

With the impact of Covid-19 very few sectors have been harder hit than the Charity Sector.

Throughout the last year, charities have seen a significant rise in demand for their services. Food banks, support services, and animal charities, to name only a few have all reported big spikes in demand. In many ways, the charity sector has been hit with a double-edged sword. At the same time as experiencing a rise in demand for their services, charities have also been hit with a drop in income.

Thousands of fundraising events had to move to virtual events or be cancelled entirely due to Covid-19 outbreaks. Bucket collections and face to face fundraising had to stop all together. With fewer shops open and people advised to pay by card as opposed to cash, counter top fundraising boxes also took a significant hit.

## **A new world in cashless donations**

As restrictions begin to ease, face to face fundraising can take place once again, shops are starting to reopen and hopefully we will see some fundraising events in the next few months. However, have people become complacent in using card over cash to make payment?

The decline in the use of cash in the UK, is nothing new. However, over the last 12 months, with the government and shops advising against its use where possible, its rate of decline has dramatically increased. (Cash in time of Covid, Bank of England, 2020)

It is too early to tell what impact this is likely to have on bucket/collection tin fundraising, but combined with reduced footfall in shops and at events, it's likely to be significant.

## **Donation Boxes Able to Take Cashless Donations**

Over the last few years a number of wireless card donation products have entered the market. Although some charities have been early to adopt these, cash only boxes vastly outnumber those able to take card payments. However, with the rise in demand, and more accessible IoT solutions available off the shelf, 2021 could certainly see a dramatic increase in the number of charities, clubs and churches adopting wireless donation points. But are the public ready? Here are what UK residents stated in March 2021.

## **“If the charity box on the counter took wireless card donations, would you use it?”**

46.3% of respondents stated they would be happy to make a wireless card donation, with another 22.8% responding as ‘maybe’. A quarter of respondents said they would not, so it seems the best solution for charities to adopt would be a donation box which takes both cash and wireless donations.

## **How else can the charity sector utilise IoT for fundraising?**

A IoT enabled donation box would certainly be a good starting point for charities looking to adopt new and connected ways of fundraising. These could be both static in a shop or mobile at an event, but what other ways could charities utilise IoT to aid their fundraising efforts.

- Sensors around a charity run, track runners remotely as they progress around a fundraising running course.
- Connected cameras at Air Ambulance Operations Bases or LifeBoat Stations? Displayed at fundraising events to show the public where their money is going to right this second.
- Distress buttons, that people can carry on them, that connect straight to a support desk.
- Sensors in support living accommodation to detect temperature, smoke, gas, water etc.

The list is endless and with providers offering almost off the shelf solutions, this is only likely to reduce in cost and grow in use over the next few years.

### **References**

Cash in time of Covid, Bank of England, 2020

<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/quarterly-bulletin/2020/2020-q4/cash-in-the-time-of-covid>

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