

Cashless fundraising in 2021 – Beyond the QR code

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,¹ watched as QR codes came of age, and contactless payments grew.

The QR code proved to be the perfect low-tech, low-cost way for all businesses to communicate and sell to customers touch-free. As a result, we saw more charities using QR codes to fundraise in creative, interactive ways. As shop window stickers, out-of-home advertising, virtual webinar backgrounds and more.

As well as QR codes going mainstream, the use of contactless payments also increased in 2020. Nine in ten payments made in UK stores (88.6%) were contactless and there was a 12% increase in the over 65's using contactless for the first time².

This is important for charities because the technology that powers contactless payments is Near-Field Communications (NFC). As we explore later in this paper, NFC is a more versatile technology than QR and enables charities to deploy a greater range of physical to digital experiences.

The increased acceptance of contactless, mobile payments and the wider use of QR codes has had a positive impact for charities. In this paper we aim to help charities make better use of QR codes and NFC to take their cashless fundraising to the next level.



1: <https://thyngs.net/articles/cashless-fundraising-in-2020>

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

How QR codes work and why NFC is more fun

It's not necessary to know how QR codes and Near-Field Communications (NFC) technologies work to use them. We do however think it's helpful to know a little bit about why they're not the same. This will help you plan how to use them in your marketing and fundraising campaigns.

What's the difference between QR codes and NFC?

QR and NFC are two types of proximity technology³ used in mobile phones. This means that when a phone comes within range of a receiver, the user is able to receive or send information. Both QR and NFC are built into most smartphones.

Phones running iOS 11 or Android 9 and newer can scan QR codes⁴ without an app.

All smartphones have NFC⁵ capability provided it's switched on. All iPhones XS and newer interact with NFC out-of-the-box and it's always switched on.

The main difference between QR and NFC is how the device is triggered. QR codes have to be activated by a user scanning an image (the code). NFC however can detect when a phone is nearby and enable it without the user doing anything.

QR



NFC

3: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/another-reason-lose-your-phone-itll-also-unlock-car-neil-garner/>

4: <https://thyngs.net/articles/2021-qr-codes>

5: <https://thyngs.net/articles/2021-nfc>

QR therefore has more limitations than NFC. First, it needs a trigger image. Second, it requires the user to do something on their phone to gain access to the information that the QR code points to. Some QR codes are also less secure.

QR codes connected to a platform are better than static ones if you want to be able to change the digital destination of your code. Using a platform to both create and manage your QR codes will mean you can change the digital experience without having to print a new image.

NFC doesn't need an image. It uses a small chip that doesn't need to be visible to the user. This is what makes NFC more versatile, sophisticated and more fun than QR. It's what transformed Pudsey Bear's ear tag for Children in Need and how Movember collected donations on-the-go using pin badges. It's also effective on T-shirts behind branded logos or graphics.

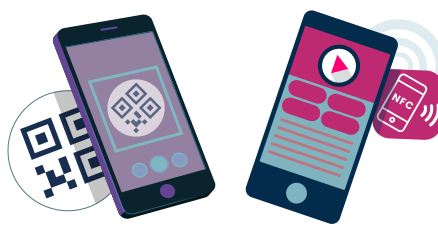
When would I use a QR code and when would I use NFC?

As a rule, we find QR is better for paper-based marketing such as posters, door-drops, and leaflets. Plus, they can be successful online when optimised correctly. NFC is far better for merchandise such as medals, badges, mascots, and wristbands because it doesn't have to interfere with the design. You can't use NFC technology on your online channels, but a good platform will generate unique URLs for you to use instead. (See figure 1 on the following page)

We recommend that, where possible, you enable NFC tagged QR codes. This is where you use both a QR code and an NFC chip to enable the same object (see figure 2). This takes into account that your supporters use different operating systems. It also gives them two options for how they interact with the object, increasing the likelihood of a conversion.

The great thing is that, if you use the Things platform, you don't have to settle on one technology over the other. The platform means you can create and manage as many QR codes, NFC links (or combination of both) and unique URLs as you need.

QR



NFC

Stickers for anything

Transform anything into a short-term donation point with QR code stickers.



Tappable labels

Add long-life value to merchandise by linking to fresh content after the purchase.



Virtual events

Use QR codes on your virtual background to collect support from home.



Meaningful medals

Take medals one step further and give winners the opportunity to connect with you.



Collection boxes to scan

Collect generous mobile donations wherever your collection boxes are.



Secure collection buckets

Fundraise even if you can't be there in person with secure NFC bucket wraps.



Engaging leaflets

Easily print QR codes onto anything paper-based.



Interactive T-shirts

Add invisible NFC chips behind the logos or graphics of your fundraising T-shirts for supporters to engage with.



Virtual QR code backgrounds

Collect support whenever you're on call with QR's on-screen.

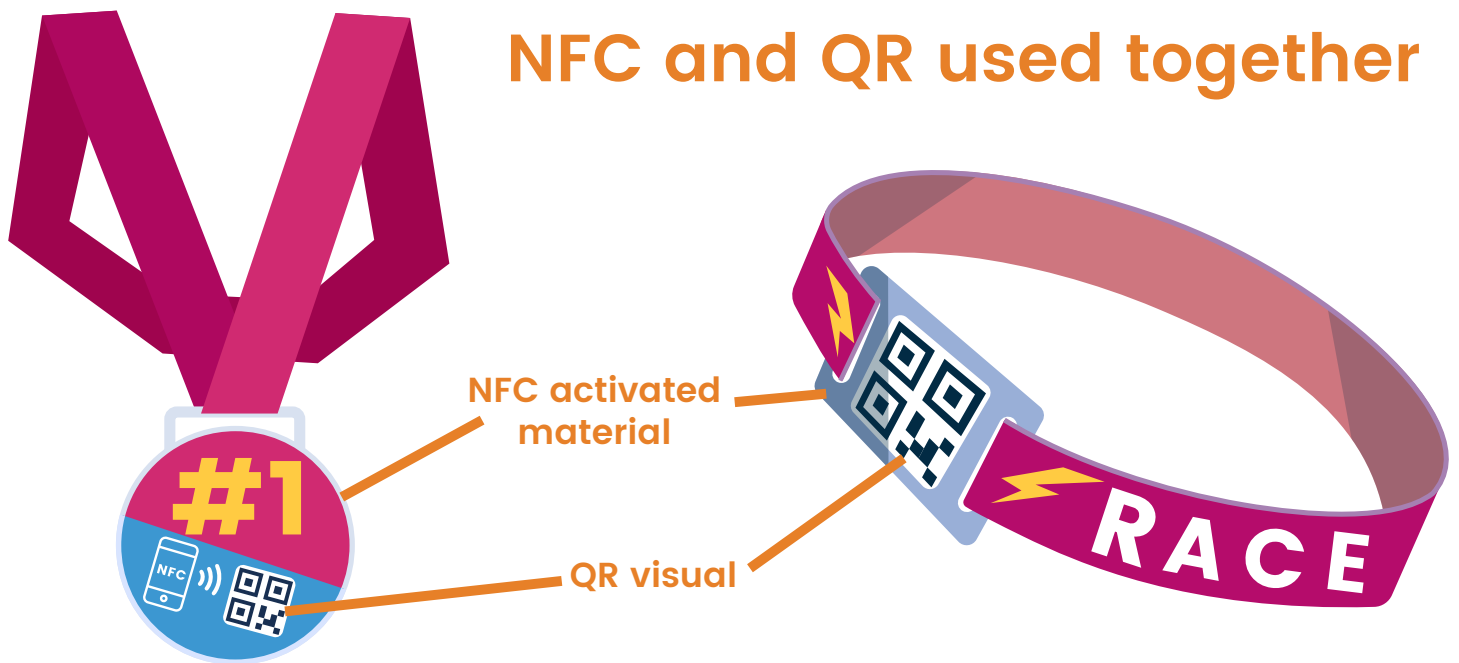


Fundraising wristbands

Give your fundraisers the opportunity to collect donations on-the-go with wearables.



NFC and QR used together



Get smart with cashless fundraising

QR and NFC are the technologies that enable a digital experience to be activated via a physical object. It's how a person is connected to information and services on their mobile phone.

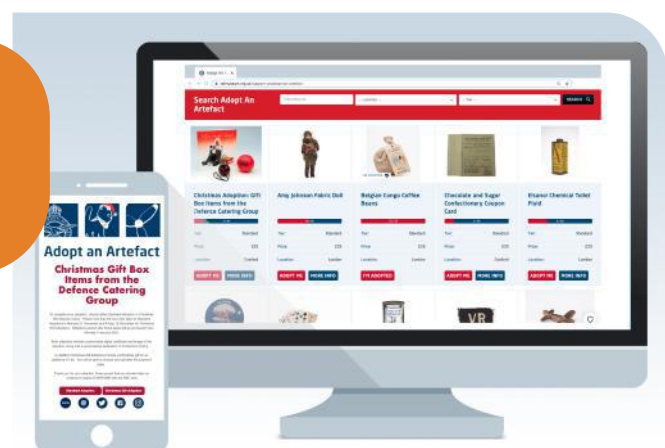
Therefore, you need to create an engaging experience in both the physical and digital environment.

Putting a QR code on your cashless bucket won't secure the conversions you need if your digital experience isn't good enough.

Once someone has interacted with your object, the most effective way to engage them is with mobile-optimised landing pages relevant to time and place. You need to make your experience frictionless and connect people to your experience in as fewer steps as possible.

You have the freedom to add QR and/or NFC capability to any object. Plus, you can implement the experiences online with their url to eliminate form-fills or lengthy donation processes, both a common barrier to entry.

Take inspiration from the RAF Museum's Adopt an Artefact campaign, where supporters can donate by adopting an artefact from the museum.





You could activate medals like the East Anglian Air Ambulance gave during the 'Only the Brave' mud challenge. Once the challenge was complete, supporters took a fun mud challenge selfie and subscribed to a weekly lottery system. All via their medal and smartphone.

Or take an integrated approach like CLIC Sargent, who have created multiple digital donation points via wristbands, posters, door drops, lanyards and more.



- 86% of the top landing pages are mobile-friendly⁶
- A two second delay in webpage load time can increase your bounce rate by 103%⁷
- Only 17% of marketers use A/B testing to improve landing page conversions⁸

Using a platform like Thyngs to create your landing pages is easier and quicker than having to create them yourself. Pages controlled via a platform will be mobile-optimised and therefore faster to load. You can also tailor and personalise experiences based on location, context, and demographics.

You can create whatever experience you want for your supporters such as games, telling a story or increasing sign ups to your newsletter. Remember you can also change the destination of any one of your digital touchpoints via the platform with no need to produce new QR or NFC codes.

6: <https://bloggingwizard.com/landing-page-statistics/>
7: <https://bloggingwizard.com/landing-page-statistics/>
8: <https://bloggingwizard.com/landing-page-statistics/>

Here are 5 cashless projects some of our customers have created using Thyngs in 2020.

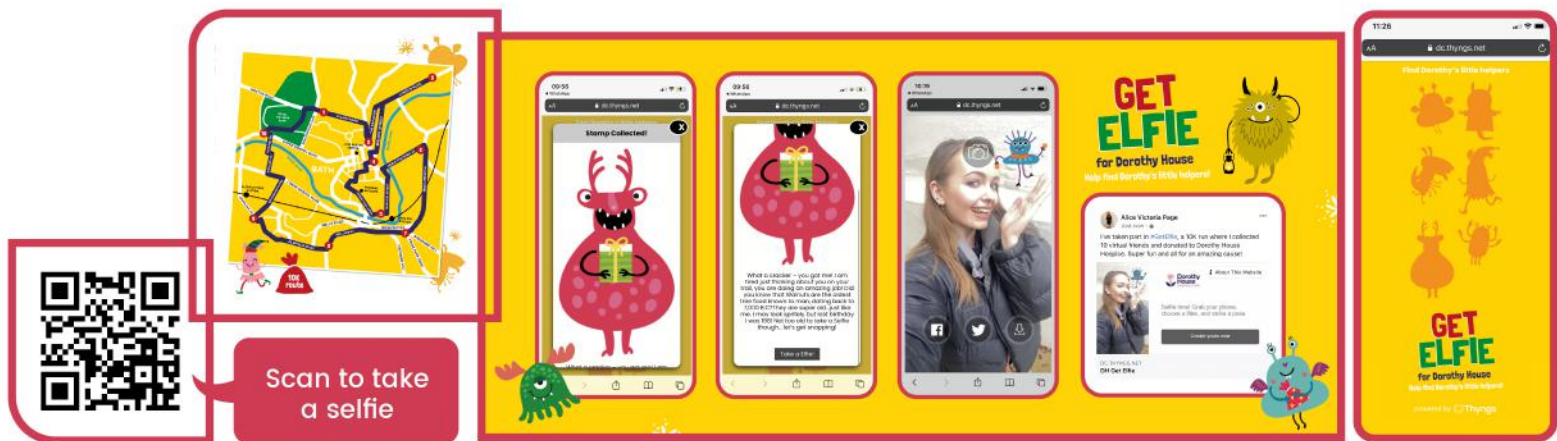
ANZ Daffodil Day Succeeds Despite Sudden Lockdown



What made the incentive successful in 2020?

The wide distribution of Daffodil QR codes played a key role in recovering donations and support. The physical distribution of the QR codes couldn't go ahead in lockdown, but ANZ were prepared with a digital strategy, using the codes online. Plus, ANZ provided fundraising posters online for communities to print, distribute and scan locally.

Dorothy House Hospice Creates Outdoor Adventure



What made the trail successful in 2020?

A mobile-optimised collectable trail enabled the opportunity for the charity to engage donors whilst taking advantage of the exercise guidelines. It's branded 'Take an Elfie' feature helped the charity create a social buzz online. It's a great way to spread awareness of the charity and campaign, and to reach those staying at home.

DKMS Virtual Gala is Vibrant

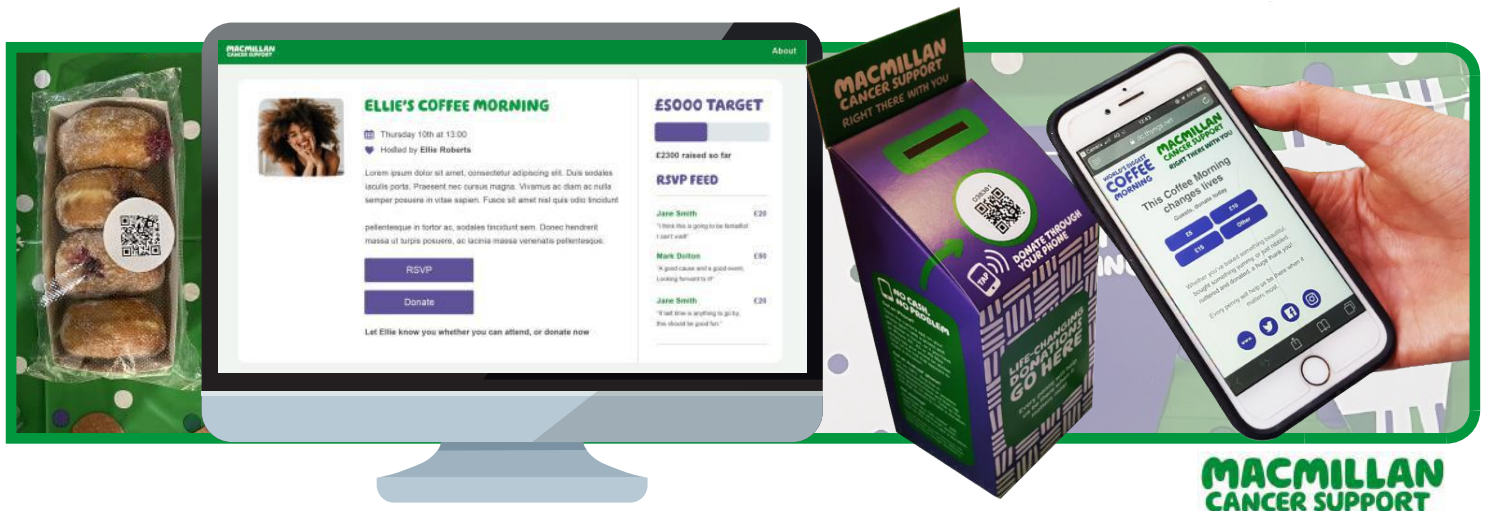


What made the virtual Gala a success despite lockdown?

The bespoke and personalised digital experience made the charity's first virtual event feel special. Key speakers announced the on-screen QR codes throughout the event, including how to interact with them from home.

Guests were introduced to the experience prior to the event which means they were familiar with the technology. They were also given a variety of giving options like a sponsorship purchase, instant donation or invoice request.

Macmillan Coffee Morning's Come Prepared

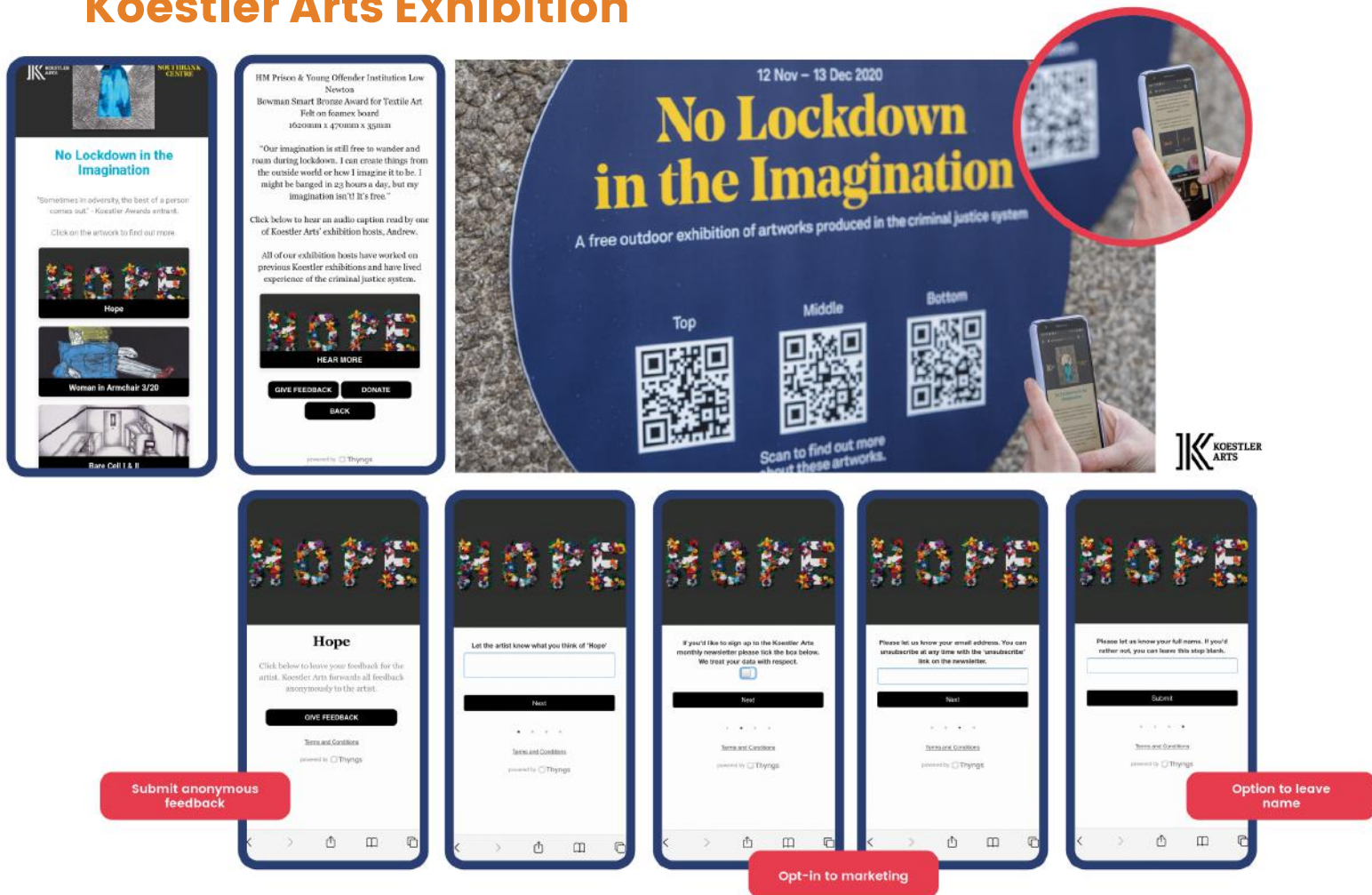


What made the coffee morning successful in 2020?

Despite the uncertainty of 2020 for in-person events, Macmillan prepared for any scenario. Famously, nothing was going to stop them.

With a team thinking outside of the box, hosts were given the invaluable opportunity to fundraise virtually, or in-distance. QR stickers were given in packs to enable safe and on-the-go fundraising, via cake-take-aways and more. Personalised digital experiences also doubled donations.

Koestler Arts Exhibition



What made the exhibition stand out both offline and online?

Physical QR codes with clear instruction could be found throughout the physical display, giving easy access to more information. URL links on social media gave those at home the opportunity to engage with the exhibition in fun and explorative ways, virtually. Venue attendees were able to view individual artworks and find out more about them.

Additionally, they could submit instant feedback with the option to opt-in to marketing, purchase artwork, and make a donation.

“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



How to get started with cashless fundraising

Getting started with QR codes and NFC is low-tech, low-cost. Best of all if you use Thyngs you don't need specialist design or web development skills to use it, as the platform takes care of that for you.

Begin by researching the tools available to you. QR codes have been included as add-ons by a variety of services including points of sale and donation websites. There are also a number of QR code generator websites that you can use to create your code.

If you plan to invest in cashless fundraising in the long-term, opt for a service that is secure and scalable.

Look for:

- A service offering both QR codes, URL and NFC on the same platform (focusing on all your online and offline channels)
- An all-in-one service that also includes mobile optimised templates (otherwise you'll need to create these yourself)
- A secure, GDPR compliant service
- Unlimited number of QR codes (can be changed without changing the image)
- A company that provides support to your fundraisers. Education is important for ensuring you get the most value from the tools
- Analytics to improve performance over time
- Management dashboard so you can manage all your campaigns in one place

A contactless fundraising pilot is one way to get started. This will give you the opportunity to see how it works, to see how it might fit with your other fundraising strategies and to get buy-in from the rest of your team.

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. Having a diversified approach that includes cashless fundraising will enable your charity to respond with confidence and speed in what is likely to continue to be changing circumstances.



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