



Running your crowdfund

Running your Crowdfund Campaign

Welcome to the MyParkScotland crowdfunding resource. This is the second of five information and work sheets – the other resources are: introduction to crowdfunding, campaign planning worksheet, glossary of terms, and other useful tools and resources - www.mypark.scot/get-involved/crowdfunding-resource

The resource has been developed by Tim Wright of twintangibles in partnership with MyParkScotland.

This information sheet, and the Crowdfunding Campaign Planning worksheet, will help groups work through preparing their crowdfund campaign, running a crowdfund and “aftercare” for people who have donated to the project.

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Before you start

A significant amount of work should go in to your crowdfund before you launch a public appeal for donations. Before pressing 'go' on a Crowdfund Campaign, it is vital to undertake some planning regarding the campaign – and that you are certain that crowdfunding is right for you and your project.

MyParkScotland will support groups to create their crowdfund page and give advice on how to structure donations and plan timescales.

We have a series of information and worksheets to help you plan and run your crowdfund campaign – and we share experience from groups who have successfully crowdfunded their project on www.mypark.scot

MyParkScotland will also act as a critical friend to help groups determine if they are ready for crowdfunding and advise on promoting campaigns.

As you read through this information sheet, it might be helpful to have to Campaign Planning worksheet to hand to jot down ideas for your project.



How to run your Crowdfund Campaign

Create a plan to bring structure to the process. This makes it more manageable and ensures that you pay attention to all of the aspects that you need to consider.

We describe the process as having four stages which we refer to as:

1. Targeting
2. Auditing
3. Choice of Method
4. Planning and Preparation

This process can be shortened to the acronym of **TAMP**.

Let's look at each of those stages in more detail.



Targeting

It is important to establish clarity around some key targets early on as these will influence many of your subsequent decisions. Typical targets to concentrate on are:

How much do you want?

You must not be vague about this. Work out in detail how much you need and factor in all of the costs of running a campaign. It is important that you have properly costed this and worked out all of the precise financial requirements. Badly costed projects run the risk of hitting their targets and not having enough to deliver the project. It is also worth considering stretch targets at this point. A stretch target is an additional target beyond your original one which can be introduced if the campaign is going well. Do you want them and if so what are they? It is best to consider this now as it is hard to cost them, develop the narrative associated with them and promote them from scratch in the middle of a campaign.

When do you need it by?

If you have little time and there is no possibility of shifting that deadline you might not have enough time to prepare properly. By the same token if you aren't prepared and you can shift a deadline it might be the best thing to do. But it is important to be clear about your timing.

Why are you doing this?

This is more of a strategic question but it is important that you think about what other goals you have and how this project fits in with them because it can help you identify other things which can be won in the course of running a crowdfunding campaign (e.g. raising profile, recruiting volunteers).

Who are you trying to reach?

By this we mean not only individuals but also types of people - members of the local community, volunteers, partners, suppliers and customers.

Being clear about these types of ambitions will help you integrate the project into your wider aims and so avoid the "tail wagging the dog."

MyParkScotland – Targeting

How much do you want? – This should include all projects costs, as well as an allowance for maintenance/contingency for the project covering 3-5 years

When do you need it by? Consider working back from when the project is to be delivered to give an appropriate timeframe for crowdfunding and seeking any other funding

Why are you doing this? How does the project fit with the wider aims of the group and also with the vision and development of the park/greenspace your project is taking part in

Who are you trying to reach? – Think about who will support your project – reaching out beyond your park group and regular users

Audit

The purpose of an audit is to explore what you have at hand to run a campaign. It will help in the planning phase and it is a way of identifying gaps you might have that will need to be filled. Typically, we would audit for what we call Assets, Skills, Resources and Tools.

Assets - These are usually items that will enable your group to spread the word about your project. One of the most important is the networks and connections you currently have. These might include mailing lists, newsletter recipients and social media followers, client lists and many other groups of people and organisations that you have a relationship with. This could also include physical locations such as noticeboards where information can be displayed about your project. Sorting these out and tidying them up into groups of usable points of contact is a very important process as this is the beginning of your crowd.

Skills - You or your group will need to undertake a wide range of activities through the course of a campaign and so understanding who can do what based on their skills is worth knowing. Who can use social media? Who knows how to write a press release? Who can blog? Who can take a photograph? Who can make a video? These are just a few of the things you might need to do, so check which skills your group already have and match them against what will be needed and then try to fill any gaps.

Resources - These are time, money, facilities and people. Crowdfunding takes time - have you got enough? Who will do your job or tasks if you have to spend time running a crowdfunding campaign? Do you have any money? This may seem a strange suggestion for a crowdfunding campaign but what if you need to hire someone like a lawyer, video maker or copywriter to help you. Can you afford it?

Tools - In most cases, these are technical tools like a computer or software to run an email campaign. But sometimes it can include more practical physical tools like cameras, collection tins or even musical instruments if that is important to your campaign. The audit process is a stocktake of the resources you have to run a campaign. You might be surprised what you discover, but if you find gaps you need to plan how to fill them.

MyParkScotland – Audit

Assets – these will be unique to every group but could include park noticeboards, community newsletters, mailing lists, membership bulletins, Facebook groups and more.

Skills – most Friends of Parks groups or greenspace action groups are volunteer based and so need to make best use of the skills of volunteers (do you know what hidden or undisclosed skills members of your group may have?) or if your audit finds your group lacks certain skills you could look to recruit new volunteers with those skills.

Resources – the key resource for most projects will be time, but depending on the project there may be a need for other resources such as photographer, someone to create a video or simply the ability to print flyers for the crowdfunding.

Tools – these could be tools required to run the campaign itself but don't forget to think about tools to deliver the project. For example, if you are crowdfunding for an orchard does the group have the tools to plant the orchard, if not include the cost of purchasing/ hiring these as part of the crowdfunding.





Method

We know there are four basic forms of crowdfunding (see Introduction to Crowdfunding) and for each one there are many platforms and, within the bigger platforms, lots of categories where you can host your campaign. Choosing the right one is an important factor in determining your success.

You need to consider the rules of the platforms and what they will allow you to do. Many have long and complicated terms and conditions that can impinge on your plans. You might need to consider payment methods, language or even platforms that are very niche to your project.

Some people do what we call DIY crowdfunding where instead of using a platform they run the campaign on their own website. This can be very successful and has some real advantages for certain types of projects, but it also brings its own challenges and needs to be selected with care.

Using MyParkScotland as your crowdfund platform

If you are a greenspace or park project we would encourage you to use MyParkScotland as your platform.

www.mypark.scot has been developed specifically to support parks and greenspace projects and is more than just a crowdfund platform. It also provides information about parks and greenspace – searchable by location and features, as well as searchable listings for events and activities.

We developed www.mypark.scot working with grassroots parks and greenspace groups to make sure that it meets your needs.

It offers an easy, safe and secure way for your project supporters to make donations online and by TextGiving.

MyParkScotland provides good value for money - our platform and payment charges are very competitive with other crowdfund platforms.

As a recognised Scottish charity, if your supporters are able to Gift Aid their donations to your project, we can use this additional funding to 'grow' their donation – this means you receive the full value of the donation and the extra money (after payment of platform fees) is used to support a Parks Endowment Fund.

MyParkScotland is a donation-based platform that works on a 'keep it all' basis (this means you keep all the money raised even if you don't reach your target), you can add funds raised off-line at any time to your target (without any cost), and you can choose the fundraising target and timetable that is right for your project.

Planning and preparation

Planning is very important for a crowdfunding campaign. Done well it will help you manage your time and resources, and play a big part in your success. You need to understand what tasks you have to do, who is responsible for doing them and when, and that you have all you need to do them. There are three phases to a crowdfunding campaign and you will undertake different types of activities for each phase. The phases are before the campaign begins, the duration of the campaign when it is live, and the post-campaign period.

Before the campaign is live you will be building awareness, checking your messaging and marshalling all of your communications material.

This could include:

- Preparing a press release
- Recording a project video
- Setting up a facebook page
- Setting up a page on your website
- Preparing a leaflet
- Taking and sharing photographs

During the campaign you will be maintaining the momentum of the campaign, continuing your outreach and responding to questions and communication from your crowd. This could include:

- Newsletter articles
- Emails to supporters
- Social media updates and activity
- Blog posts
- Crowdfund updates
- Taking and sharing photographs

Afterwards you will be thanking your crowd, fulfilling your obligations to them and managing the ongoing relationship with this asset you have built.

This could include:

- Preparing a press release
- Saying thank you! In whatever way is appropriate
- Inviting supporters to open days or activities
- Celebrating success – photographs, videos, blogs

Each phase will involve different activities, skills and possibly different people.

MyParkScotland offers support and advice to groups when planning their crowdfund campaign.

Our Crowdfund Campaign Planning worksheet helps groups plan and run their crowdfund and increases their chances of success. We can review your worksheet and give you feedback to help you towards crowdfund success.

Once your project is live on MyParkScotland it is up to each individual project to promote their campaign and keep the momentum going.

MyParkScotland is able to assist with sharing social media activity to amplify your activity and promote to a wider audience.



How can I build up my “crowd”?

Lots of people struggle to think about how to develop a crowd. It is best to try to break the crowd into a series of groups each of which has a different purpose for your campaign. This will help you to identify and target them, to connect with them and to do that with the right type of material. We usually break the crowd into three groups: Friends and Followers, Influencers, and Communicators.

Friends and Followers

Friends and followers are individuals and groups whom you already have some connection with or know of you. This might include mailing lists, contact lists, volunteers, your Board or Trustees, client or customer lists, social media followers and potentially many others. This is a group which will form the basis of your initial crowd and you will want to both grow it and to deepen your relationship with members of the group.

You will have some established method (membership, newsletter, blog, website, social media) for communicating with them and this will probably form the core approach and channel you take in terms of how you build awareness and following for your crowd-funding campaign.

The process of pooling and tidying these lists of contacts is an important process ahead of a campaign.

Communicators

Communicators are individuals or groups who help you to get the message of your campaign out to a new network. This might be, for example, via a press release and so media outlets and similar groups need to be targeted and readied, and you need to understand how to speak to these groups in terms they use and understand.

Another role for communicators is to link you into networks that you do not easily or readily communicate with. This is an important process if you are to reach out widely.

Influencers

Influencers are very important parts of the crowd for a crowdfunding campaign. An influencer is someone who carries weight, influence or trust in a sector or topic. They can encourage others who have not heard of you to trust and take an interest in your project. We say these people have a “trust tag” which they can pass to their connections on your behalf.

There may be many influencers for your project based on the range of “elements” or aspects that the project has. We talk about elements below. Influencers might be bloggers, public personalities, recognised activists and experts. The process of engaging with them and gaining their trust and endorsement must begin ahead of your campaign. You must find them and court them.

Working out the elements of your crowdfund

Elements are the different aspects of a campaign which could each be an area of interest in your project for any supporter.

It is not essential in crowdfunding for all of your supporters to support everything that your project is about. Therefore, it is possible to break your project into a series of parts that might interest different people. For example, a project to build an orchard for local people in a park will interest supporters due to the orchard's location, but also because of the aspects of growing and gardening, food and nutrition, or greenspace improvement. We call these different angles of interest facets or elements.

Each of these facets might open up an avenue of outreach, a new set of influencers and potentially a new set of supporters who might be inspired by just one of those aspects to back your campaign.

Parks and greenspaces appeal to people for a variety of reasons and serve different functions for the people using them. Crowdfunding through MyParkScotland works in the same way and it vital to recognise the different elements of your project.

For example, the restoration of a boathouse at Glasgow Green appealed to the rowing community, individuals interested in heritage and architecture as the building has listed status, people who were interested in the history of Glasgow, as well as park users of Glasgow Green. It also attracted donations from the Scottish diaspora from as far afield as New Zealand and America.

For more information see <https://www.mypark.scot/projects/west-boathouse>



Why is messaging so important?

Getting your messaging and pitch right is very important. Clarity and consistency of communication is most important. If people don't "get it" they won't back it.

When you are close to a project it is very easy to believe that everyone sees it in the same way as you do. But you need to remember that many people will have none of the contextual information that you have. So, it is very important to check and test your messaging with other people BEFORE you start your campaign - and do not be afraid to change and adjust it to meet the needs of the crowd based on that feedback.

You also need to think about how you convey that message in different channels. For example, can a picture capture it? How do you communicate it in 140 characters for twitter?

I hear it's not easy - what are the common mistakes?

Crowdfunding is not easy and many projects do not reach their targets. Here are some of the key reasons people fail:

Lack of preparation - in our experience, most projects are won and lost in the preparation. There are many things that can be overlooked but not building anticipation or being prepared to maintain the activity required for a project will usually mean you fail.

Not updating - you need to maintain awareness and interest in your campaign. One communication at the launch will not deliver a project.

Thinking one celebrity endorsement will swing a project - whilst it is helpful to have high profile support, one tweet from Stephen Fry will not sort your campaign!

Not checking messaging - it is extremely important to make sure that you get your message across in terms the crowd understand. To do that you MUST check that they do before you start.

Can you give me some tips for success?

Get off to a good start - you will know people who will want to back your project. Make sure that they are ready and able to do so the second you go live. If you reach a decent percentage of your project total quickly you are much more likely to succeed.

Keep updating - you need to build awareness and maintain it. Develop a publishing plan which ensures that you have a structured, consistent and regular approach to driving your communication process.

Check your messaging - we have already said that this is a key point of failure and so logically it is a key point of success.

Don't go on too long - a 30-day campaign is a lot of effort and inevitably the demand takes its toll on the enthusiasm you and your crowd can maintain so don't go on too long.

Be sure to build "collateral" or publicity material for your campaign - a sustained publication and communication process takes effort and material so be sure to build a stock. These might be photos, newsletters, blogs, tweets, infographics, etc. You may need different types for use in different circumstances and channels. Produce a good deal of material beforehand as it will make the project more manageable.

Ready to get started?

Use the Crowdfunding Campaign planning worksheet to get started on planning your crowdfund campaign.

If you've got a great idea for a project, event or activity in your park or greenspace, then please get in touch – here at MyParkScotland we would love to help you raise funds for your project.



We hope you found this information sheet useful – this is part of the MyParkScotland crowdfunding resource – www.mypark.scot/get-involved/crowdfunding-resource

Introduction to Crowdfunding
Running Your Crowdfund
Crowdfund Campaign Planning Worksheet
Glossary
Some Useful Tools

This toolkit has been developed by Tim Wright of twintangibles in partnership with MyParkScotland.

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Get in touch hello@mypark.scot or give us a call **01786 849757**



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