

2000-2010

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2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010



10th anniversary brochure



Everyone who uses it knows that F2F is a successful and proven fundraising method. But just how good is it? Actually it's difficult to say because the fundraising sector is not always a great one for accurately measuring things such as attrition rates, response rates, campaign breakeven levels and the like (which is quite ironic really, considering that fundraising is so much about numbers!).

But, as with so many things, this is something that PFRA has done as much work on as anyone, if not more. We know that F2F signs up around 600,000 new donors each year. Thanks to our annual Donor Attrition and Retention Survey (DARS), we can make educated assumptions about how many of those donors stop giving and when they do it. Then we can factor in reactivations and upgrades.

The upshot of this is that we estimate almost 20 per cent of all regular charitable donations have come through one form or another of F2F fundraising. These donations amount to a combined total of around £120m a year – or £10m every month. For a fundraising technique that many people thought was going to be a flash in the pan, these are truly remarkable statistics.

So I hope you enjoy this warts-and-all celebration of a decade of the PFRA and face-to-face fundraising, and that you're able to join us again in June 2020 for Volume II.



Michael Naidu
Acting chair, PFRA

Mark Astarita explains why face-to-face fundraising is one of the most powerful fundraising techniques ever devised



Mark Astarita
Mark Astarita is director of fundraising at the British Red Cross

Fundraising in its most basic form

In my nearly 20 years as a fundraiser I've learnt one important lesson above all else: nothing raises more money than going back to basics with a very simple, very clear and rather wonderful fundraising technique – it's called talking to people.

It's not a new technique and the British Red Cross certainly wasn't the first to invest in this fantastic form of fundraising we know as face-to-face. The likes of The National Deaf Children's Society and Action for Blind People have been punching above their weight for many years – thanks to trustees who were bold and recognised the opportunity earlier than others. And today the PFRA has more than 100 members who rely on them for support and guidance with their face-to-face fundraising activity and with raising millions of pounds every year for good causes.

Over the last six years at the British Red Cross, we have transformed our fundraising thanks to our dedicated and passionate face-to-face fundraisers who, day in, day out – and come rain or shine – talk to people on the street, in shops, in airports, in train stations and on the doorsteps of Britain and ask them one

simple question: "Would you like to support the British Red Cross?"

Last year the British Red Cross had three million conversations with people. Three million times people got the chance to see the Red Cross on their doorstep or on their high street and even in the worst recession in living memory we recruited 150,000 new donors worth more than £16.5m to us.

It may be sadly true that no matter how much we raise, there will always be more that we could do for people in crisis. But I believe the job of the Red Cross is always to inspire people even in the face of the worst possible catastrophes.

In a world of immense wealth, where people have more than they've ever had before, while some have none, and the gulf between those that have so much and those who have so little has never been wider, we need to remind people who are wealthier and healthier – or just plain luckier – that giving a little of themselves will do them and the world a power of good.

That selfless act of giving that may or not be reciprocated is the most positive, inspiring facet of human nature.

Through our face-to-face fundraisers

There are people alive today in Haiti, not just because of what our international aid workers did, but also because of what our fundraisers did



we at the Red Cross nurture that. We cultivate it. We promote it. There are people alive today in Haiti, not just because of what our international aid workers did, but also because of what our fundraisers did. They were the channel for the money, the donations and the regular gifts that people gave here in the UK.

Today we have enough supporters to fill four Wembley Stadiums; and these are real people, people that don't have to give, who have choices, people who can cancel tomorrow. These are people who give a little of themselves every month.

So next time you see fundraisers in their branded jackets, stop them, speak to them, hug them. Last year alone they brought on board 600,000 supporters for UK charities, who give every single month, and will dig deep to donate more than £120m this year.

So thank you to every fundraiser who has worked up and down the country to sign up new supporters. Most importantly, thank you to everyone who said "yes": they wanted to make the world a better place. And thank you to the PFRA, who have worked tirelessly to develop and promote our most treasured form of fundraising over the last 10 years.

1995

SUMMER Greenpeace Austria sign contract with DialogDirect for doorstep fundraising. One day during the hot summer, realising nobody was at home, the fundraising team went instead to the local swimming pool. F2F fundraising is born. Greenpeace Austria recruits 15,000 supporters in the first year (see p5).

1997

SUMMER Greenpeace UK is first UK-based charity to try street F2F, with Quality Telephone Fundraising (which rebrands that year as Personal Fundraising Partnership – PFP).

1999

FEBRUARY First suggestions of media disquiet. Article in *Scotland on Sunday* describes F2F as "hard sell tactics".

2000

MAY Stephen Lee convenes meeting of charities and agencies working on street fundraising. This gathering leads directly to the formation of the PFRA.

Stephen Lee was right there at the birth of the PFRA – this is how it happened

Necessity was the mother of self-regulation

Along with the typewriter and the sewing machine, we can thank the Austrians, in 1995, for the invention of this modern incarnation of charity fundraising.

Fifteen years on, its fundraising appeal remains simple and effective – a clear, compelling case for support made directly to potential donors, enabling previously unknown supporters to move smoothly through donor acquisition to committed, tax-effective giving in the course of one short conversation.

No wonder, from day one, F2F was a huge success. Yet wider society has consistently viewed innovation in fundraising with cautious scepticism. The fundraising profession has variously been associated with unwarranted intrusions into private life and unwanted interventions into arenas of personal decision-making, while the claims by fundraisers to be acting with moral authority have been interpreted simply as a smokescreen to hide a



Stephen Lee
Professor Stephen Lee is a faculty director at Henley Business College and a former director of the Institute of Fundraising

Much of the first meeting resembled a poker game in a somewhat lawless saloon



Remember these? The two fundraisers from PFRA's first PR materials

end of 1999, faced with an explosion in F2F fundraising activity across the country and a media united in its condemnation of the activity, government paused on the brink of direct regulation.

Into this fevered environment of fundraising mammon I stepped – or rather was pitched. I had already drafted the Institute of Charity Fundraising Managers (what became the Institute of Fundraising a couple of years later) code of practice and had been closely involved in discussions with ministers and the leading practitioner organisations trying to stave off direct regulation.

I received a delegation of 'interested parties' who indicated that if I did nothing to bring everyone together, then the major agencies were heading for a competition war on the streets. So, in the spring of 2000, I convened a meeting of all concerned. Much of this meeting (and a number of subsequent meetings) resembled a poker game in a somewhat lawless saloon. But gradually as trust and confidence among the participants grew, commercial self-interest gave way to the common pursuit of the creation of an effective self-regulating body.

This was to become the Public

Fundraising Regulatory Association – the first such initiative of its kind, designed by practitioners to provide comprehensive self-regulation of a particular fundraising activity.

That this was achieved in 2001 within 14 months of that initial meeting, that it was supported by a detailed constitution and membership structure giving equity to each of the interested parties and that, above all else, it was achieved alongside the completion of a detailed code of practice to which all were committed as a requirement of accreditation and membership of the PFRA, is a testament to all of those involved.

Ten years on, the PFRA has more than stood the test of time.

It has consistently played *the* leading role in establishing best practice in face-to-face fundraising and in rooting out and exposing poor practice wherever it occurs. It is itself now a model of best practice that has been copied in Australia and NZ. Above all else however, it has helped to deliver hundreds of millions of pounds of new resources to good causes.

Thankfully, in no small part due to the role played by the PFRA, the conversations on the street continue. ☺☺☺

Robert Buchhaus recounts the origins of the most successful donor acquisition method in a generation

Robert Buchhaus

Robert Buchhaus is director of Face2Face Fundraising Austria and Germany and director of the Dialog Group International



Austria's gift to global fundraising

One very hot and humid day, in the summer of 1995, the DialogDirect team fundraising for Greenpeace Austria were busy knocking at front doors somewhere in upper Austria – without much success.

DialogDirect was a young agency then, but many of our staff had 15 years experience of doorstep fundraising. But on this day, things were not going well until someone suggested that the reason no-one was home was because they were all out enjoying the weather. If we wanted to fundraise, we'd have to go where the people were.

So this fundraising team decamped to the local swimming pool – with fantastic results. News of this quickly got around and more and more teams left the doorstep to fundraise in public places.

'Face-to-face fundraising' was born. We pulled this new fundraising technique together pretty quickly. We began using information stalls on the street to improve our visibility and identified the locations that were frequented by our target groups.

One of the best results we achieved was at an open air Rolling Stones concert where 20 fundraisers recruited more than

400 new donors in just five hours.

Greenpeace's environmental message had a lot of publicity that summer of 1995 – with the occupation by Greenpeace activists of the Brent Spar oil rig and opposition to French nuclear testing at Mururoa Atoll. But even so, the 15,000 supporters during that first year of face-to-face fundraising represented an extraordinary success.

Naturally, Greenpeace Austria repeated the F2F campaign in 1996 and that year we signed up 50,000 new donors.

And then Greenpeace decided it was time to share these results with their colleagues around the world at the organisation's annual skill-share conference in 1996. The first reactions from international colleagues were along the lines of: "You stop people on the street, talk to them about our work, and then ask them to sign a direct debit mandate. And they don't cancel it but keep on giving! Weird Austrians. It'll never work in [insert name of country]."

But, of course, it would work there. And it did. A year later in 1997, Greenpeace Australia adopted the method and DialogDirect imported it to other European countries where we had

offices, not just for Greenpeace but other NGOs too. We ran campaigns for Greenpeace in Switzerland, Italy and the Czech Republic, and helped set up in-house teams in countries such as Greece and Sweden.

The success of F2F globally motivated other agencies to adapt their business plan to incorporate F2F. This happened in the UK, where Greenpeace asked its telephone agency, Personal Fundraising Partnership, to run an F2F campaign. So, in the summer of 1997, F2F fundraisers hit the streets of Brighton.

So adaptable did F2F prove that it even became the fundraising solution for complicated markets such as Hong Kong, where no other mix of fundraising techniques had really worked; and France, where, for obvious reasons, Greenpeace had poor public perception.

Fifteen years on, F2F is still a staple of Greenpeace's fundraising mix in more than 30 countries, from India to Brazil, from Lebanon to Thailand.

Far from being something that 'wouldn't work here', F2F has proved to be a universal fundraising method that can be adapted to just about all cultures. F2F is the world's fundraising technique. ☺☺☺



Greenpeace fundraisers on the Mariahilferstrasse in Vienna

Far from being something that 'wouldn't work here', F2F has proved to be a universal fundraising method

2001

→ p4 PFP and Caring Together. The term used for F2F is PFPS (Public Fundraising by Personal Solicitation). PFRA says it intends to produce professional standards for PFPS practitioners and a 'kitemark' "for meeting those standards". Louise Cook is salaried PFRA administrator.

OCTOBER First PFRA AGM. Board elected. PFRA membership tops 100 mark; sign-ups estimated at 500,000 for 2000/01.

NOVEMBER Birmingham City Council grants a first street collection licence for F2F activity to PFP on behalf of Acorn's Children's Hospice for three days in November on condition public are told how much goes to charity and how much to the fundraiser.

2002

MARCH Market Research by Quality Telephone Services in Cornwall suggests 38 per cent of F2F donors had not been given the solicitation statement. Leads PFRA to announce mystery shopping in May 2002.

Knock knock, who's there? The forgotten face of F2F

For the last four years I've looked after the face-to-face fundraising campaign at Dogs Trust, and yet despite this, it has been a successful method of fundraising for us.

Like many charities, we've relied heavily on a doorstep F2F campaign to recruit new donors, and again we are just one of many who have found it an invaluable way to swell our supporter database and recruit new regular givers that were, and still are for whatever reason, cold to other more 'traditional' methods of donor recruitment, such as mailing packs, press, or DRTV.

The success of our F2F means I have plenty of light-hearted 'my fundraising is better than your fundraising' banter with my colleagues who look after other campaigns, some of which have felt the economic pinch recently. While I quote increasing average donation values and decreasing attrition figures at my nemesis (who looks after our cold mailings), I can't help but hope that the people sat at desks nearby are also listening to me championing F2F fundraising, and that they are taking in some of the stats.

As a fundraiser, it is to be expected that our work is constantly under scrutiny, but I



Chris Ferris
Chris Ferris is donor recruitment officer for Dogs Trust and outgoing chair of PFRA's User Panel

It's easy to forget how important the support garnered at the door is to the work of many charities



find it quite depressing that with managing a face-to-face campaign also comes the responsibility of managing a method of fundraising that is time and time again questioned by members of the public, the media, friends who do not work in the charity sector, and even respected colleagues. However, the ever-increasing popularity of F2F shows that the figures do indeed add up, and for most charities, their first foray into the world of face-to-face is via the mysterious door-to-door fundraising.

Doorstep F2F fundraising is often the forgotten man of face-to-face fundraising. Indeed, if you were to make a big pile of newspaper cuttings about F2F fundraising stories, I suspect at least 90 per cent of your pile would be stories about street fundraising. Consequently it may come as a surprise – even to many fundraisers – that currently for every two donors recruited via street face-to-face fundraising in the UK, three come from a doorstep campaign. In other words, 60 per cent of all donors recruited by a F2F fundraiser are signed up at their front doors. Not bad, huh?

It's an old customer services proverb that a happy customer tells no-one, but

an unhappy customer will tell anyone who'll listen. Yet it seems that this maxim may not be working in favour of door-to-door fundraising. However, like many fundraisers who work in F2F, we are all too aware that no news/press coverage can in fact be good news.

With doorstep F2F being nowhere near as visible or high profile as its street fundraising cousin, it's easy to forget how important the support garnered at the door is to the work of numerous charities. Without the constant reminders, it's easy to overlook that doorstep F2F has not only allowed Dogs Trust to care for thousands of abandoned dogs, it has also generated millions of pounds of international aid, has helped many of the most vulnerable members of society get the support and care they desperately need, and funded research that may bring hope to hundreds of thousands of people suffering from life-changing illnesses.

It seems fitting that on the 10th anniversary of the very public PFRA, we should also celebrate the forgotten face of F2F fundraising, which, though a bit less 'public', might even now be staring through the frosted glass in your front door. ☺☺☺

Never do anything for the first time...

We will never get an entirely positive and supportive write up from the press, who like nothing better than rubbishing our work

Start up is always challenging – never do anything for the first time as a colleague once observed to me. When I became chair in 2002, the PFRA was still part of the Institute of Fundraising, supported by only one member of staff, the ever-loyal Chika, a series of splendid hot-desking Australian temps, and enjoying 'squatters rights' in the IoF offices. We needed to employ lawyers, jump through the legal hoops of incorporating ourselves as a company, find premises, recruit senior staff, procure the necessary IT equipment and then procure it again after the first lot was stolen.

We then needed to react to a whole sheaf of documents in the run up to the Charities Act 2006, including the Strategy Unit report *Private Action Public Benefit* in 2002, the Buse Report (that led ultimately to the formation of the FRSB), Home Office consultation documents, and so forth. I attended a series of meetings with Home Office officials, wrote to ministers, hosted lunches for MPs at the Commons and engaged in the usual lobbying activities.

At the end of the day the legislation did reflect the majority of our concerns. I am sure the lesson is that you need to have a very thorough and well thought-out brief, and then to nag away at the civil servants with a mixture of blandishment and hard advocacy.

We needed to build up the PFRA's profile, engage with a range of stakeholders and deal with the constant drizzle of at times negative press coverage. We will never get an entirely positive and supportive write up from the press, who like nothing better than occasional rubbishing of our work, but press coverage has become more balanced and positive, and we have been much quicker and more effective at rebutting inaccurate coverage.

Indeed when, in 2003, *The Times* published a front-page story which was positively misleading and mischievous, we took them to the Press Complaints Commission and finally secured a verdict in our favour and a retraction in the newspaper.

Having focused and robust legal advice was tremendously important, and our lawyers, Farrer and Co, were first-class.



Timothy Hornsby
Timothy Hornsby was the PFRA's first (and so far only) external chair. He is currently a commissioner of the National Lotteries Commission

Together with the providers involved, I went to Leeds in 2003 where the council was, quite wrongly in our view, attempting to use outdated legislation to bear down on street fundraising.

This case went to court, but the judge decided this was too important an issue for him to rule on, and suggested that we go away with the local authority and sort it out between us.

It worked: Leeds are now one of our staunchest council supporters.

There were always challenges, such as providers going into administration, arising phoenix-like from the ashes and then bursting into flames again (see p10), and managing a PFRA budget that delivered value for money and an affordable levy, but the staff and exec board coped admirably with these issues, though I have vivid memories of long, sometimes overlong, executive meetings.

After five years as chair I moved on, but I retain fond memories of trying my best to cope with the challenges, working with some very dedicated colleagues and at the end of the day I hope seeing PFRA develop as an increasingly professional and well-regarded body, to whom I wish the very best of British luck. ☺☺☺



The 'ever-loyal' Chika Anyanwu, PFRA's longest-serving staff member, and our 2005 Christmas card



The rather unassuming document that led to self-regulation for fundraising

SEPTEMBER Open Air Fundraising goes into administration owing charities £900,000 because they were paying up front for donors.

OCTOBER Strategy Unit at Cabinet Office reports its review of charity law and recommends a self-regulatory body be established and direct debits should be brought into licensing arrangements (see p11).

OCTOBER PFRA appoints its first external chair, Timothy Hornsby, succeeding Joel Vosey.

OCTOBER Original start date for PFRA site allocation system is postponed.

JANUARY Sue Brumpton is PFRA's first salaried ceo.

JANUARY At AGM PFRA draws up hitlist of 15 'recalcitrant' councils that refuse to sanction F2F and sets aside legal fighting fund.

FEBRUARY PFRA Announces it is to break away from IoF.

It's good to talk – most of the time



Nick Henry
Nick Henry is the PFRA's head of standards and worked as an F2F fundraiser, team leader and manager for agencies and charities for more than 10 years

When I was a street fundraiser, the response I liked most to my opening gambit was: "Yeah, I'll stop, but I'll tell you now I'm not going to donate." I knew if they said that then it was going to be a challenge, and so if they did end up agreeing to support it was an extra special feeling.

If you believe the press and are taken in by the traffic on social media networks, you might be forgiven for thinking that the public absolutely hate 'chuggers'. That's not the case at all. True, most people aren't queuing up to talk to you (although when F2F was new, that happened, and occasionally still does when it's done somewhere for the first time). But neither do the public habitually abuse and attack us. If people weren't happy to engage with street fundraisers, well, there wouldn't be much point in us being out there trying to talk to them.

I struggle to recall from my early days many times when people took genuine offence. Any hostility was usually alcohol-related.

Having said that though, there are plenty of people who aren't very nice to us.

I started my fundraising career in

Brighton in 1998 just a year after F2F had appeared in the UK. Probably because the town had been hit a bit hard in those first few months, some Brightonians had already developed their '1,000-yard stare'. They'd fix their gaze right past you as if engaging with you in any way would be the worst thing in the world. I never enjoyed working in Brighton much and would be desperate to go anywhere else. Even East Croydon was a treat.

I think there is a natural saturation point at which the novelty of street fundraisers wears off and some people begin to automatically blank them out. I've detected a noticeable difference in public attitudes to places that have experienced residential



offices to those that haven't.

In the early days, I think that any abuse that fundraisers got was usually in direct proportion to how lazily they were perceived to be doing the job. The public were offended if they perceived charities

is no longer true. And yet the stereotype has stuck.

I've never really understood why people can't just say 'No' to an approach by a fundraiser. But it is obviously difficult for a lot of people who feel they need to

To be perfectly frank, the fundraisers who attracted abuse were usually the ones who needed a kick up the backside

to be paying money for fundraisers to stand around not asking anybody. To be perfectly frank, the fundraisers who attracted abuse were usually the fundraisers who needed a kick up the backside.

That might be where the stereotype that street fundraisers (we weren't called 'chuggers' yet) weren't doing a proper job came from, that we were just a bunch of white middle class graduates hanging out with their mates. There was some truth in that in the late 90s and early Noughties but you've only got to take a look at the fundraisers on the books of most PFRA provider members these days to see that this

fabricate their way out of an engagement. I had this young fundraiser while I was a team leader at an agency. She was really vivacious and full of passion for the job and became one of the best fundraisers I ever worked with. But one day, during her second week, I could tell that she wasn't herself. I asked her what was wrong.

"This woman said she was going to donate but had to go to her car to get her purse," she replied. "But she hasn't come back. She can't be taking this long can she? I don't think she's coming back."

She was totally crestfallen as the revelation hit her. "Some people lie to us, don't they?"

After face-to-face I was determined to

make the move into 'office-based' fundraising, but at interview my fundraising experience was dismissed as niche. Interviewers seemed more interested in the languages I studied than in the skills I'd gained as a street fundraiser. Could it be I'd tapped into a rare demand for multi-lingual fundraisers? More likely I saw the reluctance to advocate street fundraising from those who worked directly for charities, which disappointingly is still the majority mind-set today, and exceptionally disappointing

Ditch the professional prejudice against F2F



Rowena Lewis
Rowena Lewis is director of fundraising at the Fawcett Society and a former F2F street fundraiser

Street fundraising was probably the best job I've ever had, though that wasn't what I expected.

I had left university frustrated at the careers centre's efforts to channel me into either a) the City or b) academia. Neither fitted. I'd spent some time telephone fundraising for my faculty and spotted the ad for F2F fundraisers in the *Metro*. The job was supposed to be a stop-gap, till a 'proper' job came along.

When that 'proper' job did come along I was back at the street fundraising agency within a week asking for my old job back. I missed the dynamism, the thrill of meeting new people every day, the variety of causes, and the passion and support of the fundraising community. In the end I stayed in street fundraising for close to two years between 2001 and 2003, raising, by my reckoning, in excess of £2m, and representing more than 30 different charities and campaigns.

When I circled the ad in the *Metro*, languishing over a lime and soda in my local Wetherspoons, it didn't cross my mind for a minute that face-to-face would propel me into a fulfilling and challenging career in fundraising.

After face-to-face I was determined to



Street fundraising not only brought in a new generation of donors, but a new generation of talented fundraisers

from fundraisers who make use of face-to-face for their own donor acquisition. Yet I'm proud as anything that so many street fundraisers have gone on to forge successful careers in the sector. You don't have to look far to realise that street fundraising not only brought in a new generation of donors, but a new generation of talented fundraisers.

Right now I've the good fortune to head the fundraising and development team at the Fawcett Society. In the seven years since I left face-to-face I've worked

directly for three excellent and inspiring charities, I've specialised in trust and corporate fundraising, dabbled in events, and I'm now learning the ropes of individual giving from the other side of the fence.

So forget the 'them and us' culture between what you might consider the 'professionals' and the 'chuggers'!

I learnt the most important lessons of my working life as a face-to-face fundraiser, and these lessons still stand true today. I learnt the fundamentals of making a good ask – intro, problem, solution, urgency, ask! I learnt how to read people and pick up on their interests as well as their concerns. I learnt how to dismiss rejection in the blink of an eye. I learnt how to stay sickeningly positive in all circumstances and how to motivate a team in the face of adversity – signing people up in a raging thunderstorm or when your fingers are like frozen sausages and you can't even grip a pen, and getting back on the street when you've taken the brunt of verbal, and in some cases, physical abuse.

But most importantly, I learnt that if I could do this job and do it well, I could do anything.

Public Fundraising Regulatory Association

→ p9 Together test case adjourned as Leeds agrees to talks at insistence of presiding judge.

SEPTEMBER PFRA is incorporated as a limited company. Timothy Hornsby and Owen Watkins remain chair and vice chair; Sue Brumpton is company secretary. New board elections to take place later in the year.

OCTOBER Adrian Sargeant produces detailed research on F2F lapsers. Reveals that half of lapsers never intended to give for more than a year, even though they knew the cost of recruitment. Also shows F2F donors are less interested in a relationship with the charity.

OCTOBER An 'investigation' by BBC Radio 4's *Moneybox* programme 'reveals' only 10 per cent of money given through F2F goes to the charity. Only Alan Gosschalk of Shelter is prepared to go on record. Leads Gosschalk to directly set up ImpACT Coalition.

NOVEMBER Charities Bill announced in → p10

Get rich quick the F2F way...or not!



Mick Aldridge

Mick Aldridge is chief executive of the PFRA

→p10 Queen's speech. An article in the *Times* completely misreports saying that chuggers face legal curbs and statutory controls and gets the requirement to disclose totally wrong when reporters have engagements on street (none sign up).

NOVEMBER Adrian Sargeant research shows that attrition is not due to the way F2F donors are recruited. 90 per cent are happy with recruitment process.

JANUARY War on Want halts F2F fundraising because the charity had become too reliant on it.

APRIL *Professional Fundraising* magazine stages F2F conference.

JULY IoF calls for door F2F to be included in licensing regime in draft Charities Bill.

SEPTEMBER PFRA appoints Nik Earl as first press officer.

NOVEMBER Home Office announces PFRA will have a seat on board of new fundraising self-regulatory body.

One often reads or hears a comment made by a critic of F2F along the lines that it's "all a gravy train for the chugging agencies that control it", or "it's just a scam to allow a few fat cats to cream off your donations for themselves". I'm never sure whether to laugh or cry when I come across opinions such as these. The sentiment that immediately comes to mind is: If only!

As one who has been personally involved in a particularly high-profile agency collapse, I know from hard experience that precisely the opposite has proved to be the case. Face-to-face fundraising is one of the hardest commercial fundraising models to make work, so hard in fact, that a number of F2F PFOs (professional fundraising organisations) have gone out of business over the last decade; far more, I'd hazard a guess, than charity direct marketing agencies, and certainly more than charity telephone fundraising companies. F2F-fundraising companies have been so prone to administration and liquidation that some might even argue they ought to be considered endangered species.

So, although this might seem like a strange subject to include in a

The Open Air debacle brought about the stark realisation that running commercially-successful F2F operations was far from secure



Chris Coleridge — remembered for all the wrong reasons

RIP F2F PFOs

Dialogue Direct UK (1999-2009)
Fruitful Fundraising (2003-2004)
Front Door Fundraising (2003-2004)
Grassroots Fundraising (2004-2005)
Open Air Fundraising (2002-2004)
Outreach Fundraising (2007-2009)
PFP (1993-2002)
Push (2000-2004)

'celebration' publication, I feel that we just can't tell the story of F2F over the last 10 years without at least reflecting on some of our less than glorious moments (and besides, as I say, I was there in the middle of it on more than one occasion).

I would imagine that the PFO collapse most people who have been around this sector for a while will remember will be those companies associated with Chris Coleridge from 2002-2004, starting with Personal Fundraising Partnership (PFP), then moving on through Open Air Fundraising and finally Fruitful Fundraising.

The collapse of Open Air Fundraising, of which Coleridge was MD, starting in the summer of 2002 had the most impact of all the failures of F2F agencies, not least because it was the first and the most unexpected. Open Air had been operating what in retrospect was an obviously unsustainable system whereby charities would pay in advance on the promise of the recruitment of specified quantities of new donors. The result was a robbing-Peter-to-pay-Paul scenario, and when three major clients cancelled their contracts, Open Air was tipped into administration owing £2m, some

£900,000 of which was owed to charities as refunds for unfulfilled donor quotas.

You might have thought that such a large collapse would have sounded the death-knell for F2F, period. But not a bit of it. The Open Air debacle was certainly a wake-up call to the F2F sector. Not only did it ram home to charities that they should not be paying in advance for not yet delivered donors, it also brought about the stark realisation that running commercially-successful F2F operations was a far from secure occupation. And in retrospect it seems odd that anyone found this surprising at the time: F2F has always had really tight margins – you just have to think about the logistics of trying to remotely manage large numbers of inexperienced, over-zealous, and unpredictable young people to begin to grasp the potential pitfalls.

And, to coin a phrase, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. Fruitful's final death-agony in 2004 wasn't actually the first irrevocable collapse (Push, at which I worked, had, marginally, gone first), and it certainly wasn't the last – just last year saw the demise of both DialogueDirect UK and Outreach. But out of the ashes of Push at least two new agencies emerged,

both now thriving; the same appears to be true of Dialogue.

Valuable lessons have been learnt about the underlying business model: since 2004, F2F is genuinely a pay-by-results method. If the PFO doesn't sign any donors, it doesn't get paid (this in stark contrast to the operating practices of other forms of donor acquisition, such as direct mail, DRTV or advertising, where agencies still charge a fixed fee, regardless of results). And the trials and tribulations of the commercial operators have at least in part spurred the steady and significant development of the 'in-house' F2F operation within some charities, which might realistically now be called a 'movement'.

The demand for F2F is higher than ever, as a proven method that delivers results in hard economic times. And, at a time when money is tight, charities can and will go to their agencies and ask them to tighten their margins even more; or they just might take their business elsewhere. Which is all well and good, though let's hope we have all learnt the one inescapable fact of F2F life: cutting corners never pads the bottom line; it only pads the wallets of administrators. ☹️👎

1916 and all that: A right dog's dinner

There's no polite way to say this: the regulatory regime surrounding F2F is a total dog's dinner. We have two disparate and frankly, quite ancient, pieces of legislation currently in force, but nothing yet that could pass for what could be termed 'joined up government'.

As everyone in this sector will know,

Legislation affecting F2F

- Police, Factories etc (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1916
- Charitable Collections Order 1974 (Transitional Provisions)
- House-to-House Collections Act 1939
- House to House Collections Regulations 1947
- Charities Act 2006
- Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982
- Public Charitable Collections (Scotland) Regulations 1984
- Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (awaiting implementation)
- House-to-House Charitable Collections Act (NI) 1952
- Charities Act (NI) 2008

and virtually no-one outside it will care, the bone of legislative contention is the arcane Police, Factories etc (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1916. This was the act hastily brought into force to prevent fundraising for bogus war charities during the First World War.

This act gave the police the power (later transferred to councils) to grant licences for street collections. Of course, in 1916, there was no such thing as a direct debit, and the act specifically refers to money. So it is a moot legal point whether F2F street collections require a 1916 licence.

In 2005, we commissioned a legal opinion from our solicitors Farrer and Co. This concluded that a direct debit is what is known as a 'chose in action' – a promise to pay money at a later date – but is not money in itself. Direct debit collections therefore do not need a cash collection licence.

This argument has formed the basis of much of our negotiations with local authorities. But it is a totally unsatisfactory situation for all concerned and, of course, not all councils agree with our interpretation (though a great many do and co-operate in producing site

management agreements to control fundraising access to their areas).

It could all be sorted out relatively painlessly though. The Charities Act 2006 contains a unified licensing regime that will bring cash and direct debit collections under the same roof. I've seen these new measures described by various fringe opponents of F2F as being new rules that will curb or even prohibit 'chuggers'. Far from it. CA06 will bring a large measure of fairness and consistency to a disordered system and we welcome it.

But there will still be anomalies. For instance doorstep F2F is currently licensable under the House-to-House Collections Act 1939, but curiously CA06 does not require any type of household collection to be licensed at all.

Of course we've been in this situation before. The Charities Act 1992 contained a similar unified licensing regime but a general election got in the way and this part was never brought into force. Now we have a second chance.

The Charities Act 2006 probably won't be perfect, but it's going to be orders of magnitude better than the current situation. Our message to the Coalition government is clear: Act now! ☹️👎

NOVEMBER Police officer arrests Gift fundraiser in Carnaby Street – handcuffed and forced to lie face-down on the ground. CPS drops case. Costs awarded to Gift. PFRA seeks meeting with Metropolitan Police.

JANUARY LibDem MP Adrian Sanders tables EDM criticising PFRA saying it does not operate to regulatory standards. 14 MPs sign. Sanders subsequently distances himself from the motion.

MARCH Farrer and Co delivers legal opinion which says direct debits are not money so are not covered by the 1916 Act.

JULY IoF/PF awards to include F2F category for first time, sponsored by PFRA – won by VSO and Dialogue Direct.

AUGUST 'Chugger' enters the OED.

SEPTEMBER Poll by cover4students.com shows 32 per cent of freshers want to be a chugger as a part-time job – top place above bar job (28 per cent) and lap dancer (15 per cent).

A fundraiser by any other name...



Ian MacQuillin
Ian MacQuillin is head of communications at the PFRA and a former editor of *Professional Fundraising* magazine

APRIL Mick Aldridge becomes PFRA's second chief executive.

MAY Middlesbrough Council (and others) require CRB checks on fundraisers even though CRB says they are not needed.

JUNE Middlesbrough backs down over CRB checks.

SEPTEMBER PFRA backs Direct Selling Association in opposition to CCCZs.

OCTOBER Fundraising Standards Board officially launches. PFRA has permanent seat on the board.

FEBRUARY Community Channel launches Chugger Chase online game.

MAY SMA agreed with Brighton following a year-long verbal argy bargy with Brighton MP David Lepper.

JULY Anna Feuchtwang, ceo of Everychild, tries street fundraising for a day.

NOVEMBER Timothy Hornsby steps down as PFRA chair.

June 26, 2002 was a seminal date in the history of face-to-face fundraising. On that day, the word 'chugger' – a portmanteau of 'charity' and 'mugger' – first appeared in print.

The person responsible for coining this lexicographic millstone was journalist Keith Barker-Main, compiler of the 'Say What: News Words About Town' column in the *Metro* free newspaper. So, on behalf of the F2F subsector, on the occasion of the PFRA's 10th anniversary, we'd just like to say: Cheers, Keith!

The term quickly caught on in metropolitan circles. At the end of 2003, voluntary sector minister Fiona McTaggart defended her use of the term by saying she couldn't "bear the properness of not using language everyone uses". A year later, it appeared in a book of new words that had "entered common usage", compiled by Susie Dent, the dictionary expert for the TV programme *Countdown*. By August 2005, 'chugger' had earned an entry in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

But perhaps it didn't become as widespread quite as quickly as we in the charity sector think it did. When PFRA meets council officials away from the major conurbations or

cosmopolitan south-east, we usually have to explain what 'chugger' means. A Google search of 'chugger' (in association with the words 'charity', 'fundraiser' and 'fundraising') reveals a slow accumulation of usage that has only really taken off in the past two years. Surprisingly, for a word that has been around for eight years, it looks as if this year, 2010, is going to be the year that 'chugger' finally becomes widely used.

The term 'chugger' was intended right from the start to be a derogatory term and there's little that has divided fundraising opinion as much as the use of this word.

To many, it is and always will be a contemptible slur on the integrity of hardworking people trying to do a difficult job for good causes. Indeed, in its original use, this is exactly what it was intended to be, and many people, probably the majority who speak, blog or Tweet it, still intend this meaning.

But more and more I'm seeing it used as a general descriptive term for street fundraisers, with no intended negative overtones. It's also becoming increasingly common to see tin

How it all began

Keith Barker-Main's definition of 'chugger' from the *Metro*, June 26, 2002

"Licensed charity muggers with coloured tabards and clipboards laying in wait on every high street in the land to pounce on you and relieve you of your dosh by pressing all your guilt buttons and making you sign up to their cause."

rattlers referred to as chuggers, while the word is also used to describe newspaper vendors, market researchers, door-to-door utilities salespeople and even political canvassers. We're in the early stages of seeing the word 'chugger' evolve to mean anyone who takes up your time on the street or doorstep.

This has led to attempts by some fundraisers to take back 'ownership' of the word, reasoning that the more we use it, the weaker its derogatory connotations are and the less potential it has to hurt.

At the Institute of Fundraising Convention in 2006, F2F agency Gift Fundraising launched a high-profile

To many, the word 'chugger' is and always will be a contemptible slur on the integrity of hardworking people trying to do a difficult job for good causes

attempt to rebrand chuggers as 'charity huggers', which in turn led to a debate within the PFRA whether to officially embrace the term (and even whether to go the whole hog and adopt the phrase 'charity hugger'). In 2009, PFRA's communications committee did endorse the use of the word in engaging with people who themselves used the word in a neutral way devoid of ill-intent.

Anyway, for the past two years, PFRA's ceo Mick Aldridge has adopted the word 'chugger' through children's charity I-CAN's Adopt a Word scheme. In one sense at least then, we do actually own the word.



'It will never work' – F2F in 2020

I am convinced we will see far more rigorous testing. We did it with direct mail, and we will increasingly do it with F2F

By some bizarre twist of fate I seem to have become something of a specialist in face-to-face fundraising. At least, UNICEF must think so given that they have employed me as their 'global fundraising specialist' for the technique. It all seems a long way from the birth of the PFRA 10 years ago, and if you had told me after one of those early board meetings that, a decade later, I would be writing about the next 10 years of F2F – well, I would have asked for a pint of whatever you were having...

But here we are and, I am convinced, here we will stay, in one form or another. By my reckoning F2F is now under way in between 40 and 45 countries. Certainly UNICEF is active in most of these, and having a global overview, it is possible to see the developments and improvements that ensure the ongoing evolution of the technique.

Everybody knows that there are different ways to do F2F. You can work on the street, go door to door, business to business, set up in malls, stations, airports, cafes, safari parks, bars (yes, really) – you name it. You can also operate with an agency or in-house, a hybrid of the two, or even use volunteers.

Owen Watkins
Owen Watkins (centre, with the Helsinki team) is UNICEF's F2F fundraising specialist and a former PFRA vice-chair



Fundamentally though, it's all the same stuff: it's taking the opportunity to have one person ask another for financial support on behalf of an NGO. It's the oldest form of fundraising: it's personal, it's interactive and it works.

So I do not see too much evolution in terms of the dynamics of the dialogue over the next 10 years. This is because the technique works because it's human – take that away and it will be less effective.

Where I do see evolution is in two main areas – technology and donor management. Each plays an important

role in the value maximization of F2F donors, and with a market like the UK where recruitment is expensive and break even can be well into year two, they are yet more important.

The use of technology to support the sign-up process is something that we are starting to use in UNICEF, and has already been more widely used in a number of countries. Essentially, it's about the quality of the data that you are acquiring. Technology offers the opportunity to exclude the errors that result from relying on handwriting-on-paper, by allowing you to directly – and

correctly – input data one time only, and to actively check the donor details live. All these factors increase the percentage fulfilment rate of your shiny new donors – meaning more of the ones that give you a signature give you money (which is the point of the exercise in the first place).

It consistently amazes me how little some charities know about their donors, and how little they do to look after them. Equally, where charities do have donor retention programmes, how little is known about those aspects of their programmes that add value, those that do not, and those that, in some cases, destroy value.

I am convinced we will see far more attention paid to this area, and far more rigorous testing undertaken. Charities need to find the percentage point gains that make their programmes more profitable – we did it with direct mail, and we will increasingly do it with F2F.

The future of F2F is one of evolution, rather than revolution. The way in which we recruit and manage our donors will become more refined, and we will be smarter with our data. But the onus is on you to implement these changes, and find the small gains that will make a big difference to your fundraising.

JANUARY Legal opinion from the Office of Fair Trading says Cold Calling Control Zones cannot be legally enforced.

FEBRUARY Office of the Third Sector releases guidance on required form of solicitation statement.

APRIL Gift Fundraising issues PDAs to fundraisers.

JULY PFRA's first Donor Acquisition and Retention Survey confirms what has been gut feeling among F2F fundraisers – that attrition in the first year is around 50 per cent – but also shows retention rates are improving and highlights an 11/12 month spike in attrition.

JULY Institute of Fundraising removes recommendation to be a member of PFRA from the F2F code of practice.

OCTOBER PFRA membership endorsement reinstated into code.

NOVEMBER Leeds City Council, one of F2F's former most vehement opponents, signs SMA.

We all have a responsibility to safeguard F2F's future

For the last eight years I have sat on the board of the PFRA and seen some huge changes in face-to-face fundraising. Along with developments in the environment in which we fundraise, these change have led to a massive increase in the scale of F2F in the UK.



Michael Naidu
Michael Naidu is assistant director of fundraising at Mencap and acting chair of the PFRA

But still the challenges persist. Reading the papers and searching the internet you would believe that chuggers are still evil, charities who use F2F are lining fat cat company profits and the average person on the street is less trusting of charities because of this activity.

standard get a call from the PFRA demanding improvement, while offering support to achieve best practice.

The commitment to self-regulation does not stop there. When I joined the board in 2002, the PFRA had just responded to the review of charity regulation – *Private Action, Public Benefit* – the initiative that kicked off the formation of the FRSB. We supported this initiative wholeheartedly

from the very start and continue to play an active role on the board of the FRSB. We promote the role of the FRSB in our work with local authorities and our non-sector stakeholders such as the Association of Town Centre Managers, Institute of Licensing and the Trading Standards Institute.

These organisations may not mean much to you, but they have a direct impact on charities' abilities to get out there and fundraise. They sit as observers on the board of the PFRA and should be thanked for their support and guidance.

Accountability and transparency have become buzzwords that many throw around but few act upon. This is not the case with the PFRA. For three years Morag Fleming and Rupert Tappin, both members of the board, have run the Donor Attrition and Retention Survey (DARS). They have shared anonymised attrition results and evidence of best practice in ongoing communications with the whole sector, not just PFRA members. In my decade of fundraising I have never heard any one else being so honest about the reality of attrition, yet you would think that F2F is the only form

of fundraising that suffers from attrition – ignoring an issue such as this is not going to make it better.

As to the future, well we are at the whim of the new Coalition government. Months of lobbying by our former chair, Timothy Hornsby, and active engagement with the then Office of the Third Sector have brought the laws around fundraising in the public domain to the brink of modernisation.

With massive public spending cuts looming, the diary management service offered by the PFRA can reduce administration costs to cash-strapped local authorities. This could lead to more fundraising capacity, but the need for more capacity can only be made by you – the charities that recruit donors through face-to-face fundraising.

If your organisation's long-term fundraising strategy is to recruit donors on the street you should be a) proudly shouting about the difference the money you receive makes to your beneficiaries and b) pestering me to get a place on the board of the PFRA.

We all have a responsibility in ensuring that face-to-face fundraising is here for the long haul. ☺☺☺

NOVEMBER Donor advice website Intelligent Giving call on public to 'boycott chuggers' after misunderstanding solicitation requirements.

APRIL Nick Henry becomes PFRA's first head of standards.

JUNE Figures show 681,000 sign ups for F2F in 2008/09 financial year – highest for six years – but that doorstep sign-ups account for 60 per cent of all new donors recruited, and trend is increasing as more charities put their resources into doorstep F2F.

JULY Second DARS shows attrition has increased to 56 per cent in first year, undoubtedly because of the recession.

OCTOBER Dialogue Direct UK ceases trading.

FEBRUARY Code of practice revised to allow fundraisers to enter some Cold Calling Control Zones.

“Face-to-face fundraising is likely to be a short-lived method of fundraising. As more and more charities take to the streets to sign up new donors, the more competitive the situation will become. Many charities have forecast that there is a limited opportunity for face-to-face sign ups and are investing money into this method of fundraising now as a result.

“With hundreds of thousands of new donors being signed up through face-to-face this year, there are going to be fewer and fewer potential new donors out there. This type of activity will surely lead to a saturated market within a few years, when the cost of signing up numbers will increase to a point where it will no longer be cost-effective to sign up donors in the streets.”

Dominic Kemps of Brann Consulting, writing in *Professional Fundraising*, June 2000



Celebrating 10 years of excellence in
Face-to-Face
 Fundraising



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