National Park. The SDF supports schemes that promote a more sustainable way of living in, working in and visiting the National Park, while conserving and enhancing its local culture, wildlife, landscape and communities. <http://c-js.co.uk/2qiZK47>

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Paddy Hunter-Murphy MSc CFRE MInstF is one of the few fundraising consultants with over 30 years experience. He specialises in capital appeals, major donors, trusts & foundations, corporate fundraising and legacy marketing. Clients include animal welfare, conservation and environment charities such as Secret World Wildlife Rescue and Rhino Ark (Kenya). First 1-2 hour consultation meeting is free. Tel 07957 292599 info@paddyhuntermurphy.co.uk

A day in the life of Jaanika Reinvald, Visitor Experience Assistant for the National Trust



Jaanika at the annual Rock Climbing Taster Session (National Trust)

I work at Brimham Rocks, a relatively small countryside property that attracts over 200,000 visitors a year, the vast majority of them come at weekends and in school holidays. The marketing challenges for the property are twofold. We need the high visitor numbers to raise the money essential for running the site on a daily basis as well as fund the ambitious conservation projects. At the same time, though, we do not really want to increase the overall visitor numbers, rather spread their flow evenly all around the year. As a result our promotional strategy is simple – only market the site during quieter times of the visitor season to attract guests in off-peak season.

We raise funds to support our conservation work, in particular the installation of new footpaths. Upgrading our infrastructure is necessary to keep up with the ever growing visitor numbers. As we are a small property it is commonplace that the staff get involved in all aspects of the site management. As a result most property staff and volunteers do a bit of fundraising in the form of raffle ticket sales.

My typical workday :

8.30am

Meeting with the representative of a local business, an independent farm-based ice-cream parlour, to discuss mutually beneficial promotional schemes. We discover that the profile of our customers is very similar – both sites attract a majority of families with young kids. Our conclusion is clear - in order to keep the visitors in the region for longer and help them plan a full day out some cross-promotion is necessary. During the trial phase we swap posters, flyers and leaflets, agree on another meeting in a couple of months to compare the outcome and see whether our strategy has born fruit.

9.30am

The deadline for the next regional newsletter is looming on the horizon - it is time to write an article, for example, about our amazing Christmas offer, expanding crafts programme or new walking trails. Having already collected details about the new product ranges in retail, local produce available in catering it is time to visit the conservation department and see what their plans are for the season.



Volunteer selling raffle tickets at the gazebo (National Trust)

10.15am

Updating property marketing and communications plan – a vital tool for observing the progress of each promotional channel from central promotion and web content to press releases and social media.

10.30am

Daily morning staff briefing.

11am

Property facilities open for visitors. This is also the time when we start with active raffle ticket sales. Together with the raffle volunteers we set up the gazebo next to the busiest footpath. Successful raffle ticket sales depend on the number of visitors engaged. As all our fundraising efforts are currently going towards new footpaths families with buggies and mobility scooters buy the highest number of tickets.

12noon

A marketing volunteer has arrived to discuss current promotional opportunities. It appears that she has come across a work of art depicting an iconic view of our site by a well-known artist and is sure that unveiling this piece of art and sending out a press release beforehand will help us attract more independent adults. We



Painting done by Landscape Artist of the Year 2016 finalist Gregor Henderson displayed by a volunteer (National Trust)

arrange a photo shoot for the following Friday to capture the painting with the depicted view.

Before lunch there is just enough time to review our web page. We need to make sure the information is tailored to the needs of a first-time visitor. This is an excellent opportunity to train the volunteer in the use of the web content management system.

2pm

Meeting the videography volunteer to discuss the topic for the next video clip. As a site concentrating on nature conservation we are keen to promote our wildlife. It is spring and we agree that ground-nesting birds are an excellent choice for the next video clip. The shooting and editing of the video is a time-consuming activity, thus

presenting the clips is postponed until next spring. We also discuss the possibility of filming the life of rabbit

populations throughout the year. The length of these video clips is fixed – under one minute for social media, around five minutes for use on property web pages.

3.30pm

Raffle volunteers have finished their day. On a sunny day they may have sold over 30 tickets.

4pm

Catch-up with the site manager discussing the potential crowdfunding. There are many aspects of infrastructure that need upgrading on site – is crowdfunding an avenue to be further explored?

5.30pm

Attend fundraising webinar explaining the mechanisms of a crowdfunding project.

7pm

Presentation at a local community museum with the aim to raise awareness of the site and the economic impact it has on the region.

To sum it up, our budget for paid promotion is small. Hence, we concentrate on maximising free opportunities by writing press releases, using social media channels, attending local meetings, using in-kind promotion with local businesses and making sure we stand out through central promotion in the organisation such as regional newsletters and email campaigns.



Brimham Rocks panorama (Matt Clark)

Generally I can say that being involved with promotion and fundraising at a property in a large independent charity comes with its own inherent challenges. On the one hand there is a lot of in-house expertise and help available, on the other hand everything must follow the organisational brand guidelines. This role is an excellent stepping stone for people interested in a career in marketing or fundraising.

Find out more about Brimham Rocks at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/brimhamrocks

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Interview with Dawn Bebe, Co-founder & Director of Crowdfunder



You've obviously been very successful in the media field, when & why did you set up Crowdfunder?



Dawn Bebe (Crowdfunder)

I and my co-founders noticed something happening in America called crowdfunding, an interesting idea and could help connect people & resources so we set about trying to develop a platform.

There were already a couple of platforms in America, Kickstarter & Indigogo that were well known but it was very early days in UK terms. We launched about 3 years ago and now we are the number 1 crowdfunding platform in the UK.

What makes crowdfunding different from other ways of raising money?

It involves promotion of your project to a crowd who then pledge money on your great idea in return for a reward. This can be a product, benefit or service so something in kind that you give back to the people who have pledged money. In this way it's quite different from going to the bank and applying for a loan or applying to a funding body for a grant.

A lot of our readers work for tiny charities, if you are within a small organisation are you able to provide anything in the way of rewards?

Yes, rewards don't have to be anything expensive so you could perhaps offer a tweet of thankyou. Often people offer unique money can't buy experiences so for example if you were raising money for a park or a new trail say you could be the first person to walk along the trail or you could have a party at the end of the trail for you and your friends so things that don't necessarily need to cost a load of money but you need to be creative with what you offer back.

The site has to make money so is there a charge?

We charge 5% upon success, so if a project successfully hits their target we charge 5% of the money that you raise. If projects are worried about that 5% we suggest they put their target up by 5% to cover the cost.

There are 2 ways of crowdfunding; first is all or nothing and you set a target, if you don't reach that target no money is taken, the pledgers don't give anything. The other is flexi funding where you set a target but you keep what you raise, there would then be the charge of 5% on the total reached.

Do people have to be technically savvy to use the site?

No you don't have to be, the site is very simple to use and if you can send an email or take a picture or video on your phone then you've probably got enough skills to be able to do it. We also recommend if people lack some of the skills needed that they get in a team to help them. So older people might ask their grandchildren or friends to help write the copy or make the video. We strongly recommend you don't do it on your own.

Setting up the project does take time as with anything but you have to weigh it up against not having the money or applying for loans &/or grants. People will comment afterwards that they got the money quicker than if they had applied for a loan or grant. Essentially once you've set up your project and you start to crowdfund you've set a length of time, typically 30 to 60 days for the project to run, once you've hit your target and the fundraise ends you get the money within a couple of days so it depends how you view the time it takes & time vs effort.

Lots of people do small raises, for example £100. The average project on the site is about £2000 but we have had people raising as much as £350,000 for much bigger projects.

Find out how it works <http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/how-it-works>

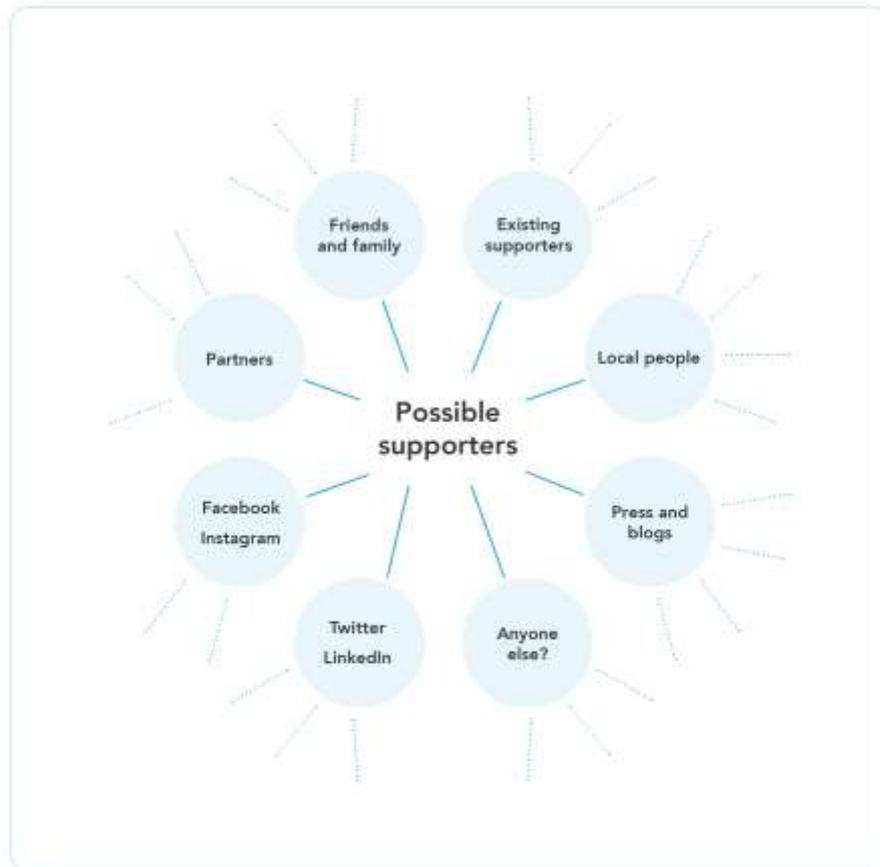
Do you do any form of promotion of projects or does the project owner promote themselves?

You need to be able to promote the project yourself. One of our first tips is to identify your network and potential backers. Crowdfunding works best when the first people to pledge are close to you, simply because if those people are not prepared to give you money it will be seen as a poor idea by the crowd.

Identifying your Crowd

You will need to engage with your personal and professional contacts to make your project a success. Usually your friends and family will be the first to pledge, with new audiences coming later. Let's look at the big picture first.

The best way to start is to gather your team together and start drawing a map of your network. Using this network map template will give you a much fuller picture of the shape and size of your Crowd. Your unique network map will be the basis for all the key elements you'll be creating next, so leave nothing out.



How to identify your crowd (Crowdfunder)

On the website there are downloadable tips & guides to read and find out how to crowdfund successfully. When you add your project to the site the system starts coaching you automatically so it starts giving you advice on what you need to do. We also offer coaching via phone and we run a series of google hangouts and online workshops that people can join and find out how to crowdfund so there's a whole raft of help & advice that people can access through the platform.

What sort of projects can the site support?

There are three types of project typically on Crowdfunder: charities, businesses & those that have community benefit. We have just launched a facility for projects to be able to receive pure donations so enabling people to just donate, without receiving a reward so in that sense it makes it even more suitable for charities. We would never suggest that people put a page up requesting money in general, the crowd wants to know what the money is going to be used for & how much the project owner needs so a very unfocused project doesn't tend to be very effective & the crowd doesn't tend to want to support general costs.

The screenshot shows the Crowdfunder website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Abby Gordon-Farleigh', 'Tools', 'Admin', and a search bar. Below that, the Crowdfunder logo and navigation links 'Start crowdfunding', 'Find project', and 'How it works' are visible. The main banner features several colorful icons (a blue circle with a leaf, a green circle with a plant, a purple circle with a lightbulb, and a pink circle with a sun) and the text '#CROWDFUND RURAL AYRSHIRE'. Below the banner, there's a section for a funding opportunity: 'Up to £5,000 of £250,000+ fund' for new and innovative projects. A 'To apply' button is present, along with links for 'Show full criteria' and 'How does this work?'. The main heading is 'Crowdfund rural Ayrshire ...an exciting new way to raise funding!'. The text below explains that Ayrshire LEADER Local Action Group has a £250,000 pledge for innovative projects. It offers a 50% match fund up to £10,000 for projects aiming to raise up to £10,000. A form is provided to register interest, with instructions to describe the idea outlining why, who, how, when, and what. A reminder to add project costs and organization type is included, along with contact information for the LEADER team.

An example of the opportunity to apply to LEADER via the website (Crowdfunder)

On Crowdfunder we also have Plus Funders facility where we hold details of grant funds. If a project is added that meets a grant criteria, the project owner will be alerted to the fact that they may be eligible and given the opportunity to apply to the fund. Although some of the grants are already out there the majority are exclusive to Crowdfunder. In essence we form partnerships with a variety of different funding partners. To give an example: Crowdfund Birmingham is a campaign launched to fund Birmingham, at the heart of which is £470,000 worth of available funds, the campaign is also offering free crowdfunding courses to help people raise the money they need.

Do you consider the site to be a one stop shop for fundraising?

Yes it can be, often projects come in attracted by the funding we have on offer but once uploaded their project attracts funding via the crowd anyway. There are two elements: the fact you can raise money relatively quickly from the crowd but also that you can source some additional funding through one of the grant funds.

Have you got any advice on setting up a successful crowdfund?

We have a lot of crowdfunding for environmental & community projects, like coast paths & tree protection to name a couple. The most important advice is to plan your project: think about how much you want to raise and who the people are that will help you raise it.

The rest is telling your story really effectively, making sure you shout about what you're doing and get people engaged with the project. You don't have to have an expensive, fancy video, you just have to convey your

message successfully. An example of a successful project is Butterfly Conservation's 'Why are our butterflies disappearing' which raised £6800 from 307 people
<http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/why-are-butterflies-disappearing>

The screenshot shows the Crowdfunder campaign page for 'Why are our butterflies disappearing?'. The page features a large image of a butterfly on a purple flower. The campaign title is 'Why are our butterflies disappearing?'. The project is by Butterfly Conservation. The campaign has 307 supporters and has successfully raised £6,810 of a £5,000 target. A 'New stretch target' section thanks supporters for their help in exceeding the original goal. A 'Rewards' section offers a £10 pledge reward, which includes a butterfly postcard and a sign-up to a monthly email newsletter. The estimated delivery date for the reward is January 2017.

A successful Crowdfunder campaign (Crowdfunder)

There are a whole range of tips and guides on the site that people can look at.
<http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/your-story/your-story>

Crowdfunding is a good way to learn to fundraise better isn't it?

Yes, we think of crowdfunding as building social capacity, capacity within communities; building skills & employability skills in people. To be able to crowdfund effectively you need to be able to market your idea, you need to be able to communicate & explain what the project is, be able to promote it, do some online work, create a video and be able to fundraise & effectively target people and ask them to support the project with money. All those skills are transferrable and generally speaking are needed for running a small business or organisation.

Our youngest crowdfunder was Dylan who was 7, for his recipe book project. If Dylan can do it then most people can have a good go. We've got crowdfunders who are in their 80's so it works right across the ages.

Finally what developments have you seen in fundraising?

The rate of growth in the crowdfunding market is absolutely massive so increasingly it is the first point of call for people who want to raise money. It's a great way for grassroots organisations or early stage businesses to provide the seed funding to get their idea happening. We're now raising in the region of £1million a month for organisations and we've raised £34million for projects across the UK in the last 3 years.

We are increasingly doing fund distribution for other organisations and are in active conversations with many local authorities and development agencies like LEADER and community infrastructure levy funding bodies. We are talking to lots of people across the UK about using their funding in a different way to reach different projects with matchfunding.

All the work of fund distribution is online with Crowdfunder so funding bodies are finding this is an effective way of distributing their fund, they come to us to administer their fund distribution and in this way they can give knowing the projects they are supporting are wanted by the crowd, they are validated by people who are matching funds with their own money.

To give you some ideas check out The Reef Project, currently crowdfunding to help create the world's first multi purpose, modular artificial reef and marine habitat. <http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/arc-marine>

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Habits for successful parks innovation

By Lydia Ragoonanan, Senior Programme Manager at Nesta

Faced with funding cuts of 60 per cent and more over the next decade, public parks in the UK are at risk. Within this context, the Heritage Lottery Fund¹ and Big Lottery Fund² (who have invested over £800m into public parks) teamed up with Nesta to run Rethinking Parks between 2014-2016; an experimental programme designed to find, test and measure the impact of new ideas to sustain public parks.



Lydia Ragoonanan (Rethinking Parks)

Rethinking Parks supported eleven teams over an 18 month period, so that the wider sector was better armed with knowledge about promising options to bridge the pressing funding gap.

We never anticipated that all ideas would work, or that any model would completely replace the need for local authority funding. What we have found, however, is that there are a number of approaches parks teams can use to help close the funding gap. Approaches with promise include Burnley Go to the Park³ - a project that is changing the park maintenance

regime from more intensive formal planting to less intensive meadows and perennials as a way to both reduce cost and increase biodiversity. Darlington Rethinking Parks⁴ encouraged regular volunteering by businesses to improve parks, whilst Bristol ParkWork⁵ has supported a number of participants into employment or training through their in-park horticultural skills and work experience programme.

Yet it's not just the idea that makes a project promising. The disciplines used to test and shape new ways to fund parks are as important as what is done.

From our experience of working with the eleven teams over the past 18 months, we think there are a set of disciplines that ought to be applied as a default for the sector, rather than just confined to Rethinking Parks. These are disciplines that, regardless of idea, should put park teams in a good position to adapt promising ideas from this programme or, crucially, inspire them to develop their own. We think these disciplines should become regular practice for people in the parks sector, and with that in mind we are calling these disciplines 'habits'.

Our seven habits for successful parks innovation are:

1. Diversify income streams

Park teams should broaden the number of income streams, layer income and look for opportunities that cut costs while enhancing people's experience

2. Understand where your money is going

Park teams should get under the skin of their finances. This practice helps identify opportunities for efficiencies, and for improvement. It's hard to know where you can go if you don't know where you are starting from. Bringing in external financial expertise to understand opportunities to improve the return on investment is often a helpful way to achieve this.



3. Involve people

It's essential to understand what people value about each park, and why. Observing, asking and involving people helps identify opportunities and barriers when developing, testing and implementing new approaches.



Go to the Park, Burnley
(Rethinking Parks)

4. Test, adapt and then do it again

The first idea is rarely the best idea. Even well thought through and researched plans need tweaking when they move from concepts to concrete projects. Approaches such as prototyping build in deliberate opportunities for testing. This way ideas can be fully launched based on testing of real people's experiences and evidence of impact.

5. Work with others

People who love parks come from all walks of life, and Rethinking Parks has demonstrated a wealth of opportunities to tap into the energy of people who love parks, but don't necessarily want to join a 'Park's Friends' group. Through partnering with others, opportunities to tap into a wider set of resources open up. So too do different skills, mind-sets, ideas and experiences. Just as the income streams need to diversify, so too do the range of partners who can support parks.

6. Secure a mandate to operate

Without permission to try new things, to test and to bring in new partners, good ideas may never get off the ground. Communicating the case for change, explaining to decision makers how risks will be managed and framing ideas within the wider strategy are ways to secure a mandate for change.

7. Be open

Cynics rarely change the world. Bringing in new ways to fund and sustain public parks requires a level of openness to challenge on behalf of local authorities and lead partners, as well as being open to a wider set of people and partners to shape decision making.

As Rethinking Parks programme participant, Simon Goff from Burnley Borough Council noted "We don't have to keep doing things the same way we've always done them."

This Learning to Rethink Parks⁶ report identifies just a few new ways our public parks can continue to thrive into the new century and I hope proves to be a useful resource for the sector in this quest.

Rethinking Parks was a £1 million Big Lottery Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund and Nesta programme designed to find, support and test new business models to sustain the UK's public parks.

More about each can be found here⁷.



London Coastal Parks and Garden Foundation, Bournemouth
(Rethinking Parks)

Footnotes

1 <https://www.hlf.org.uk/>

2 <https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/>

3 <http://www.nesta.org.uk/node/20446>

4 <http://www.nesta.org.uk/node/12425>

5 <http://www.nesta.org.uk/node/21047>

6 <http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/learning-rethink-parks>

7 <http://www.nesta.org.uk/blog/11-projects-are-rethinking-parks>

Our focus is lottery-funded programmes, working with you to deliver the most effective impact and outcomes for the scale of your project. We have an impressive track record and offer feasibility, fundraising, consultation, community engagement, business planning, project management, coaching, facilitation, monitoring and evaluation. Contact: simon@countrySIDetraining.co.uk or see www.countrySIDetraining.co.uk

Jo Byron (MinstF Cert) is a highly successful fundraising professional and trainer with a 15 year track record of securing large grants from trusts and foundations for environmental charities. Please see my website at www.jobyronfundraising.co.uk, linked in page or contact me for a free consultation at: byrontrc@gmail.com or by phone on 07807 845056.

Growing a Greener Britain's charitable objectives are: Creating improvements to free, publicly accessible green space Providing local employment opportunities through the creation of maintenance projects. Providing training and work experience opportunities in the local community. Promoting of green open spaces within the local community. You can contact us at: info@growingagreenerbritain.org

MyParkScotland – Scotland's only crowdfunding platform specifically for parks and greenspaces, helping people discover and support their local parks and greenspaces. Use the power of the "crowd" through online and text giving to help make your park or greenspace project a reality. Visit www.mypark.scot or email info@mypark.scot for more information.

Why charities need champions

In a fast-paced world that is regularly summed up in 140 characters, ambassadors enable charities to cut through the noise and reach new and existing audiences that resonate with people on both a national and local level.

Similar to any recommendation, whether it's where to go for the perfect cup of tea or a great hotel for a holiday, having peer-on-peer, celebrity, or corporate advocacy allows for charities to be promoted by the people who have benefitted, contributed or seen first-hand the benefits to derive from what the charity offers. Therefore, it's important that charities have advocates that regularly donate their time, their money or their voice to build a robust supporter network and successfully raise their brand awareness.



The real deal

In a day-to-day reality, ambassadors are so much more than cheerleaders for an organisation. As well as giving their stamp of approval, their ambassador or advocate role allows charities to reach an audience and get their message out there through a different voice that is relatable and 'gets' the cause they are championing.

It's vital that charities research and choose wisely before taking ambassadors on board and ensure that key messages and values are aligned. In order for success, the ambassador-charity relationship needs to be genuine and built of mutual understanding and agreement.



Mark Lane (Groundwork UK)

Broadcaster and gardener, Mark Lane is Groundwork's first Health, Wellbeing and Community Ambassador. His role in Groundwork is to help Groundwork meet strategic objectives by helping to raise awareness with a wider audience.

"I was inspired to get in touch with Groundwork, as I strongly believe there is a great synergy of ethos and approach to safe-guarding, improving and creating new neighbourhoods and outdoor spaces for the betterment of the environment and for the improvement to communities," said Mark.

"My landscape design career has allowed me to share first-hand the importance of re-connecting people with nature, outdoor spaces and community neighbourhoods, so I was thrilled when they asked me to become their Health, Wellbeing and Community Ambassador."

Community champions

Community champions are a different breed in that they have both the passion and the local knowledge to implement change – two things that are not easily plucked from a shelf.

For Groundwork, this stems from volunteers and people who are enrolled in our programmes and also, people who have seen physical improvements in the local community.

Community champions mobilise beneficiaries and local networks to encourage even more support, ultimately persuading them to become champions too and therefore creating a whole new division of community volunteers and fundraisers.

Irene Lewis, who lives in Hackney, London has been the driving force for a local community garden on her estate that has since helped to bring the community together. As a result of being involved in Groundwork projects, she has both gained appreciation for the charity and what we stand for, which allows for our charity values to be put in practice.

“Sandford Court is worth a million to me,” said Irene. “The space was really empty and desolate. That was when I found out about Groundwork, and I thought ‘come on girl – see what you can do!’”



Irene Lewis (Groundwork UK)

Power of the corporate

Building relationships with corporate partners allows for a different audience to learn more and relate to a charities core brand values.



Skanska (Groundwork UK)

In our experience, businesses are increasingly looking at more innovative ways of being a good corporate neighbour, through skills-based volunteering and Charity of the Year Partnerships that allow companies to proactively give back and engage with social corporate responsibilities.

“At Skanska we really take pride in our approach to the environment and being a responsible, sustainable business,” said Adam Crossley, Director of Environment at Skanska. “We love the idea of being able to contribute to a lasting legacy in the communities around where we work, so it’s great when our people get to volunteer with a partner like Groundwork who care so much about both the environment and the communities in which we work.”

The kids are alright

The lasting benefits and new vision that young people bring to the table is something that all charities should embrace.

Not only are the youth of today the next generation of fundraisers, they are also powerful advocates in their young age and in our experience, socially conscious about the world around them. Social action speaks volumes and in a social media world, a lot of this shouting happens online. The tech-savvy generation can create a buzz about a cause in a 10 second video on Snapchat and still create a lasting impact, making them a vital asset in promoting a charities brand to the wider – and future – generation.

Groundwork has recently established, ‘Groundwork Youth’, a new programme of work to help inspire and engage young people across the country to be social action and environmental advocates in their local community. By nurturing the next generation of Young Green Leaders, we can ensure that their voices are heard and more importantly, that they understand and appreciate the value of what we do and take this forward with them later in life.

“Volunteering has made me more aware of what’s around me what the issues actually are,” said Jamie, 16 who volunteered with Groundwork last summer. “We want to ensure that young people are a part of the community and that people don’t just see us as just rowdy teenagers.”

To find out more about how you can be an Ambassador with Groundwork, please visit - <https://www.groundwork.org.uk/ambassador>

Written by Stacey Aplin, PR and Communications Officer at Groundwork

Small Charities Coalition was created by small charities to respond to the need for free, accessible and sustainable support. Now a coalition of over 7,500 members, our mission is to champion the role of all small charities, whether registered or not, with an annual income of less than £1 million. www.smallcharities.org.uk

Take the time & reap the rewards

How do you get the most out of social media for promotion and turn this awareness into fundraising?

In my humble experience, countryside teams are made up of a disparate bunch of people with passion, who have a wide variety of skills and a broad range of tasks. Their level of social media use stretches across a broad spectrum, from 'I don't get it' to the digitally extrovert.

Here's my guide for countryside teams using social media for promotion that will lead to fundraising.

Run a commentary

Rangers, and on-site staff, should be taking lots of pictures. Show us things you're lucky enough to come across because of your job; great views, incidents, wildlife and characters. Images should be tweeted live and loaded on to Facebook. Use Instagram for an arty effect (also makes sharing on to Twitter and Facebook easier) then pin it to your Pinterest page.

Tell us where you are. Most of your followers are watching your social media output from an office and looking forward to the weekend when they can get outside. Use Facebook to check in at places (you can create a Place that isn't a building), tweet where you are right now as countryside places have engaging names, Velvet Bottom being one of my favourites.

Show your vulnerable side. Don't be afraid to show the latest fly-tip, or the piles of poo on the footpath.

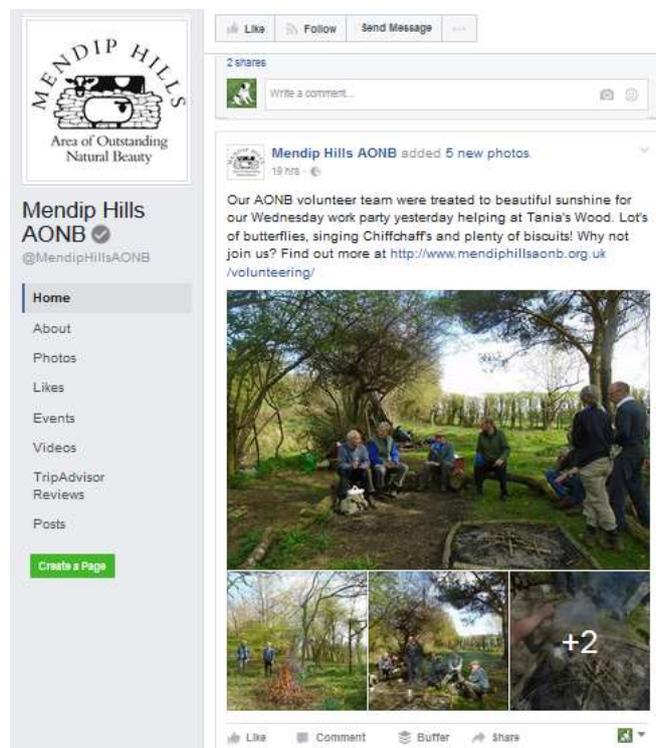
Tell us about your volunteers, the work they're doing and thank them through social media. Everyone likes to be publicly thanked, chances are they have social media accounts and will share your message, meaning you make even more friends.

Countryside teams, project officers and rangers are seen as the font of all knowledge as we cross disciplines from archaeology to farming and community development. Reinforce this impression by sharing the local news you pick up on. Make sure the facts are correct.

Teams often have a 'strategic' officer focussing on planning or landscape development. Let them become the media, sharing latest legislation, latest applications and government policy. Encourage them to see themselves as conduits of information from national bodies to local organisations.

The community that you work in and around are all sharing content through social media. Be a part of that community by liking and following them. A simple retweet of a local B&Bs offer will win you a new friend instantly, then they'll probably share your content. I guarantee you have an amateur (or professional) photographer taking local shots and putting them online. Share these and you're making a local friend and showing us things we wouldn't normally see in one go!

Gather all the above into a weekly briefing enewsletter for 'partners'. Simply cut and paste into one email. Make yourselves relevant, thought-leaders integral to the future of our countryside and worthy of more funding.



Mendip Hills AONB Facebook page (Mendip Hills AONB)

From chaos to coordination and then campaigns

Retweeted post on twitter (Mendip Hills AONB)

Most countryside teams go through the three stages of chaos, where you're pleased just to get people using social media let alone giving it a strategy. Then coordination develops where target audiences are defined, key messages and visual styles are agreed. This is when campaigns can get planned to run in parallel with the day to day commentary.

It's a team effort. People will need encouragement to do this. The 'communication' officer has to lead from the front. Make sure social media is on the agenda of your team meetings. Text on-site staff with the message 'what are you doing right now?' the answer is invariably fascinating for everyone else. Ask them to take a picture and email it later if need be.

Strategic campaigns that focus fundraising efforts start on spreadsheets (CJS – there are also free templates available online). Map out the digital platforms you're going to use, e.g. website news and blog, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and the e-newsletter. Plot what content will go out on which day, write the content and specify what image will go with it. Create bespoke graphics, we use Canva, and specify when they will go out. Then schedule all your content up front so you're not adding last minute. As you'll have done your audience planning you'll know the best times of day to schedule your content? Scheduling is easy on Facebook but you'll need to use Hootsuite or a similar tool to schedule Twitter and Instagram.

While your campaign is running build in monitoring time. Check the reach of your posts against your Just Giving page, are there peaks that you can learn from? Was there a piece of content that had an amazing reaction?

Campaigns need creativity but they are 90% organisation that needs to happen up front.

The one thing we all have in common is the people we deal with every-day; visitors, land-managers, partners etc. They are using social media. By not using social media teams are missing out on community engagement, professional news, funding sources, local incidents, sightings and gossip. These are common currency for countryside teams and social media is just another way of dealing with them.

Most of all never forget that we are privileged to work in places that many never will and see inspiring wildlife and views all the time. Use this position through your social media.

Make them jealous and emotional.

Jim Hardcastle, Mendip Hills AONB Unit Manager

Facebook: Mendip Hills AONB Twitter: @mendiphillsaonb Instagram: jimhardcastle
(CJS uses Corel, TweetDeck & buffer to introduce a few more programmes)

Do you want to sign up more supporters for your campaign or organisation? Raise the public consciousness about a green issue? Or attract more customers? Green Spark is a sustainability-focused PR and marketing agency that loves helping clients to successfully promote the green message, persuade people to turn good intentions into sustainable action, and to sell more green products or services. We specialise in attracting new audiences and reaching beyond the 'usual suspects'. Our service combines 25 years experience of working in the environmental sector, creative flair and scientific training. Whatever you need help with media coverage, design, website, social media or simply making a start with your marketing, talk to us to see if we can help. Find out more at www.greensparkmarketing.co.uk call 07894 663436 or email hello@greensparkmarketing.co.uk

Green Spark
PR and marketing

To ensure success of your rural or environmental project, appropriate PR messages must reach your target audience, raising awareness of vital work, gaining support among the community and helping to generate essential funding. For marketing and PR advice on rural projects, call Rachael on 01903 892060, rachael@holdsworthpr.co.uk or visit www.holdsworthpr.co.uk.

A day in the life of Jamie Wyver, Consumer PR Executive for RSPB



Jamie Wyver (Chiara Ceci, RSPB)

8am – The day begins with our ‘Daily media summary’ which we take turns to write. I’m on the rota for today, so I’m in early to look through the daily national newspapers for stories that might be of interest to the rest of the organisation. One of our nature reserves featured on The One Show last night so I make sure that gets a mention. There are also some stories about charity law, climate change and pollution. At 8.55am I call our Conservation Director to brief him on what’s making the headlines, before sending the summary out by email to colleagues and posting it on our intranet.

9am – Before the office gets too busy and the meetings begin, I try to get some writing done. I’m usually working on three or four magazine features at any one time. One might be for a children’s publication, so I’ll be trying to bring out my inner seven year old discovering the joys of rock pooling. Another could be for a specialist birdwatching magazine, where I’m encouraging readers to help us look out for ‘screaming parties’ of swifts. Then there are the countryside lifestyle

magazines, where I want to stimulate the reader’s love of nature but get some important conservation messages across too.

The emails start flowing. We get a lot of generic emails sent to a number of press offices and it’s always worth a read to see if there’s an opportunity for us. Not today though: “Are you a woman between the ages of 34 and 56 who may have been a viking in a past life? We want to tell your story in our magazine”. Someone wants to know which of our nature reserves contain weasels, and they need to know now, so I email my colleagues around the country to start gathering suggestions. We have over 200 reserves so requests like this can take time...

10am – In our team meeting we compare notes on what each of us is doing in the week ahead. We’re building up to promoting our Wild Challenge, which encourages families to take part in various nature activities. Then there are press trips to new nature reserves to organise, and the results of this year’s Big Garden Birdwatch to announce.

11am – I help out a few TV researchers looking for filming locations. Often they want to film very specific wildlife behaviours – a starling murmuration, or a great crested grebe’s courtship. I tell them we can’t ever promise the birds will do what they want, but I put them in touch with some of our local teams and nature reserve managers who can give them more advice. We often have to gently guide people who might be new to researching nature filming, for example explaining that they can’t get great shots of wild turtle doves at Christmas (unless they want to travel to West Africa).

12noon – We’re very lucky to be working in the middle of a nature reserve so on a sunny day there’s no excuse to stay indoors. I head out to see if the spotted flycatchers are back, and pop into our reserve shop to stock up on mealworms for my garden birds. On the way back there’s a chiffchaff singing, heralding spring. One of the most useful things you can do as a media officer at an environmental charity is to get outdoors. I find it incredibly helpful to visit the nature reserves and landscapes I’m writing about and pitching to the media. It’s also what we’re always encouraging people to do – get outside, enjoy nature. What you write is so much more authentic when you’ve been out there, experiencing wildlife yourself.

1pm – I join the end of a “translocation” meeting. This is a regular catch-up with some of our ecology experts who are involved in giving some of our rarer species a hand returning to their former strongholds. We look at whether any of these stories are ready to pitch to the media yet. They’re not but it’s always useful learning for me, and having a good understanding of how these processes work is great for when I’m talking to journalists.

2pm – A magazine writer urgently needs images of curlews – immediately! I help her out with a selection from our online library, RSPB Images, and in return she agrees to mention our five year curlew conservation project. I'm now inundated with people offering me weasels. I get back to the researcher who asked the question, who says she's very sorry, but her producer has decided he prefers stoats. They're cooler because they change colour in winter, apparently. Also, she's found some stoats to film, so the weasels can stand down. I email everyone to let them know.

3pm – I'm editing a 50 second film I shot on my smartphone, showing how the money raised by Birdfair, the annual nature festival we run with The Wildlife Trusts, is helping conservation. While a lot of our work revolves around magazines and TV, our team also produce 'agile content', videos that can be produced quickly to use on social media. It's a different way of telling a story and one that many people seem to prefer.

4pm – The weasels keep coming. I'm even getting photos of the weasels, some good, some not so much. I start a weasel folder, and store the emails for later. Hopefully I'll be able to do something with this information at some point in the future! I forward an interesting news story to our national magazine contacts. We often pick up regional press releases from our colleagues and forward them on: this one's a lovely conservation success story with natterjack toads increasing on one of our Scottish reserves, Mersehead. The title includes the phrase 'Toad-al success', which I think will make people smile.

5pm – I'm heading home excited for the next day, when I'll be out with a film crew looking for woodpeckers. I hear one of them drumming at the top of a tree as I leave the office. Spring is on the way and nature is getting ready. How brilliant that I get to spend my day sharing wildlife with the world. If we can get people to love nature as much as we do, then surely we stand a good chance of saving it.

Find out more about the RSPB's work here: www.rspb.org.uk/our-work

With more than three decades of experience in the public relations field I can achieve outstanding results. I am passionate about the countryside, farming and environmental issues and importantly have the experience, skills and contacts to ensure that your story becomes part of the news agenda – whether it is mainstream press or social media platforms. Everyone has a good story to tell, but it is important to present it in the right way, to the right target audience and at the right time. My aim is to achieve results that add sparkle. Just get in touch at: morag@moragwalkerpr.co.uk



The CJS Team would like to thank everyone who has contributed adverts, articles and information for this CJS Focus publication.

Next edition will feature Volunteering published on 18/9/17