

CHANGE MAKERS

News and views from the Third Sector
Issue 3

Q&A with...

HELEN BALL

Chief Executive at Barnsley Civic Enterprise Trust Ltd.

Also in this issue:

Why charities should consider soft skills when searching for their next hire

How important are soft skills in today's workplace/management/leadership type stuff.

How has COVID-19 affected charities and the environment?

Peter Batchelor, Director of Finance and Central Services for Yorkshire Wildlife Trust discuss the impact of the last three months.



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Welcome to the latest edition of Change Makers

A warm welcome to the latest edition of Change Makers Magazine. It is fair to say that it has been a remarkable and undeniably challenging period for the sector, and indeed the world as a whole, as the Covid-19 pandemic impacted all of our lives both personally and professionally.

It has never been in question, the extent to which not-for-profit organisations have become a valuable and key part of wider society and it is crucial that leaders have access to well-informed advice to continue supporting those who both work within, and benefit from, the sector.

The recent, unprecedented degree of challenges have undoubtedly changed the Charity and Not-for-Profit sector and it has certainly been a time for adaptability and resilience as we look to bounce back as best we can in the coming weeks.

In this edition of Change Makers, we take a look at some of the changes we can expect to see in the coming months. A shift in boardroom strategy and the harnessing of different skills and behaviours is likely, as the industry looks to adapt to the changing environment and cope with challenges such as reduced funding.

We were delighted to catch up with Helen Ball, Chief Executive of Barnsley Civic. Helen is responsible for the development of the venue in becoming a leading Northern cultural hub. Helen talks us through her fascinating career to date and the level of change the industry has gone through.

Leeds Cares are a charity that support NHS staff to deliver the very best care in Leeds' eight teaching hospitals. Their CEO, Esther Wakeman met with us to discuss what makes a good fundraiser, how she came to work with Leeds Cares and its impact on the local region.

We also look at the importance in the development of the often overlooked 'soft skills' when considering the recruitment of new team members in the charity and not-for-profit sector. And finally, Peter Batchelor, Director of Finance and Central Services at the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, does a deep dive on the impact of Covid-19 on both charities and the wider environment.

If you would like more information about any of our events, or you would like to share your unique story, or that of your organisation, in a future edition of Change Makers, please feel free to get in touch with me directly.

As always, we gratefully welcome any feedback or suggestions for future editions that you may have to offer.



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What we're seeing in the Charity Sector



Funding gap will be more than £10bn in next six months, research claims

The UK voluntary sector is expected to face a funding shortfall of more than £10bn over the next six months, new figures indicate.

Gathering responses from 261 civil society organisations, Pro Bono Economics says income will fall by £6.7bn, while demand for services rises by the equivalent of £3.4bn.

It said, that charities with annual incomes of less than £500,000 were particularly exposed to the financial squeeze with survey results indicating that one in eight of those charities expected to go out of business in the next six months.

HOLD ON TIGHT!!!



Top Virgin Money Giving charities saw 93% fall in donations in early lockdown

VMG says donations to all non-NHS charities through the fundraising platform fell by 44 per cent in the month after the lockdown began with the charities that raise the most seeing a 93% reduction a month after lockdown began.

With so many charities relying on digital fundraising during the pandemic, it is crucial for charities to find new and innovative ways to reach potential audiences.

Creative and memorable social media campaigns are at the forefront for many, with many people turning to online for better connectivity to the outside world. The platform said that although

it recorded £19m in donations between 24th March and 21st April, a 151% increase compared with the same period last year, the donations to all non-NHS charities through the site fell by 44%, from £12.5m to £7m over the same period.

VMG added that donations to charities supporting the NHS were up by 2,000% in the same period and giving to food banks increased by 3,000%.

Government figures show that a fifth of sector staff have been furloughed

Almost a fifth of all voluntary sector employees have been furloughed during the Coronavirus pandemic, Government figures show. Responding to a DCMS Committee inquiry into the effects of Coronavirus on the sector, the Government says that 164,000 jobs had been furloughed as of 3 May.

As reported by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations in June 2018, the voluntary sector employed 865,000 people, therefore showing that 19% of employees have been put on furlough.

The DCMS Committee's report has called for Ministers to set up a bespoke Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for the voluntary sector in order to allow furloughed employees to volunteer for their own organisations.

Whilst the government is aware of the long term financial needs of the sector as a whole and its

importance in rebuilding society post-Covid-19, a £750m package of support for the sector is focused on targeting short-term needs of those organisations playing a role in Covid-19 response, supporting vulnerable individuals and relieving pressure on public services.

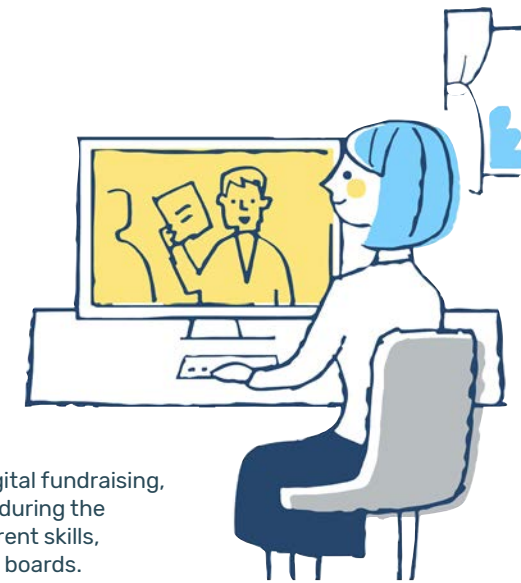


Could Covid-19 cause a shift in the boardroom?

With many charities gravitating to digital fundraising, service delivery and remote working during the pandemic, we may begin to see different skills, behaviours and processes on charity boards.

Trustees are currently being pushed to respond to fast-moving operational pressures and are needing to think strategically, whereas the usual quarterly board meeting won't facilitate for this. For trustees to contribute supportively and meaningfully, they will have to move to more agile ways of thinking and working, and will have an increased need for adaptability, problem solving and communication skills.

Board meetings themselves will need to be reconstructed in order to become more versatile, as no one knows how the transition to a post lockdown world will play out. Boards will need to cover all bases and plan for a world where there are many different scenarios, and need to focus on planning for consequences rather than causes or events.



In order to succeed at this, boards will need to have a variety of perspectives around the table. The need for more diverse trustees and the use of virtual board meetings should widen the talent pool for which charities can draw. This should in turn create a new dynamic and exciting environment for board meetings, and moving forward, could see many charities become more engaged and inclusive.

Figures indicate an increase in volunteering during pandemic

In what has been a difficult time for many charities, Reach Volunteering says it had 2,100 new people register on its site in April and May, about three times the number that did so in the same period last year.

Compared with 750 people in the same period last year, this has been described as a 'silver-lining' of the pandemic. The increase in volunteers is up from about 8,000 people since the start of April, with a total number of volunteers registered reaching new highs of 11,172.



With an average of 240 new applicants per week, compared to 83 last spring, the rate of sign ups is three times what the charity normally expects.



Utilising the digital world

Many charities have found that digital service delivery has been as effective - or even more effective - than the physical service delivery methods that were employed previously.

After introducing live broadcasts on Facebook, many charities are now reaching a wider range of audiences. The replay function of many social media sites allows users to engage at a time that is most suitable for them, and this is a positive change for many charities that may long continue after the pandemic has subsided.

Creativity key to boosting income

As the world turns to online fundraising, many have adapted in ways that may not have happened without the pandemic.

Many sites have seen an influx of personal fund-raisers for charities, with people offering yoga classes, online gigs, and pub quizzes - all for a small donation. These have proven to be popular with the public whilst people use their spare time to learn new skills or adapt to a different way of connecting with friends and family.

It is crucial that charities continue to amplify and motivate these smaller fund-raisers in order to inspire others and continue to receive valuable funding from public contributions.





What makes you unique?

with Helen Ball

Helen Ball is the Chief Executive of The Civic, an arts centre in the centre of Barnsley. It offers a combined arts programme and is also an events venue commercially which hosts weddings and conferencing. Helen lives close to the venue in Barnsley with her two children.

Helen is responsible for the development of The Civic in Barnsley in becoming a leading touring venue in the North and a cultural hub. Her background is predominantly in the public and third sector with extensive experience in leadership and transformational change.

She has a proven track record in organisational development and strategic planning, with a broad range of experience in managing people. Helen is passionate about the arts, supporting growth in creative industries and the transformational impact they can have on communities.



Q1 So, tell us how you got to where you are, your career to date and how it led you to your current role

Originally, I left school wanting to train to be an actress. I spent 18 months trying to secure a place at drama school, which was challenging and a real learning curve at age 17. I was eventually offered a place on a brilliant course at East 15, but was unable to raise the funds to cover the cost of the course. Eager to study, I took an undergraduate degree at Bretton Hall, with the intention of reapplying to drama school afterwards. In the end I came out

with young people and research and development work on schools-based projects delivered by the department.

This mixture of regular work in a Theatre venue and a range of freelance projects in diverse communities working with different age groups, backgrounds and cultures, really gave me fantastic range of experiences that I could draw on as I developed my career.

about arts administration and grant funding. I was successful in securing the role which was meant to be for only three years. I went intending to leave when it was finished and ended up staying with BMBC for seven years working in several different roles in the Culture department.

Around two years into my Community Arts position, a small re-organisation in our department took place and a management position became available to run the Arts Development team.

I was not sure about taking it, as I was about to go on maternity leave with my daughter. It was also quite a challenging time for me as it was the point where I moved away from practical work in the community and closer to arts administration. A role less about people and more desk-based strategic responsibilities.

I did enjoy it, but it was challenging. It was good for me to grow; however, it was also hard in a lot of ways as I missed interacting with the end-user and the customer experience. I think the further you go into local government, the further away you can feel from the end user. I did the role for about 18 months and then there was a leadership change in Senior Management in the local authority and the Assistant Director of the service, and my direct Line Manager moved on from his role. I was asked to

People do not often realise that local government and not-for-profit careers are all consuming. It is not about making money, it suddenly becomes more about 'if you don't do it, it won't happen'. There is a different type of responsibility to it, that I found intense to start with.

of the University with a broader degree, which was not just acting training, and a wealth of experiences that opened my eyes to more career possibilities in the Arts.

On graduating, I worked freelance on community projects and youth theatre productions in Stage Management and Directing and I also had a chance to work with young people on education projects.

I took a part-time position alongside my freelance work within the Education department at Sheffield Theatres which opened more practical projects

In the space of two years I had worked with some very diverse communities, different cultures and many young people. Entertaining and holding the attention of a large group of 13 years olds for an hour is good practice for any profession.

My role at Sheffield Theatres was fixed term and, as it came to an end, I decided to look for a full-time role with one organisation.

A full-time Community Arts role became available in Barnsley, working for the local authority which enabled me to gain practical experience and learn more

What makes you unique? with Helen Ball

take the role on an interim basis for six months and then shortly after, the wider Directorate created a Head of Service position which I applied for, and was successful.

I went from managing a team of four officers with a small budget to managing a department of 72 staff, which was across a range of areas. My responsibilities covered the arts, museums and heritage, markets and town centre services and a workforce of both front-line and specialist staff. One of the biggest challenges was leading a service that included colleagues I had once worked alongside and collaboratively with. But I rose to it and enjoyed several successful years in the role which I am very proud of.

People do not often realise that local government and not-for-profit careers are all consuming. It is not about making money, it suddenly becomes more about 'if you don't do it, it won't happen'. There is a different type of responsibility to it, that I found intense to start with.

Not long into being in a senior position, I had to make decisions about people's jobs because the government changed, and we started looking at efficiency cuts. It was quite terrifying standing in front of a room of people who all do manual jobs and you know if they lose their job, they can't pay their mortgage and can't feed their children. You doubt yourself about whether they are going to believe that you are right for the job and that you know what you are doing. That

The benefits from all that intense change was that I gained a lot of experience in a very short space of time.

Being a young female leader, there is often a misconception made about me that I am too young to have the responsibility I have. When you look at my CV, you would think 'It is all Barnsley, she hasn't really been anywhere so how can she have much experience?'

What people don't realise is that by being dropped into that situation, I had to learn on the job. Nobody told me how to manage these large numbers of people, I had no hand over or guide. Everyone is looking at you for direction.



The experience was a big learning curve for me and, at times, was very hard on my family. At that point I had a two-year-old daughter and it was hard to get my work/life balance right. I was working full-time which I found difficult to begin with, but it was the right thing for me to do and it was an opportunity I simply could not turn down.

One of the things I have found challenging in the sectors I have worked in has always been the work/life balance.

experience had a significant impact on me both personally and professionally.

Throughout my time in the role, my Executive Director invested a lot of energy in me and my continued professional development. I went through three restructures, two of which my own role was reviewed. Throughout this period of development and change, I had my son, which gave me yet another challenge.



In the past I have doubted myself at times or thought, people are going to look at my CV and think, 'I can't see what she has done'. That was my insecurity based on being young, that people might judge me before they met me.

I left local government to take up my current role at a time when the organisation was really struggling. I am now in my seventh year with the Trust and thoroughly enjoying the journey.

Q2 How do you think your past experience has prepared you for this role?



It gave me a sense of perspective. A lot of my peers have never worked in anything other than an arts organisation and have never worked in any environment where they have had to manage manual staff. A lot of my peers are not from the background I am from. I came from a working class, single parent family. I had my first Saturday job when I was 13 and I worked part-time all the way through my studies and funded myself.

I measure everyone in my workforce by their work ethic. I have always had to be prepared to do what is necessary to move things forward and need that from my team. A willingness to get stuck in.

That's how I could empathise and work with my front-line staff in my previous role, as I could see how hard they worked and that their job was no less important than mine in terms of trying to deliver something.

It also gave me HR knowledge and the ability to see through challenges. Some people who have worked in a certain place for a certain length of time are in their own world, and they see change or new leadership as an opportunity to push the boundaries.

Working in local government also helped me understand how the town and community work, which is important. You need to get to know the communities, discover why the people are the way they are, to understand the choices they make especially if you are going to build audiences.

As a cultural leader there is always the challenge of getting people to believe in you and what you want to achieve with your venue or organisation. Understanding the community we serve is invaluable in meeting that challenge.

Q3 What has changed and how has the sector evolved since you first joined?

What I have sought to change at The Civic is accessibility and people seeing it as a place where you can choose to bring your family and friends. It's not an elite place, it is there for everyone. One of the first things I wanted to do was get as many people in that building as possible to see what is there for them – community groups, schools etc.

I am very proud of The Civic, proud to run an asset that has served the community in many ways over 180 years. It has a variety of things happening in it. We put shows/exhibitions on, but we also have Weight Watchers in every Saturday morning. People can use it for what they need it for.

I am seeking to build and maintain a sense of community within the venue and I am still striving to achieve an Arts Centre that is truly a destination

drawing people into town, as we look ahead with our plan for the next ten years

As a sector, funding has got a lot harder for everyone. We have had to try and be more commercial to increase trading income, but still retain our artistic integrity.

The balance has got harder to achieve with the economy facing the problems it has. Someone might only have £10 to spend and want to take their children swimming or to the theatre, but they can only do one or the other. We are also competing to a degree with digital technology and with services such as Netflix that you can watch in the comfort of your own home. That has been the biggest change.

You have got to fight to be heard now and you have got to work hard to stay relevant to your audiences.



What makes you unique? with Helen Ball

Q4 What you are currently doing, and what do you think is going to be the impact on the region, before and after Covid-19 and what were your priorities before and after.



We are working towards developing a scheme to complete the building and we need to raise £7.2 million to complete it. The local authority has a long lease on the Victorian front part of the building which is due to finish in 2022 and we were working towards being able to reopen a fully refurbished building from then.

A lot of the work up until February was working with the design team on the

improve and conserve the historic high street and this will both enable us to carry out vital conservation and refurbishment work to the front phase of The Civic and lead a cultural engagement programme with local partners that the community can get involved with.

The project has been on pause since Lockdown started and I am unsure about when we will be able to reopen and operate as we were before.

At present all we can do is think about a recovery plan and different scenarios that we may face. I have discussed with our chairman whether we might need to fulfil a different need for Barnsley in the short-term. The building has always been there for people when they have needed it, soup kitchens, housing troops, education etc. We might have to consider doing something like that again. There is always that worry that we might be in a situation where people can go back to

Plans are in place to re-instate The Civic's original Victorian entrance on Eldon Street



The building has always been there for people when they have needed it, soup kitchens, housing troops, education etc.

plans for what we want to do, which includes restoring that Victorian front as our main entrance and doing some conservation work to the front of the building. We are working very closely with the local authority and they secured the funding from government for Eldon Street to be a High Street Heritage Action Zone. We are included in the scheme to

Theatres and entertainment venues will be among the last to re-open as Lockdown eases. This presents a challenging financial picture for our sector, although we have benefitted from things that have been published for small businesses generally, such as the Government Job Retention scheme and a business rates holiday.

Arts Council England are also making available significant levels of emergency funds that we can access, however it is important to note these are Arts Council's original funding allocations for 2020 and not a new initiative, which could reduce future funding opportunities.

work or school, but we can't trade. I have got a scenario where I have got staff to try and pay who I can't give work to, or I have got to try and find them other things to do until we can do our jobs.

For me in this situation, the priority must be keeping the cash in the business so I can protect my staff for as long as I can. I have noticed a lot of my fellow venues using digital programming to keep content in the public domain, however, we are not as resourced to be able to do that, so, I would rather save money to do something really positive when we can reopen. My current priority is the people that work here, perhaps even above the art.

Q5 What advice would you give to someone coming into this organisation before and after Covid-19?



My advice is to be prepared to make your own work or look for opportunities. There can be a culture in our sector of waiting for the work to come to you or expecting opportunities to fall in your lap, which they generally don't.

Right from training at Bretton, it was drilled into us that you need to have a survival instinct, especially if you want to perform or work on a self-employed basis. You must be adaptable and work well with people.

challenge you or provoke debate. We have a bigger role to play than just being a place of entertainment. We must support our community to raise their own voices and express their own creativity.

There will be an opportunity soon to get people more involved in what they want to see in our venue. That is something I wanted to do with the capital redevelopment. Part of that journey is about inviting people to come and see what we are planning to do with the

We will entertain you, but we may also challenge you or provoke debate. We have a bigger role to play than just being a place of entertainment. We must support our community to raise their own voices and express their own creativity.

In terms of operating a venue, it is about remembering that you are more than just the work that you put on. The work we programme, the exhibitions we create and the experiences that we offer is what sets us apart from any other charity. It is nothing if no one engages with it or it does nothing more than just give people employment.

The way we structure our programme is very much about offering experiences. We will entertain you, but we may also

venue and talk about what they would enjoy. It is important to see what you can do to offer people opportunities. There will be freelance creatives in South Yorkshire that have lost all their work in the space of three months, so there is a responsibility for us to see if we can support them as well.

We are an important part of South Yorkshire's cultural ecology and its COVID recovery.

THE
Civic
BARNSELY

The Civic exists to provide Barnsley and the surrounding communities with a culturally significant voice.

The aim is to present a progressive programme of festivals, exhibitions performance and events that relate to the area, social, economic and political attitudes whilst also entertaining and encouraging debate.

We are passionate about people of all ages and backgrounds having access to the best possible arts and cultural experiences on their own doorstep.

The Civic, Hanson Street, Barnsley, S70 2HZ

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How has COVID-19 affected charities and the environment?

by Peter Batchelor, Director of Finance and Central Services Yorkshire Wildlife Trust



Yorkshire
Wildlife Trust

Charities

COVID-19 has had a hugely detrimental financial impact on the UK charity sector.

Many traditional methods of fundraising and face-to-face engagement have not been possible, depriving charities of essential income many need to survive. Whilst many charities have looked to innovate, using digital means to continue their engagement, this will never fully replace the in-person engagement that charities rely on for impact, public benefit and to generate funds.

Those charities reliant on income from sources such as fundraising events and activities, entry fees to sites, visitor amenities, as well as charity shops for example, will really struggle in spite of government support.

I would urge everyone who is still able to during the pandemic, to continue to support their chosen charities who need your support right now more than ever.

The environment

Dolphins in the canals of Venice, deer and wild goats cantering along UK town high streets, Marsh Harriers nesting on the main path at Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's very own Ripon City Wetlands Nature Reserve (which until 12 months ago was still an aggregate quarry).

COVID-19, in just a matter of months, has shown us the potential of what can happen if we make space for nature. Just imagine if wildlife and our ever pressured biodiverse landscapes were truly given the chance to thrive.

Being in lockdown at home has led many people to look differently at the environment they live in, enjoying the wildlife in their gardens, or visiting local green spaces using the allowance of daily exercise offered to us during the lockdown for our mental health and wellbeing. People who may previously have never ventured to their local nature reserves or woodlands, are learning the value and importance of this space, both for people and wildlife.



With estimated use of vehicles and air travel down by over 50% in the UK since lockdown, we have demonstrated what is potentially possible and how our actions can help reduce climate change and air pollution. Reductions in carbon emissions of up to 75% have been reported across major European cities during the lockdown.

Many of us have also realised it is possible to perform part of our roles working from home. If each of us could reduce the number car commutes to and from work each week, we would be contributing to a sustainable reduction in energy use and carbon emissions.

Who are Yorkshire Wildlife Trust?

At Yorkshire Wildlife Trust we are dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring wildlife and wild places in Yorkshire with a vision for a Yorkshire that is abundant in wildlife, with more people having a genuine and meaningful connection with nature.

We manage over 100 nature reserves across Yorkshire – from the iconic Spurn Point and Flamborough Cliffs nature reserves on the East coast of Yorkshire, all the way to the rugged Southscales limestone pavement, precariously placed on the edge of Ingleborough in the Yorkshire Dales.

Each year the Trust also works on a huge array of projects across the county to improve biodiversity of Yorkshire's grasslands, woodlands, its river catchments and the North Sea, as well as working to enhance people's engagement with nature. We are only able to do this with the continued support of our 45,000 members and 1,000 volunteers.

Interestingly, almost everyone in Yorkshire lives within a 30 minute drive of a Yorkshire Wildlife Trust nature

reserve. With a Yorkshire population of over 5 million, we would love to inspire more people to support our cause.

I feel very fortunate to work for such an amazing charity, helping it deliver nature conservation in Yorkshire.

Peter Batchelor,
Director of Finance
and Central Services
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust



Photography by Pete Batchelor




Dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring wildlife and wild places in Yorkshire.

ywt.org.uk

What makes you unique?

with Esther Wakeman
CEO at Leeds Cares

Leeds Cares are the charity that supports Leeds eight teaching hospitals. The charity supports NHS staff to deliver the best care for over a million patients and their families each year.

By utilising the money generated through generous donations and events held by the charity, Leeds Cares have funded life saving equipment and funded research fellowships whilst also investing in state-of-the-art technology as well as improving the patient and family experience at the hospitals.

Esther Wakeman started as CEO at Leeds Cares in February 2020 and had a baptism of fire with Covid starting in March. Esther, like all CEOs of a charity, has found the past five months to be testing and challenging ensuring that the safety and wellbeing of the staff whilst also making sure that the organisation supported the staff on the front-line.

**leeds
cares**
Leeds Hospitals Charity

Q1 Can you tell us about your career to date and how it has led to your current role?

I had a career in Sales & Marketing for a number of years. This included everything from working in a gym to running a call centre. After that I had my own digital marketing business which is where I started working for a couple of charities, including Chester Zoo. I found I absolutely loved the charity sector. For the first time, I was hearing stories about how charities had changed someone's life and I realised that it would be a compelling thing to do for a career.

Initially, I took a role at my local hospice covering maternity leave. It was just a six-month role, but soon after I was offered a more senior role so decided to stay. Then a director role came up at another hospice and I stayed there for several years.

The hospice sector is a fantastic place to work as it's somewhere you can really see the impact of the money you raise. People support hospices for lots of reasons, often related to a personal experience but also recognising that at some point, you might need that kind of care in your own life.

I had no intentions of leaving the hospice sector, but I saw the role at Leeds Cares advertised and it was a very aspirational position. At the time, the charity had just become independent and was in the process of moving from a grant giving charity to becoming a public-facing fundraising charity.

One of the key things in the plan was a £30 million Children's Hospital Appeal, to support an existing renovation project that will be ready in 2025. We need to raise funds to turn a standard NHS children's hospital into something that will really be outstanding, a centre of excellence for children in the north of England. Being able to lead a charity that could make that happen was a very exciting prospect, especially as I had just had a child of my own. I started the role in February and then a month later we all had to work from home due to the pandemic, which was clearly not what we had planned at all.

Q2 Do you think your experience in fundraising was what drew you to the role as they moved from grants to fundraising themselves?

One of the key things the interview panel were on the lookout for was someone with experience in fundraising. A few years ago I decided my next career move would be a Chief Executive role, so I had started a lot of personal development work alongside my day job, including being a trustee at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Junction Arts and I was already a director at Buxton Football Club. This board experience all helped in securing the role but ultimately it was the right time for me to move on and take that next step. I had been in my role at the hospice for six years and needed a new challenge to look forward to.



Continues overleaf →



What makes you unique? with Esther Wakeman

Q3 What would you say makes a good fundraiser?

The fundamental thing about great fundraising is understanding that it's the profit that matters. You can be really inventive and have the best ideas in the world, but it's the profit you generate that will pay for the difference your charity makes.

The other thing that's important as a fundraiser, is having a long-term focus. If your focus is short-term, then you become unstuck quite quickly or you become a busy fool. The best fundraisers recognise that fundraising is about building lifetime relationships with supporters and creating opportunities for conversations, rather than just bombarding people with asks. It is not about asking or

persuading people to give you money, it's about giving people an opportunity to give to something they care about and make a difference. You're helping people by providing them with a way to help others in their corner of the world.

In the north of England it is harder to get qualified fundraisers because of the talent concentration in London. However, this just means you have to put more effort into training and development.

The Institute of Fundraising has some wonderful courses, so if someone joined our team and had the right values and all the key skills but had never been a fundraiser we would look to put them through some comprehensive training that would enable them to do that role.



Q4 How do you believe your past experiences have prepared you for this role?

I think the biggest area of preparation was being a Trustee of other charities. One of the key roles of a CEO is being able to give information and reassurance to the board – but at the right level. When you've been in that position and you know that the board is less involved in the day-to-day running of the charity, you understand what level of detail is needed to enable the board to make informed decisions. It gives you great insight when you have been on the other side.

Such a large part of the CEO role is being able to work with both your Board of Trustees and your leadership team. Having a long-term strategy in place can help with this and that's something I've done in every other role I've been in. As a Chief Exec, you need to be able to look to the future and give your team something to aspire to, so you know you're all moving in the same direction and most importantly, to give your donors confidence that their donations will be well spent.

Q5 What originally attracted you to working at Leeds Cares?

When I was considering taking the Leeds Cares role, I went out and started to talk to people about the charity. The thing everyone said was that it had huge potential. One other Chief Executive said Leeds was like a 'sleeping lion'. It's such a huge Trust – 18,000 staff, 1.2 million patients a year – yet the

charity is relatively small in terms of its fundraising income which presents a huge opportunity to have a greater impact. That's really what attracted me to the role – the prospect of a challenge and knowing I can look back on something and see where my team have made a difference.

Q6 How do you think the sector has changed and evolved since you started with the organisation?

The key thing since February has of course been the Coronavirus pandemic. It's been horrific for so many people; for those who have lost loved ones or had to shield through lockdown, or who have unfortunately lost their job.

The silver lining for us has been the exposure the pandemic has given to NHS charities. The public are now starting to understand that there's a role for NHS charities and that they can make a difference by donating to us, and helping us put the 'icing on the cake', above and beyond what the NHS can pay for.

The pandemic has also raised our knowledge of logistics. Our new Fundraising Director – who started on the same day as me – turned into a logistics expert overnight because we had so many generous donations from the local community. We had a whole operation to distribute the £400,000 worth of goods that we had delivered – everything from chocolates to fruit and vegetables!

The public recognised that NHS staff were working around the clock to support them and that ensuring they had food, drink and toiletries was a great way of saying thank you. Although Leeds is now treating fewer people with Covid-19, we are still seeing the aftermath of that first wave and the local community is still wanting to help and show their appreciation.

The pandemic has helped us to show that as a local charity we can respond quickly to really specific needs. Even simple things, like the hospital having access to specialist ultrasound machines. During the outbreak, the hospital needed portable ones, almost overnight. We were able to work with donors to source those and get them on the wards quickly.

Donations also supported the 'forgotten' families who were having to shield with their children and were not able to leave the children's wards. We were able to deliver packages for them so they could have food at the bedside. All of these

things have helped to show the public how we, as an NHS charity, can make a difference right at the front-line of care.

It is very moving to be able to make that difference and slowly, we're building a profile to help us tell people about who we are. More recently, we've been able to fund wigs for cancer patients, which ordinarily have a prescription cost of about £75. This might not sound like a lot, but there's actually a lot of hidden costs to having cancer, so some people go without a wig because of the expense. Knowing as a charity we can make a difference to those patients, and support their self-esteem, is huge. It also means we can tell our supporters, it doesn't matter how much you give, £5 or £500, it all helps.

Q7 What is the biggest challenge now moving forward?

Our biggest challenge now is to keep growing the charity so it can have an even bigger impact on our hospitals. We know we make a difference now, but with more money and a wider reach, we could support more families and fund specialist medical equipment to save more lives.

We're also going to have to build on the momentum caused by the pandemic for charities like ours and continue to help people understand who we are and what we do. We need to focus on telling peoples' stories and talk about the impact we have had on their life and the life of their family.



Q8 What kind of work are you currently doing and what is the impact on the local region?

At Leeds Cares we support all of the services across our hospitals but two areas – our Children's Hospital and our Cancer Centre – are specialist centres and so they attract patients from across the north of England. We have phenomenal staff and specialist equipment in these hospitals and so, naturally, supporters want to say thank you for the fantastic care they have received and ensure future patients can benefit.

As well as supporting these specialist areas, we're also investing heavily in

research. Leeds hospitals have great links with the university, as well as organisations like NIHR, Cancer Research UK and the Wellcome Trust. This means Leeds attracts world-class researchers, studying everything from organ preservation technology to predicting rheumatoid arthritis. Research is so exciting as it can really transform the future care of patients and families and, in some cases, prevent ill health altogether and save lives.

Q8 What advice would you give to other organisations at this time and what advice would you give to someone in a similar position or wanting to be in a similar position to you?

Right now, my advice would be to focus on your volunteers. Take time to check in on them and make sure they're OK because we're all going to be needing our volunteers in the future.

Sadly, it sounds like there will be future job losses so there might also be new volunteers or freelancers who want to give their time to your organisation.

organisation that you really care about and where you know you'll want to make a difference. If you feel passionate about why your charity is raising money, then that makes a huge difference to how good you'll be at your job. It also makes you much more genuine when talking to others – passion makes you very authentic, which comes across when you're talking to potential donors.

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Volunteers are hugely valuable and can do a lot to help charities move forward.

The other thing I'd advise is investing in your teams and continuing your training and development plans. When times are tough, training is often the first thing to be cut, but it's so important to ensure your team stays engaged and feel empowered. Also it's much cheaper to invest in retaining a good employee than it is to go out and search for a new one.

In terms of those people who might be looking for a career move or wanting to step up into a Chief Executive role, I'd say follow your passion. Go for a role in an

When my little girl was sick last year, we ended up in Sheffield Children's Hospital. The staff and the care we received was just amazing. Looking around and seeing the charity input, it makes you realise there's huge value in what hospital charities do, making the difference between a standard hospital and one where the care is really outstanding and the environment is bright and welcoming. When you're a parent, or you think about your loved ones in hospital, it makes you realise how much you want the hospitals near you to be brilliant, so their experience will be as good as it can possibly be.

Considering soft skills when searching for your next hire

The importance of soft skills must not be overlooked when looking to hire new employees. Of course hard skills are important too, but soft skills are more difficult to develop than hard skills.

In a recent survey, 92%* of employers said that soft skills mattered much more than hard skills, so these are definitely something you should focus on when looking to hire new team members for your charity.

Soft skills are a person's communication, social and interpersonal skills and are far harder to measure than any hard skills, which can be clearly listed and often certified. Soft skills are usually things that are inherent in a person's character and personality, meaning teaching soft skills is often impossible.

Employees who possess soft skills usually find it easier to adapt to changes and stay calm under pressure. This is

especially important during turbulent times such as we're experiencing at the moment. Everyone is having to work differently due to the current pandemic and charities are no different. Having employees who are adaptable and able to deal with changes is far more beneficial for an organisation than those who don't possess these skills, especially for those in leadership or senior roles.

Those with great soft skills also communicate far better with those around them and are able to work well within a team, something which all charities can benefit from. Teaching people to be team players, more often than not, doesn't work, so hiring

someone who already has these skills is crucial and will lead to a more balanced and contented workplace.

Those who have soft skills generally find it easier to transition and move up the career ladder too, which means hiring someone with these attributes will mean they're able to grow and develop within your charity. They'll be able to use their skills to help them progress and will be able to help your organisation work towards continued success as they do.

If you need help with hiring the best talent for your charity, Brewster Partners are here to help. Get in touch today to find out how we can support you.

*LinkedIn's Global Talent Trends report - 2019

The leading soft skills currently deemed most important to be successful



Leadership Skills

Companies want employees who can supervise and direct other workers



Teamwork

Collaboration is high on the agenda with an expectation for employees to show strong team working skills



Communication skills

Effective, concise and transparent communication is an important skill that companies are increasingly expecting



Problem solving skills

Solution focused employees will be undeniably favoured leaders as they look to develop problem solving skills across their workforce



Work ethic

Companies will be looking to identify employees that push the boundaries of their responsibilities and show a strong work ethic to support their business' development



Flexibility/adaptability

Employees who demonstrate willingness to adapt to change will be incredibly well received as employers respond to the changing political and economic climate

We get **Unique People**™

Brewster Partners are specialists in the identification and attraction of Senior Managers, Directors, CEO's, Non-Executives and Trustees.

Working collaboratively with our clients, we take the time to understand their culture, their values, and exactly what they are looking for from a new senior hire. We are confident that our extensive network of senior executives, online resources and bespoke approach enables us to provide our clients with the highest quality service available.

Some of the clients we have worked with

