

HOW TO...ORGANISE A COFFEE MORNING

Coffee mornings are a great British tradition. Large or small, they are the perfect activity for conversing, mingling and raising money for ShelterBox.



What It's All About

By organising or taking part in an event that raises funds for ShelterBox, you will be directly providing aid for people affected by disasters all over the world. A great thing about ShelterBox is that every box bears its own unique number, which means that after your event you can find out exactly where the money you raised has gone via our website www.shelterbox.org. There are numerous ways to raise money for ShelterBox at your coffee morning. In addition to drink sales, you could sell food and snacks, hold raffles and auctions, have a cake sale or a Bring and Buy. Whilst you don't need to have all of these activities to make your coffee morning a success, you should decide early in the planning process.

Expenses are an inevitable part of holding a charity party, so it's important to decide what you will provide for free, what you will make money on and what you need to spend. That way, you can deduct these expenses accordingly from your fundraising profit and make more accurate projections about your potential earnings.

On the other hand, fundraising isn't always all about raising money, it's just as important to raise awareness about ShelterBox and the work we do too. You can contact our Fundraising Team and they will be happy to provide you with promotional materials for your party. Whether you put up a poster, show a ShelterBox DVD or give out fliers, making people aware of the work we do is just as valuable.

Finding A Venue



One of the great things about holding a fundraising coffee morning is that your event can be any size you like. Choice of venue plays a big role in this, so you will need to decide where you'll hold your coffee morning before you proceed with planning.

Fundraising coffee mornings are commonly held at homes or in the workplace. These places offer a cosy setting, along with easy accessibility for those attending. Homes and most offices also have kitchens - perfect for coffee preparation - and seating areas for your guests.

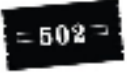
If you're planning a larger coffee morning, you can also investigate spaces within your local community. As your event is being held during the morning hours, community halls and businesses may let you use their space for free or for a reduced rate. In fact, a local business may benefit greatly from having so many guests come into their shop at a typically slow time for sales!

If you do decide to hold your coffee morning in a community area, you will need to visit the premises beforehand to determine how many people the space can accommodate and ensure it's appropriate for your coffee morning. You should also find out what will and will not be provided by the venue, such as tables, chairs, kitchen facilities or toilet facilities. Also, when booking your venue, remember to allow adequate time to set up before and clean up afterwards your morning.

Planning Your Fundraising Coffee Morning

Once you've chosen your coffee morning venue, you can begin planning the actual event. Choose a date that is far enough in the future to allow yourself plenty of time to plan and prepare; this will also give your guests plenty of notice to be able to attend.

Coffee mornings can be very basic set-ups. Initially, all you need is a facility to make and serve coffee, and a collection box for donations. You should plan in advance whether you're going to sell coffee for a fixed price or accept any donation as a goodwill gesture. Determining how much it actually costs to make a cup of coffee is instrumental in making this decision.

 You may choose to optimise on the event for additional fundraising opportunities, such as selling other refreshments, having a cake sale, holding a raffle or maybe even having a bring and buy sale if you have ample space at your venue. You can double or triple your fundraising during a coffee morning by holding additional activities. The longer people linger at your coffee morning, the more money you'll raise for ShelterBox!



Finally, make sure you collect donations in a prominent place. Don't be ashamed to ask for donations or talk about ShelterBox; that's why people are there!

Publicising Your Coffee Morning

Once you have chosen a venue and a date, you will need to publicise your coffee morning or send invitations. How you do this depends on the size of your coffee morning, but make sure you give yourself plenty of time and your guests plenty of notice. For a smaller gathering, like in a home or small office, you can simply invite people by word of mouth or by sending invitations. However, you should ask people to RSVP for a home or office coffee morning, so you don't under-prepare for the number of guests who will attend.

For a community coffee morning, you'll need a bit more publicity. You will have a greater chance of success if you spread the word wider beyond close friends and family. The more people that know about your coffee morning, the more successful it's likely to be and the more money you're likely to raise. Make eye-catching posters, fliers and signs advertising the event and distribute around your local area. Make sure they are striking, easy to read and include all the necessary details. You can even go door-to-door within your community or make announcements at other local events, such as bingo or school recitals.

If you have a big venue and are planning a large attendance, why not send a press release to your local newspaper, magazine or radio to see if they will run an article about the coffee morning or place an ad? Or if you're technically minded, use social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and chat forums to help you spread the word about your fundraising activities quickly and widely.

On The Day

With the right preparation, the day of your fundraising coffee morning can be stress-free. Be sure to arrive at the venue early to set up chairs and start making coffee. You want everything to be ready for the arrival of your first guests, and it's inevitable that some people will arrive ahead of schedule!



When the time comes to start your coffee morning, it's a good idea to have someone positioned near the doors to recommend donations and inform people of other events taking place (such as cake sales or raffles). Remember, you will need to set your own policy about minimum donation amounts; however, most people who come to a coffee morning understand the process and are happy to contribute without prompting.

Once your event is in full swing, you're well on your way to fundraising success. All that's left to do is mingle, keep the coffee pot brewing and remind people about ShelterBox!

Keep It Safe and Legal

We don't want you getting into trouble when fundraising for us so do bear in mind that there are some rules and regulations for certain fundraising activities. Some general guidelines are outlined below. Or you can contact us on 01326 569782 or fundraising@shelterbox.org for support and advice for your party.

- If children are attending your coffee morning, always ensure that they are safe and that you do not allow them to solicit money or collect money alone or without an adult.
- If you are organising a larger coffee morning do check with the venue if there are any health and safety issues or if any kind of insurance is required. If you organise an event that involves the public in any way, you will need to ensure you have public liability insurance.
- If you are going to be carrying money around take care with personal security. Always use a safe route and always be accompanied and/or carry a personal alarm.
- If you want to collect money in a public place, you must first obtain permission to do so. To collect in the street, you will need a licence from the local council who will also give you a set of rules to follow during your collection. Street collections are a popular means of fundraising so you need to apply for the licence well in advance. To collect on private property, for example in a shopping centre, you must ask for permission from whoever is responsible for it. Door-to-door collections are illegal without a licence.
- ShelterBox cannot accept responsibility for accidents, so make sure that your event is safe for all concerned. Assess the risks involved and make sure that they are eliminated or minimised to an acceptable level.
- If contractors, sub contractors or external facilities are used, make sure they have the relevant experience and can demonstrate compliance with insurance and health and safety standards.
- Food safety laws apply when food is available at an event whether it is for sale or not. You need to be aware of these and follow food hygiene procedures. Further information can be obtained from your local authority environmental health department.

Top Tips

Let ShelterBox know! We have an experienced and dedicated fundraising team here at HQ. We're just at the end of a phone or email if you need any advice or have any questions or queries. Plus, we can provide you with promotional materials to help support your event. Contact 01326 569782 or fundraising@shelterbox.org

Failing to plan means planning to fail. It sounds cliché but without some sort of plan it will only result in more stress for you and those around you. Put some sensible deadlines in place so that you can manage things in small chunks rather than trying to do everything at once.

If you're planning additional fundraising activities at your coffee morning, you may feel overwhelmed by your tasks at times. Don't let these situations get the better of you. If you have friends, family or other volunteers available, get them involved or delegate jobs to them.

Remember: you're doing this for your charity and it's meant to be fun.