

REGULATION 12 – FUNDRAISING GROUPS

A RNLI fundraising group is a group of volunteers that run fundraising activities on behalf of the RNLI. These can be one of the following: a Fundraising Branch, Guild, Group or Crew.

Fundraising Branches exist to raise funds for the general purposes of the RNLI and to promote the RNLI within their local area. Many Fundraising Branches remain in existence but have the option to become a Group or Crew as part of the RNLI's future fundraising plans. It is no longer possible to form a Fundraising Branch.

Lifeboat Guilds were historically formed by the wives and families of lifeboat crewmen.

It is no longer possible to form a Lifeboat Guild, however, several guilds remain in existence.

Fundraising Groups and Crews are being established to continue fundraising in the community. Any new fundraising groups will need to be called a Fundraising Group or Fundraising Crew.

All Fundraising Branches, Guilds, Groups and Crews must follow the guidance set out in this Constitution. Fundraising Branches, Guilds, Groups or Crews do not need their own constitution.

PART A

COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING CONSTITUTION

1. Purpose of a fundraising group

The aim of a fundraising group is to raise funds for the general purposes of the RNLI, to plan and deliver a fundraising programme locally and to promote the RNLI within their community.

2. Forming a fundraising group

New groups can be formed by working with the Regional Engagement Team in that area. The Regional Engagement Team must ensure that the key roles are filled as detailed below and follow the process to officially set the fundraising group up with the RNLI. Volunteers will be supported throughout the process by the Regional Engagement Team. Please find the set up process below:

1. Community Manager identifies the opportunity for a new fundraising team
2. Community Manager discusses the opportunity with the Fundraising and Partnerships Lead (FPL) this includes its structure and support
3. If set up is agreed, Community Manager completes a change form – this goes to the relevant teams incl. FPL inbox to make sure they are aware

Fundraising groups must operate within the terms of this Constitution at all times.

3. Fundraising groups will...

- a) ensure that all volunteers are registered with the RNLI (this is held in CRM via the Fundraising Team).
- b) recruit new volunteers following the volunteer application process.
- c) work with individuals and organisations who fundraise locally for the RNLI.
- d) hold regular meetings.
- e) keep online accounts up to date and provide reports when needed.

- f) work with the Regional Engagement Team and other volunteers in the local community.
- g) undertake risk assessments where appropriate.
- h) promote pledges, legacies and in memoriam donations.
- i) follow policies and procedures on the Volunteer Zone and Finance Volunteer Guidance.

4. Suggested Key Volunteer Roles

For a fundraising group to operate, there are a number of key roles that need to be held by volunteers which are listed below. There are many other fundraising volunteer roles that can be part of a fundraising group including Branch Collection Organiser, Branch Secretary and Branch Box Secretary.

- a. Branch Chairperson or Volunteer Fundraising Coordinator
- b. Branch Treasurer or Volunteer Fundraising Finance Coordinator
- c. A third volunteer who is willing to sign the Banking Mandate
- d. And if the fundraising group also sells RNLI products, they will need a Volunteer Retail Coordinator

Role profiles are available for all fundraising volunteer roles that outline responsibilities within each role.

5. Volunteer Recruitment

- 5.1 The RNLI has an open recruitment policy and as such, new volunteers and volunteers transferring roles will need to follow the volunteer application, selection, and recruitment process.
- 5.2 Volunteers should not be voted into their roles.
- 5.3 Historically, volunteers were asked to pay a membership fee to volunteer and be part of their fundraising group. This should no longer be happening.

6. Fundraising Group Meetings

- 6.1 Fundraising groups are no longer required to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- 6.2 It is recommended that fundraising groups hold an annual review meeting. At this meeting it is suggested that they have the following agenda points:
 - a) Review the previous year including financial accounts
 - b) Set fundraising targets for the upcoming year
 - c) Review the purpose of the group and consider some non-financial targets for the year
 - d) Review current roles and tenures for forward/succession planning
 - e) Deliver volunteer and supporter recognition
- 6.3 The taking of minutes is not essential but consider recording and sharing actions and key points with fellow volunteers
- 6.4 Other regular meetings should be held as and when they are needed for planning

- 6.5 Consider inviting your representative from the Regional Engagement Team to any meetings you hold, especially the annual review and they will attend if available.

7. Volunteer Problem solving Policy

Issues with volunteers must be dealt with in a respectful way and it is important that these are dealt with in a fair and consistent way. If an issue is raised, the Volunteer Problem Solving Policy should be followed with the support of the Regional Engagement Team and a Volunteer Advisor.

8. Closure of Fundraising Groups

Volunteers and the Regional Engagement Team may decide to close a fundraising group at any time. In the event of the closure, the Regional Engagement Team will follow the closure process and volunteers must ensure that all relevant documentation is returned to the RNLI.

9. Financial guidelines for Fundraising Groups

- 9.1 The Branch Treasurer/Volunteer Fundraising Finance Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the financial activity of the fundraising group is conducted in accordance with the RNLI's Standing Financial Instructions and the Accounting Guidelines for Fundraising Branch Honorary Treasurers. In particular the Branch Treasurer/Volunteer Fundraising Finance Coordinator should ensure that:
- a) appropriate accounting records are maintained.
 - b) all income raised by, or donated to the fundraising group is promptly credited and uploaded to the online cashbook. The Branch Treasurer/Volunteer Fundraising Finance Coordinator should regularly check entries and analyse the income accordingly.
 - c) all income is properly acknowledged using official RNLI receipt books and recorded in the cashbook. All fundraising payments will be shown on the online cashbook and should be allocated appropriately by the Branch Treasurer/Volunteer Fundraising Finance Coordinator.
 - d) the local expenditure facility and cheque book are administered correctly.
 - e) Fundraising group accounting information is produced for the group in an accurate and timely manner when required from the online cashbook.
 - f) The year-end and summary should be processed and completed on Salesforce.
 - g) bank accounts are not operated by, or in association with, the fundraising group.
 - h) appropriate controls are in place regarding the issue and use of receipt books.
 - i) appropriate controls are in place regarding the operation of collection boxes; and
 - j) the Finance Department of the RNLI is notified immediately of any instance when fraud is suspected.
- 9.2 All fundraising groups are required to maintain accounting records as prescribed by the Finance Department. In particular:
- a) Fundraising groups are required to maintain a cashbook, and this is done by the Branch Treasurer/Volunteer Fundraising Finance Coordinator using the Salesforce online cashbook. Income and expenditure are uploaded to the online cashbook, and it is the responsibility of

the Branch Treasurer/Volunteer Fundraising Finance Coordinator to regularly log on to Salesforce to check the entries and allocate them to the appropriate cashbook heading.

- b) Fundraising groups are required to complete a year-end summary. The year-end and summary should be processed and completed on Salesforce.
- c) Paper statements are no longer sent by the Finance Department as real time information is now held on the online cashbook.

10. Preventing and tackling fraud

10.1 The Board has a duty to safeguard funds, both by implementing procedures that minimise opportunities for fraud and by taking appropriate action if fraud is suspected or uncovered. Occasional audits may be carried out at any Branch from time to time as part of the RNLI's normal internal audit procedures. Meanwhile, in terms of fraud prevention:

- a) Fundraising groups should implement sound procedures for control of stock, collecting of funds, opening of collection boxes, counting, and banking money; and
- b) two people (who are unrelated) should always be present to witness the opening of collection boxes and the counting of money.
- c) cheques must be completed in full prior to signing.

10.2 Any volunteer suspecting fraud must immediately inform the Finance Department (usually via the Branch Treasurer/Volunteer Fundraising Finance Coordinator) before taking any action. The Finance Department will then take any necessary action and implement an investigation as appropriate. It is the RNLI's policy to always confront fraud and, when appropriate, to prosecute.

11. Bank accounts and fundraising income

11.1 Fundraising Groups are not permitted to operate bank accounts, whether or not these are opened in the name of the RNLI. All income must be processed through the direct banking system.

11.2 All fundraising income must be banked as soon as practical after receipt to one of the RNLI's bank accounts specifically set up for the purpose. Income must only be credited utilising bank giro paying-in books supplied by the Finance Department.

11.3 At no time should income be banked in any other way or to any other account, with the sole exception of income from the sale of souvenirs and Christmas cards paid in on behalf of the RNLI (Sales) Limited which has its own dedicated account and paying-in book.

12. Legacies

Any legacy payment received by a fundraising group must be sent to the Legacy Department together with all paperwork: under no circumstances should Branches bank legacy cheques.

If you receive a letter, or an email, that refers to the RNLI having been left a legacy, please forward this immediately to the Legacy Administration team in Poole so that they can respond. By all means respond to the sender to thank them for the information and to offer condolences, but please also

say that their letter/email/cheque has been forwarded to the Legacy Team in Poole, who will respond directly.

By law, valid receipts and discharges for legacy payments can only be signed by the RNLI Trustees or those officers who have been given specific authority to do this in respect of legacies. This is not the same as the authority that has been delegated to Branch Treasurers/Volunteer Fundraising Finance Coordinator and others to sign receipts, so requests for receipts for legacies must be sent to the Legacy Administration team in Poole for signing and must not be signed by anyone else.

You can find further information on [Legacies here](#).

13. Expenditure

- 13.1 Expenditure is normally made by cheque, using the expenditure facility provided by the Finance Department.
- 13.2 The minimum signatories required to establish an expenditure facility are the Branch Treasurer/Volunteer Fundraising Finance Coordinator and ideally the Branch Secretary and the Branch Chairman/Volunteer Fundraising Coordinator or two other appropriate volunteers. Whilst an expenditure facility cannot be established without these, additional signatories may be added as required. Under normal circumstances the Branch Treasurer/Volunteer Fundraising Finance Coordinator should hold the cheque book.
- 13.3 All cheques require two signatures: under no circumstances should any cheque be signed by either signatory in advance of full details having been completed.
- 13.4 All fundraising groups operate within a cheque drawing limit. Cheques exceeding this limit may only be drawn with the prior approval of the Community Manager.
- 13.5 Expenses vouchers, invoices or receipts must always be obtained to support expenditure.

14. Fundraising Expenses

- 14.1 With regard to fundraising administrative expenses volunteers may, when appropriate, be reimbursed for costs appropriately incurred in the performance of their duties on behalf of the fundraising group.
- 14.2 All such costs must be in keeping with the RNLI's charitable status. Reimbursement will normally extend only to such areas as postage, telephone calls and stationery. If costs are to be incurred in other areas prior reference should be made to the Community Manager.
- 14.3 Expenses claims must relate to actual items of expenditure; at no time should lump sums be paid to defray costs incurred by a volunteer. All claims must be processed in accordance with the RNLI's Volunteer Expenses Policy.

15. Petty cash floats

Fundraising groups may maintain a petty cash float to cover small items of expenditure, but this should not exceed £30 (or 30 Euros). Such a float is not obligatory but where utilised should be recorded separately from the main cashbook.

16. Floats for Volunteer Retail Coordinators

If the Volunteer Retail Coordinators require an ongoing float separate from the fundraising group petty cash float, then a cheque should be cashed for the amount in question. This cheque should be recorded in the cashbook as a petty expense on behalf of RNLI (Sales) Limited.

17. Related volunteers

Volunteers who are related to each other must not undertake jointly the handling of cash, signing of cheques and signing of year-end accounts, this policy exists to protect volunteers from adverse criticism, it should be noted that for this purpose related persons include unmarried partners.

18. Financial queries

- 18.1 All queries relating to financial procedures, the accounting records and the banking system should be addressed to the Finance Volunteer Support team on 01202 663053 or 0300 300 0127 or by email - branch_accounts@rnli.org.uk. The only exception to this being cheques exceeding the limit where contact should be made with the Community Manager before the cheque is drawn.
- 18.2 The Accounting Guidelines for Branch Treasurers/Volunteer Fundraising Finance Coordinators are available from the Finance Volunteer Support team.

19. Visits by RNLI staff

From time to time the RNLI's Internal Auditor and other staff may make random visits to the Branch to review the records and procedures in use.