

Last weekend, after 18 months, I joined a local charity to do some fundraising at a nearby motorway service station. I have done many of these before but as this was the first one I had been involved in post lockdowns, I wasn't sure what Bucket Collecting in 2021 would be like.

Volunteering for 2-hour shifts, myself and my colleagues stood at the entrance to the service station and greeted entering members of the public. Dressed in the charity t-shirt, suitably masked, and next to an information stand about the charity we held a donation bucket for cash and a portable card reader for card donations. The card reader was preset so it did not need to be touched by a supporter, they could simply hover their card/phone/smartwatch over the top to make a donation.

After an 18-month break, it took a little time to get back into the swing of it and get used to doing so with a mask on. At first, I started smiling at people, but quickly realized they could not see my smile and probably thought I was staring. So where I could not say hello (too loud, or too far away with a mask on) I would make eye contact, smile, and also gesture with a head nod. That seemed to work.

It was very busy, far busier than I was expecting. The weather was nice, and it was a weekend, but with some restrictions still in place, I thought it would have been a lot calmer. In saying that though, everyone was respectful of one another, wearing masks, sanitizing, following one-way systems, etc, so that was reassuring to see.

Bucket Collecting in 2021

In terms of donations, there was a very good steady flow. This was fantastic and very similar to pre-covid levels. The biggest shock though was there was only a very marginal drop in cash donations vs card donations. Personally, I have barely used cash in the last 18 months, due to Covid. When I have gone to supermarkets and things I rarely see people pay with cash. But when it came to fundraising, I would say about 90-95% of donations were made in cash.

It was very positive to see that people were happy to donate and engage. After all this time away, it seems that the public at large still appreciates what their local charities do, and are happy to contribute where they can. This was great to see.

Heading out again in a couple of weeks and hoping for another great day!

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