

25 WAYS TO RAISE MONEY FOR A SMALL GROUP

- 1. Raffle** This works best in well-defined communities, and can be on a small scale, selling tickets during a pub evening, or on a larger scale. You'll need a lotteries licence from your district council or equivalent if tickets are sold at more than one event. These are quite cheap and easy to get – prices vary from authority to authority. If the prizes are donated you could be on to a winner, but only if you have a determined volunteer group committed to selling tickets, and access to a lot of people that might buy them. It can be a hard way to make money if you are a small group.
- 2. Car boot sales** These are an easier alternative to holding your own jumble sale. Just book a space at your nearest sale, collect good quality second hand items and sell them. These can be run by three or four people. Some groups host car boot sales on their site; check with your local council for permission but you can normally run a small number each year without needing planning permission.
- 3. Guest meeting** Get a really good speaker – you'll need someone like Jonathan Porritt or a major local celebrity. Charge an entrance fee and also make money on refreshments. Meetings like this generate good publicity but you won't make a lot of money unless the overheads and expenses are very low.
- 4. Sponsored rides or walks** These can make a lot of money if they're done well but take a lot of volunteers to organise. Choose a good route – ideally a circular one, perhaps visiting somewhere attractive en route – get the sponsorship forms out well in advance and persuade everyone to come. You might be better to join one run by another local organisation. Rotary and Round Tables often set them up for a range of community groups and local charities; some of your sponsorship fees go to your group, and some to another organisation like a local hospice.
- 5. Sponsored projects** These are popular with sponsors since they can see you are actually doing something worthwhile. They can cover any aspect of group work, with sponsored path clearance or tree planting as obvious ideas. Look for innovative projects. The Kiplin All-Stars group made over £1,000 by doing a 48 hour dry stone walling marathon. High profile activities like this can also get you good media coverage.
- 6. Book sale** Everyone has books they don't want. You'll need a church hall or some such building – weekday lunch times are good if you can get a town centre site – and you'll need somewhere to store and sort the books. Find a friendly local dealer who can look for the valuable ones beforehand and buy them from you.
- 7. Sponsorship...** a huge subject. The basic idea is that you are entering a relationship with the sponsor. You give them publicity and they give you money. The questions to ask are: "How can you publicise a sponsor and how valuable is the publicity that you can offer?" Sponsorship can include sponsors' names on t-

shirts or a newsletter, sponsored tools and notice boards with the company's name at the project site, or a van emblazoned with your sponsor's logo. Ideally sponsorship will come in cash, but think also about sponsorship in kind. This means that the sponsor supplies you with materials. These could be tools or even photocopying. Ask your local print shop if it will run off your newsletter in return for having a free advertisement on the back. A community composting group in Oxenhope use the local dairy's pickup truck to do their compost collection; they only need a vehicle one day a week and the dairy doesn't use it after 10am. The dairy gets the benefit of extra advertising as the pickup is seen in the village and they are happy to support a good cause.

- 8. Advertisement** If your newsletter goes out to a lot of people, there may well be people who will pay to advertise in it. Think creatively about which businesses would like to reach conservationists, such as wholefood shops and bookshops. You can put advertisements in the newsletter or send out leaflets with it.
- 9. Fundraising concerts** You can lose a fortune here as well as making one. Don't go into this unless you have a band who really will draw the crowds, a cheap venue where people go and someone who has done this kind of thing before.
- 10. Selling merchandise** Unless you are prepared to go to a lot of summer festivals, green fairs or fetes you're unlikely to make much at this. Make t-shirts for your group for fun and charge them a little over the cost price, but otherwise the investment needed, storage space required and time you will spend selling things is rarely repaid.
- 11. Collecting cans** Most local councils issue collection licences which only last for one day in a year. An alternative to street collections is to collect in local, privately owned shopping centres or pubs. You won't need a licence, but do get permission from the management. Put a collecting can in a shop and it raises money for you every day. Look for as many locations as possible. Put collecting cans out when you are working on site and place them where passers-by will see them and you can keep an eye on them. Again, make sure you have got permission from the relevant people. Always make sure that any collecting tins you use are properly sealed until the money is counted.
- 12. Carol singing** If you are feeling thoroughly extrovert, or have group members who are game for anything, try singing carols in your town square or outside your local supermarket. As for other sorts of collections, ensure you have permission from the relevant bodies.
- 13. Pub collections** Pub collections are a fun and easy alternative to street collections. Check with landlords beforehand. Try a Christmas pub collection in fancy dress or while singing carols.
- 14. Stalls at fairs** Stalls can be good places to get the message across. You will need a large banner to attract maximum attention. If you want to raise money, think about setting up some kind of game or challenge as part of your stall at a fair, school fete or other public event. Oxford Conservation Volunteers acquired giant, heavy-duty paper rubbish sacks and invited all comers at a street fair to get

their head and torso inside one and punch their way out for 50p a go. The would-be local MP was one of many who failed!

- 15. Project open days** An open day is a great way to introduce more people to your site. You can lay on refreshments, run activities for children and encourage a lot of people to have fun outdoors. Charge for your refreshments or ask for donations to help you meet costs, but better to have lots of visitors who love the place and join your group than put people off by asking for too much money.
- 16. Barn-dances, ceilidhs and discos** If you have to pay for a hall and a band these almost never make money. Run them because you want to.
- 17. Social events for the group** If the group is going out together to the theatre, tenpin bowling or some other venue, try to negotiate a bulk rate for tickets and let the group keep the difference.
- 18. Plant sale** if you've got space to grow seedlings and plants, a town centre stall or sale can be very profitable, especially in spring.
- 19. Woodland produce** Lots of surplus small wood? Why not sell it! Cambridge Conservation Volunteers sell firewood and hazel for thatching spars from Hayley Woof. West Sussex Conservation Volunteers sell charcoal produced from Lodge Copse Demonstration Woodland.
- 20. Collecting recyclable material** This is often a lot of work for little return, but if your local council is running a scheme where local collectors get paid, look to do a once-a-month recycling blitz. Aluminium cans are the best bet; if you can persuade a local school or business to collect for you this could make a reasonable sum.
- 21. Wine tasting** Local wine merchants are often keen to sell by the crate through wine tastings. You need to bring together 20 or 30 people with some money to spend.
- 22. Giving talks** If group members are asked to give talks to other organisations, then ask for a donation.
- 23. Promises auction** Ask local traders, and anyone else, for 'promises' – pledges that they will do something for the purchasers. Publicise this well in advance and you can make a lot of money if the auction is well run. Examples of pledges would be offers to come and prepare a meal for four in your home (from a local chef), four hours' gardening, a massage or aromatherapy session, your photograph taken professionally, or your car or bike overhauled.
- 24. Standing orders** Get those sleeping members who never come on projects to donate £2 or £5 a month through a banker's order. Many people don't notice this much money leaving their bank account and 20 people giving £5 a month is £1,200 in a year. If you are a registered charity, think about setting up a covenant system.

25. Charging for work you do on other sites If some of your members enjoy the practical work and have got time to spare maybe they could help out another group with fewer skills or strengths in return for a donation for your project. You'd need to make a clear arrangement of what you could do and how much money you would need to be paid before you start work.