

# THE LESS-CASH, CONTACTLESS FUTURE IS NOW

We founded **Thyngs** on a vision of the future that's playing out today. Where fewer people carry cash and commerce is accessible via nothing more than a smartphone.

In this future, charities would lose out without an easy and cost-effective cashless donations platform. We made it our mission to design a solution accessible to any charity of any size.

When we began on this journey in 2016, technology was way ahead of adoption. In 2020 a new need for touch-free technologies emerged and adoption accelerated.

During the pandemic more people discovered how to use their phone to make payments and access services at a safe distance. People who had never made payments via mobile, or scanned a QR code, were more willing to try.

The increased adoption of contactless technologies enabled organisations to continue to sell, even with social distancing. It also provided a lifeline for charities, who came under pressure to fundraise and deliver services at a distance.

During 2020 we observed digital transformation moving to the top of the agenda for charities. We saw increased demand for affordable and scalable cashless donations services. We also watched as QR codes went mainstream and adoption of contactless payments grew.

In this paper we share tips for using QR codes, success stories and fresh ideas. We hope it will inspire others to fundraise in new and exciting ways. First, we look at what changed in the tech landscape and what it means for charities.



# HOW AN NHS PR CAMPAIGN GAVE CHARITIES THE EDGE

Search the internet for stories relating to 'death of the QR code' and you'll get over 16,000 results dating back a decade. Thanks to an NHS PR campaign, the QR code has beaten the bookies and gone mainstream.

The fact that we no longer need to explain what a QR code is, is largely as a result of the NHS Track & Trace app. The black and white pattern invented in the 90's is now recognisable as a way to access useful services and information.

About 80% of smartphone users said they have scanned a QR code at least once, with about 40% saying they scanned a code in the past week. Of those users, just under 45% have scanned a QR code at a restaurant, bar, or café. More than half of all respondents said they expect to use QR codes for payments in the near future. (Mobileiron<sup>1</sup>)

**“We’ve got to utilise the fact that QR codes are now common and used everywhere. The older generation are using it. And for some of us in the charity sector, that’s our key target audience.”**

– Androula Papaiacovou, Contactless Income Manager at MacMillan Cancer Support

The widespread use of QR codes in 2020 for check-in, table ordering, payments etc has had a positive outcome for charities. Now more people know what they are, they provide a low-cost, touch-free way to collect cashless donations.

We’ve seen many more charities using QR codes in creative ways. As shop window stickers, out-of-home advertising, virtual webinar backgrounds and more. QR codes enable charities to easily direct donors to specific content, such as a donation experience or video campaign.

What we find exciting is that QR codes are also a stepping-stone into more engaging and versatile technology like Near-Field Communications (NFC). NFC is invisible and can be added to any object, vs QR codes where the object must be large enough to accommodate a code.

QR codes are safe, touch-free technologies and the ability to scan them is built into modern smartphone cameras, which are only getting more sophisticated. These technologies enable charities to transform how and when they engage supporters now and in the future.

1. <https://www.mobileiron.com/en/blog/how-covid-19-has-accelerated-qr-code-adoption-uk-eu>

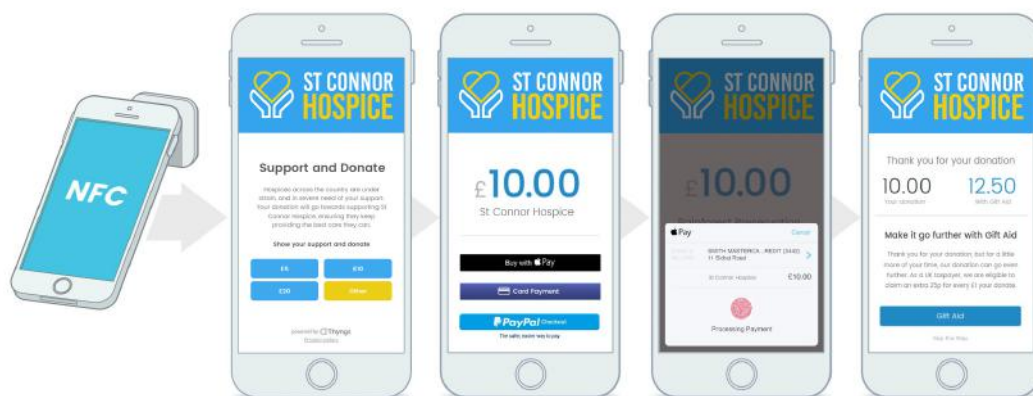
# IF YOUR GRANNY IS USING CONTACTLESS IT'S TIME TO PAY ATTENTION

Alongside QR code adoption, the use of contactless payments also increased in 2020. Early last year people became concerned that cash could be a source of transmission for the virus. This resulted in retailers asking people to pay via contactless where possible. Some businesses even declined cash altogether.

There was a 12% increase in the number of people aged over 65 using contactless payment methods for the first time.

Nine in ten payments made in UK stores (88.6%) were contactless (Barclaycard<sup>2</sup>).

Nearly ten million people, or 18% of adults registered for mobile payments in 2019 with 79% of these registered users recording a payment (Uk Finance<sup>3</sup>)



According to Bank of England<sup>4</sup> cash remains an important part of the UK economy. But people are making fewer cash transactions. “Only 23% of all payments in 2019 were made using cash, down from close to 60% a decade earlier, as people increasingly turn to other methods to make transactions, such as debit cards and digital payments.”

The decline in cash has been a concern for charities for some time but the pandemic intensified this trend. “Some of the change in consumer payment behaviour will depend on the social distancing measures in place, and the opportunities available for consumers to spend cash,” said Bank of England. “However, the barriers to alternative payment adoption may have been permanently broken by Covid.”

2. <https://www.nfcw.com/2021/01/22/370280/nine-in-ten-uk-in-store-card-payments-are-now-contactless/>

3. <https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/system/files/UK-Payment-Markets-Report-2020-SUMMARY.pdf>

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

# THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CHARITIES

**The less-cash, contactless future is no longer coming. It's now. This brings challenges but also opportunity.**

Digital transformation hasn't been easy for charities, which made reacting to the pandemic even more difficult. According to The Charity Digital Skills Report 2020<sup>4</sup>, internal barriers are still preventing charities from getting the most out of digital, with lack of funding and digital skills cited as the two biggest obstacles.

The great thing about QR codes is that you don't need specialist skills. There's also no need to invest in new equipment like terminals, or to hire designers and developers. This makes them accessible for all charities of all sizes.

The investment for charities is understanding how to get the most out of them. Donations is just one use-case. For charities focused on the long-game, QR codes can also be used to drive acquisition and engagement.

**"It doesn't matter what size charity you are, it's about starting something, trying an innovative idea out, and jumping on the journey. Once you've done it for the first time you learn from it, because you have the data and analytics to learn from. Test, learn, develop."**

– Gill Thorpe, CEO at The Sourcing Team

**"Without doubt, having a diversified portfolio of income streams has helped us weather the C-19 storm in 2020 better than we might have expected."**

– Jonathan Sandall, Director of Fundraising for SSAFA

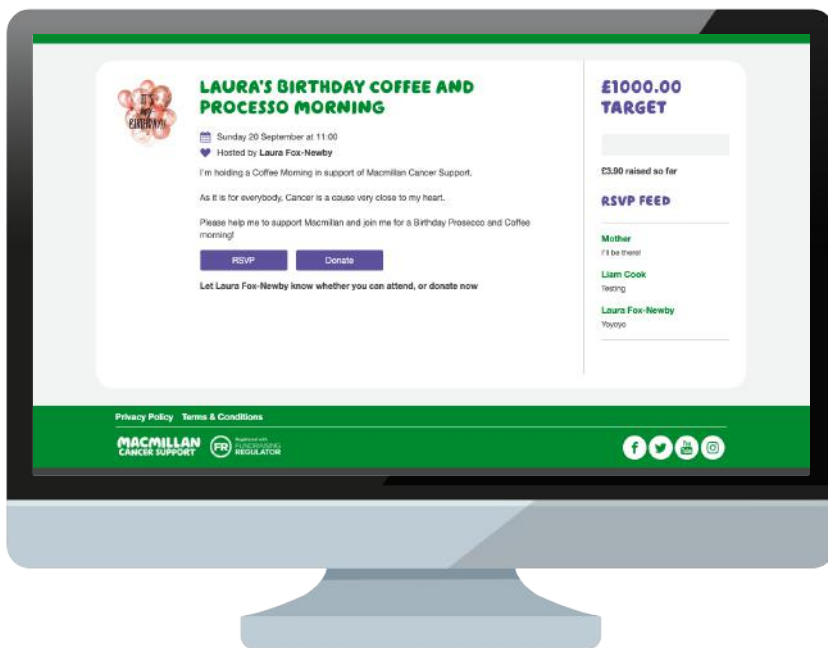
There has never been a better time to try something new and there are plenty of examples out there to draw inspiration from. QR codes are the first step on the journey to a more diversified, digital approach to fundraising.

# CASHLESS FUNDRAISING – 5 LESSONS FROM 2020

## 1. Personalised fundraising pages increase donations

Unable to hold in-person events in 2020, **MacMillan World's Biggest Coffee Morning** went virtual. MacMillan used QR codes via the Thyngs platform to collect cashless donations. They issued fundraisers with a unique QR code that linked to a personalised page for that fundraiser.

“In our first year we asked people to scan the code when they received it with limited personalisation. But at the points where people could personalise it, we got absolutely phenomenal feedback. This is one of the areas we developed pre-covid for 2020.” –Androula Papaiaacovou, Contactless Income Manager from MacMillan Cancer Support.



Hosts that personalised their own fundraising page, raised almost double the amount of those who left their page un-personalised!

## 2. Always include the unique URL in your online posts

This is an oversight we see time and again. QR codes are designed to be scanned using a smartphone. If someone is viewing your QR code via a mobile phone, they are unable to scan that code. The way around this is to always include your code's unique url.



### 3. Educate your fundraisers

**Your staff are only going to encourage the technology if they understand it. Confident staff will mean confident donors.**

Educate your volunteers and fundraising teams. Show them how the technology works and why it's valuable to your charity. We found that those charities who took the time to educate their team using our resources got better results.

You need to also give your team as much notice as possible that you are introducing cashless donations. If you drop it on them at the last minute, they'll have less time to become comfortable and confident using it.

### 4. Not all QR generators are user-friendly and secure

There was a flourish of new QR code generators last year. In addition, online fundraising and payment terminal providers included them in their offering as add-ons. If you plan to integrate cashless fundraising into your marketing long-term it's worth investing in a platform with analytics and good security. If you need multiple QR codes, you need a trusted platform that helps you manage and track them all in one place.

**Be aware that you typically get what you pay for.**

Not all code generators are secure, have analytics, or provide mobile-optimised landing pages – you'll need to create these yourself.

### 5. Re-think the design of your communications



Open camera



Frame QR



Click pop-up

More people may now be familiar with the QR code, but not everyone will know how to scan one. Your QR code needs supporting instructions that direct donors through the process.

# The first step on your digital fundraising journey

If you're one of the many charities who tried out QR codes for the first time last year, congratulations on making that first step. You now have the ability to react to the changes that the UK will inevitably see this year as we continue to cope with the pandemic.

When the country re-opens and charities are able to once again engage in face-to-face fundraising, you will also be in a better position to engage supporters. In 2021 charities will need to deploy services that proactively engages their audience. This means taking a more strategic and integrated approach to digital fundraising.

**The great news is, the technology that enables you to do this already exists.**



In our next paper we'll explore how charities can use smartphones to better engage with fundraisers beyond QR codes.

Get in touch to discuss how digital fundraising could be integrated into your charity, or to find out more about the Thyngs contactless fundraising platform.



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