

Charity reporting

The Charity Commission has noted that too many charities are still failing to use their annual reports to communicate the benefits they deliver.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/charities-must-better-communicate-to-the-public-through-their-annual-reports-and-accounts-urges-regulator>

For tips on producing a better annual report, see the guidance here:

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/news/guidance-on-trustees-annual-reports> (for Scotland)

And here: (for England and Wales):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-benefit-reporting-pb3>

Prospering Boards: new microconsultancy opportunity

This summer, AIM relaunched its programme of one-to-one support for boards of museums in England, Prospering Boards. The programme offers the opportunity to apply for a programme of bespoke support from a pool of expert consultants. For the first time, we are offering short, quick fire interventions for boards with a clear idea of how they want to develop, alongside our established programme of more in-depth support. We are delighted to have approved our first microconsultancy to help support the board of the Charles Dickens Museum.

If your board could benefit from expert support in any area – complex or straightforward – see our application information here: <https://www.aim-museums.co.uk/prospering-boards-new-opportunity-apply/>

And for an informal discussion ahead of an application to the programme, please contact Helen Wilkinson, helenw@aim-museums.co.uk

In focus: trustees and fundraising

In each issue of the AIM Heritage Trustee Newsletter, we'll be offering some quick-fire tips on a challenging issue, written for AIM by Alex Lindley. This month we look at the question of how trustees can best support fundraising.

As a trustee, you're probably aware of your board's core responsibilities in overseeing your museum's fundraising activities. There's certainly plenty of excellent advice - from the Charity Commission and others – to support us with this part of the role. However, boards can sometimes be reluctant to consider *their own role* in active fundraising, for a number of good reasons. We might be wary of treading on toes if employees normally lead fundraising activity. We might feel we don't have the skills or time to do it, or maybe we're conscious that not everyone is in a position to make personal cash gifts or provide access to potential donors.

However, I don't think these challenges should stop us. Not only are there sound financial reasons for boards being involved in fundraising, there are also other benefits that fundraising can bring to our boards. All trustees can make a contribution to fundraising, which needn't involve personal giving or drawing on wealthy networks. Here are a few ideas for how you can get everyone involved:

Talk to others involved in fundraising in your museum. They might have ideas for how the board can get involved and you can have an open discussion about how to make sure your efforts are co-ordinated. This can help to ensure that all fundraising activity has a consistent message (e.g. about why you need to raise funds and what the money will be used for), regardless of who's doing it.

Be specific about where the board should focus its efforts. Whilst individual trustees might have the skills and connections to undertake a wide range of

fundraising activities, a scattergun approach could risk coming across as incoherent and might entail a great deal of individual effort for relatively little reward. Instead, pick a key area for the board to focus on, which complements your museum's other fundraising activities. Then identify how different trustees can play a role. For example, if your board chooses to focus on private donations, some trustees may be able to make introductions to potential donors from their networks, whilst others could come along and chat to them at events or maintain a database of contacts for future reference.

Be proportionate and realistic: Talk together as a board about realistic targets for raising funds. Think carefully about the time and skills you are able to commit collectively, as well as about how much you need or want to raise. There's no point in launching a big campaign if you don't have something specific to spend it on!

Whatever you do, do it together. A shared fundraising focus can help you to achieve more collectively, as well as bring your board together and increase trustees' engagement with your museum's cause.

Whilst fundraising as a board might have its challenges, the rewards – whether they be in pounds raised, relationships strengthened, or trustee commitment deepened – make those challenges a price well worth paying.