Getting started with online fundraising

Why?
Every organisation could do with a few more pennies in the bank. While online fundraising for a small local organisation probably isn’t going to see you rolling in cash, it could provide a supplement to your other income.

Sometimes your supporters would like to be able to help but don’t always know how best to go about this. Giving them a way to donate means that there’s always a simple action they can take to support you.

Any online donations you receive from UK taxpayers are also eligible for Gift Aid. This means that for £1 donated to you, HMRC will add an extra 25p to the pot so you end up with more in the coffers.

But why online?
Quite simply, it’s really easy to do. Once you’ve set up your page you can do as much or as little work to promote it as you like. (Although we would recommend promoting it a lot... see Spread the Word below!)

*The average online donation is £30 compared to £15 offline.*

You don’t even need a techie to build your own online donation page... there are plenty of services out there that can take care of that for you.

The practicalities - setting up an online page
First, find which online fundraising site is right for your organisation. Most of them make it easy to get started and will take care of all the admin for you, including the financial side of it. Check out Community How To to compare some of the websites available and see which is right for you.

*Some sites will transfer your money monthly, while some wait until you receive a certain amount before transferring the funds.*
Localgiving is one example of a website that will help you get set up. It’s dedicated to supporting small, locally focused charities and community groups - and if you sign up at www.localgiving.com/charitysignup, Localgiving will match every pound you receive with a pound from their own pot! Find out more about the scheme over on the Localgiving site.

Be specific
Don’t just set up a giving page and ask people for money. Ask for a specific amount for a definite thing. For instance, asking for £8 to cover an hour of volunteer training, or £30 to run a workshop is much more likely to get a donation. People like to know where their money’s going - and that warm, fuzzy feeling inside means they’re more likely to donate again.

Offer a range of options to suit different purses. Not everyone can afford to donate enough to buy you a new computer, but they might be able to cover your tea and biscuit costs for an outreach session.

Spread the word
Now you’ve got the means to collect online donations make sure your potential donors can find it!

- **Use your website**
  First up, make sure you add a link from your own website. Visitors to your website are likely to already be supporters of your work, so you’ll be more likely to receive donations from these people. Make sure the link to donate is in a really prominent place on your website to direct potential donors to your giving page. Make it as easy as possible for them!

  Let your donors know exactly where their money goes and how it helps - use case studies to show how previous donations have made a difference.

- **Use your newsletters**
  Both print and e-newsletters are great places to promote your online fundraising efforts. Let your supporters know what you’re asking for, why you’re asking, and most importantly - where to go to donate.

- **Use your social media accounts**
  Received a donation? Send a tweet with a word of thanks. Looking for funds to buy new equipment? Share some photos of your old broken equipment to show just why you’re asking for donations. Social media offers ways to show a more personal side to fundraising.
Thank your donors
Got your first donation? Remember to acknowledge it with a thanks. Send a quick email showing your appreciation, and sign off from an actual member of your team.

Everyone likes to be thanked - it reassures them that their hard-earned money has successfully reached the right destination and makes them feel like they’ve really made a difference.

Give people another option
Remember that not everyone can or will donate funds. Give people the option of helping you out in other ways - whether that’s giving their time and support or simply being an advocate of your organisation.

Whatever you want, be clear about what simple actions people can take to help you out. Build a real relationship with your supporters and they could help your organisation for years to come.

Good luck!