

A TALK BY PROSTATE CANCER RESEARCH & THREAD FUNDRAISING

# Building a supporter experience *manifesto* and team *behaviours*.



**Craig Linton**

Director · Thread Fundraising

**Harry Ellison**

Head of Events & Community · Prostate Cancer Research

**THREAD**  
Fundraising



PUBLIC FUNDRAISING INCOME, 2023 → 2025

2.4x

*...and a supporter experience that couldn't keep up.*

THE SECTOR PROBLEM

Expecting tools to deliver a better supporter experience without strategy, leadership or culture is like expecting a *Ferrari* to run without a driver.

This isn't a PCR problem. It's a fundraising problem. Across the sector we talk about delivering better experiences — and don't put the structure in place to do it.

WHY A MANIFESTO, A PROMISE, BEHAVIOURS?

# Why *bother?*

**01**

**Sets the culture.**

"This is how we treat the people who fund us."

**02**

**Holds us accountable.**

Behaviours are checkable.  
Values can be harder.

**03**

**Gives us a framework.**

A shared yardstick for every team, every channel.

**04**

**Helps us prioritise.**

When everything is urgent, this tells us what comes first.

WHERE WE WERE · 2024

# Growth was everywhere. Supporter experience *wasn't*.

INCOME GROWTH (2024 → 2026)

# +125%

*Individual giving and events both running hot.*

Record-breaking IG and Events year

New campaigns, audiences, partners

BEHIND THE SCENES

# 14 days

*Time it took to send a thank-you.*

Supporters falling through CRM gaps

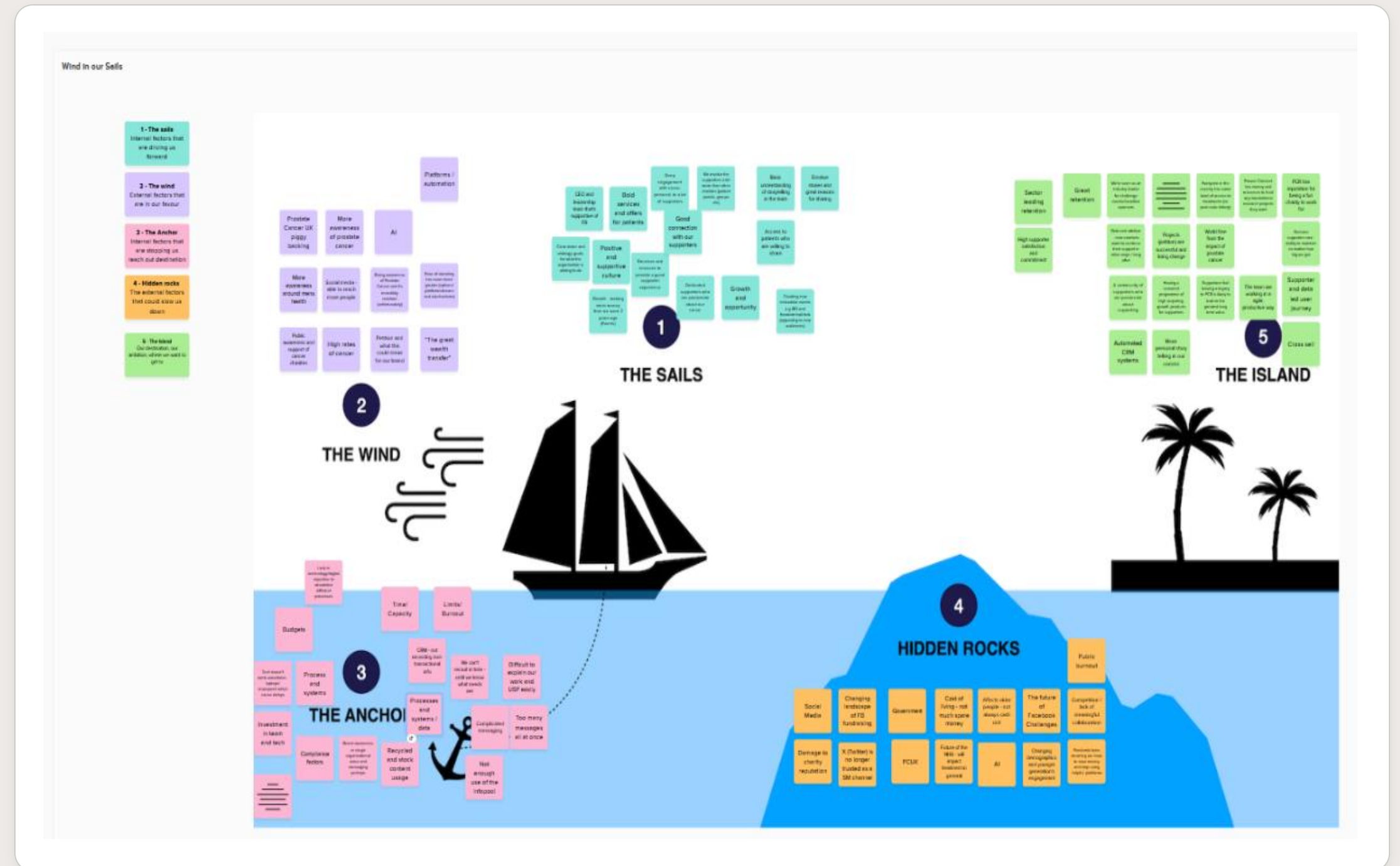
Care decisions made on the fly, team-by-team

OUR FIRST ATTEMPT

# Sept 2024.

## Our first workshop on a supporter promise and manifesto.

Cross-team session · "Wind in our Sails" exercise  
Sails, wind, anchor, hidden rocks, the island





## Our Supporter Promise

Your Support Matters.  
Every Moment. Every Step. Every Day.

At Prostate Cancer Research, we are dedicated to giving you the best experience as a supporter—because you are at the heart of everything we do.

Every conversation we have, every message we share, and every thank-you we send is personal and meaningful. Your generosity drives life-saving research, supports men and their families, and brings us closer to a future free from the impact of prostate cancer.

We want you to feel truly valued as part of our community.

When you choose to support us, we want you to know that you're making a difference—and that we are here to support you, too.

We are committed to providing outstanding care, communication, and connection.

We are proud to stand with you in the fight against prostate cancer.

And together, we will change the future.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

The Prostate Cancer Research team.



### Made a mistake or not lived up to the promise?

We always strive for excellence, but if you ever feel that we haven't met the high standards we set for ourselves, we want to hear from you. Your feedback helps us improve and ensures that we continue to provide the best experience for all our supporters.

If you have concerns or wish to make a complaint, please refer to our Complaints Policy, which sets out how we will listen, respond, and take action where needed.

You can find more details on our website or contact our team directly—we are here to help.

Prostate Cancer Research. 22-23-Great James Street, London, WC1N 3ES. rcn 1156027.  
info@pcr.org.uk. 0203 735 5444. www.pcr.org.uk





## Our Team Manifesto

Delivering the best experiences for supporters.  
Every Moment. Every Journey. Every Day.

Delivering a great supporter experience is what we do.

It's part of our team DNA.

Every conversation. Every comment. Every communication.

We're committed to making them as personal and  
powerful as possible.

Together we want to create a world free from the impact of  
prostate cancer.

It's our job to connect supporters to our mission and make  
them feel special about supporting our work.

We want to be their favourite charity.

We do this, not only because it helps us raise more money,  
but because we believe as a team that is the right thing to  
do.

We're proud to represent Prostate Cancer Research.

That's why we'll hold each other accountable to deliver  
great experiences and supporter care.

Prostate Cancer Research. 22-23-Great James Street, London, WC1N 3ES. rcn 1156027.  
info@pcr.org.uk. 0203 735 5444. www.pcr.org.uk



# Then it *stalled.*

→ OVER TO HARRY, HERE'S WHAT HAPPENED NEXT...

# PCR's *journey.*

With **Harry Ellison**

Head of Events & Community

PROSTATE CANCER RESEARCH · PCR.ORG.UK



# Why it *stalled*.

REASON 01

**Too *abstract*.**

A manifesto that sounded right, but didn't tell anyone what to do on a Tuesday morning.

REASON 02

**No *owner*.**

Everyone agreed. Nobody was accountable. The work fell off every agenda.

REASON 03

**No *time*  
protected.**

Squeezed in around campaigns. Lost every time to the next deadline.

Q3 &amp; Q4 · 2025 → 2026

# This time, we were *intentional*.

*Two in-person sessions. Virtual follow-ups. All diarised before the work began — not squeezed around it.*

We didn't throw the 2024 work away. We reviewed it. The manifesto wasn't wrong — it just wasn't enough.

CALENDAR · 2025–26

BOOKED FIRST

**Oct '25**

Agreed to park &amp; re-visit in Q4

**January '26**

In-person workshop 1

**Feb '26**

In-person workshop 2 — pick &amp; commit behaviours

**Mar '26**

Virtual sessions — what worked, what didn't

**Apr '26**

On-going team sessions to reflect, learn and share

# We planned Q3 to *protect* Q4.

*Time for this work doesn't appear. You make it — by booking it before the campaign deadlines book you.*



## Q2 · 2025/26

### Acknowledge the problem

Permission to wait, as conducting audience insight and research. We knew Q3 was crazy with events and Christmas.

## Q3 · 2025/26

### Diary blocked, work begins

Two workshops booked in before the work — not squeezed around it.

## Q4 · 2025/26

### Two behaviours, live

CRM hygiene + the holding-message rule. Embedded across teams.

## Q1 · 2026/27

### Retrospective + next round

Honest review. Opens the door to chatbots and tailored comms next.

*Manifesto*

|

# *Behaviours.*

*A manifesto says what supporters can expect.*

*Behaviours say what we actually do — and behaviours are **checkable**.*

**CHECKABLE ✓**

"We thank within two working days."

**NOT CHECKABLE ✗**

"We value our supporters."

2026 WORKSHOPS

# Our behaviours, *from the room.*

*Flip charts, sticky notes, hands in the air. This is what we wrote down — and what we now do.*



---

## Trustworthy

*Reliable · Consistent  
Professional · Knowledgeable*

---

## Human

*Empathetic · Grateful  
Passionate*

---

## Curious

*Engaged · Ambitious  
Always learning*

## 1. Trustworthy

*Supporters feel confident in us because we are reliable, consistent, professional and knowledgeable. We do what we say we will do and communicate with clarity and integrity.*

*This is the foundation everything else rests on. Good systems, consistent processes and clear boundaries build the trust that turns a one-off donor into a lifelong supporter.*

#	What we do	Why it matters	Actions and tasks
1	We plan intentional supporter journeys so that all supporters have positive, consistent experiences with PCR — whether this is their first gift or their tenth.	<i>Consistency is the bedrock of trust. Supporters should receive the same quality of experience regardless of which team member they interact with.</i>	
2	We keep up to date with mandatory and recommended training, to ensure we are sensitive to supporter needs and are compliant with fundraisers' data, so that supporters know they can trust us.	<i>Data breaches or misuse erode trust irreparably. Knowledge makes us credible and safe. Compliance is not a back-office function — it's part of every supporter relationship.</i>	
3	We log all correspondence consistently and accurately on the CRM. The team should <u>refer back</u> to this before future communications with individuals	<i>Accurate records mean future interactions are seamless. No supporter should have to repeat themselves or feel like a stranger returning to us. Joined-up knowledge enables joined-up care which endures beyond individual staff members</i>	<b>Make sure emails, calls, SMS, WhatsApp, letters etc are added within 24 hours of the interaction</b>
4	We respond to all supporters within 2 working days — even if only to acknowledge receipt and confirm when a full resolution will follow.	<i>A prompt holding message builds trust, offers a consistent experience and seizes the opportunity before motivation dissipates.</i>	
5	If we make a commitment to a supporter, we honour it — or proactively communicate if circumstances change before the deadline arrives.	<i>Reliability is built in the small moments. Missed promises — even minor ones — compound into a feeling that we can't be counted on.</i>	

## What we'd never do

*Sometimes it's easier to define a standard by its opposite. These are the behaviours and attitudes the team agreed they'd never want PCR to embody.*

#	What we'd never do	Why this would matter
1	Fail to own up to mistakes and blame others instead.	<i>Supporters don't feel heard. Problems that could be resolved quickly fester into complaints and lost donors.</i>
2	Repeat the same negative patterns without acknowledging or learning from them.	<i>We lose income. We lose supporters. We lose credibility. Institutional amnesia is expensive.</i>
3	Be fixed in our mindset — ignoring colleagues' ideas, being dismissive of new approaches or resistant to feedback.	<i>Supporters don't feel cared for, listened to or supported. And neither do the team members trying to improve things.</i>
4	Make a supporter feel unintelligent or unwelcome for not understanding the difference between PCR and other cancer charities.	<i>Confusion about who we are is a recruitment challenge, not a supporter failing. Our job is to educate warmly, not judge.</i>
5	Make a fundraising ask in the same communication as delivering difficult news or responding to a complaint.	<i>Context matters absolutely. A poorly timed ask in a charged moment can end a relationship permanently.</i>
6	Let a supporter feel like a transaction — responding with generic <a href="#">auto-replies</a> to significant personal moments.	<i>Our supporters are often men living with cancer, their carers or bereaved family members. They deserve more than a receipt.</i>

# We picked *two things*.

*01*

**Add supporters & comms  
to the CRM properly.**

Emails, phone calls, in-person chats. So relationships belong to PCR not to individuals. So the next conversation knows the last one.

*02*

**Respond — even if it's  
just a holding message.**

A supporter waiting in silence is a supporter losing trust. Two working days, wherever possible, even if the full answer takes longer.

THE FEEDBACK LOOP

**The team told us what worked.**

*And what didn't.*

*Honesty is what stops this work fading after the workshops. It's also how the next round gets better.*

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

# Keeping it *alive*.

01

**Built into  
induction.**

How new joiners learn "this is how we do things." Which is what culture really is.

02

**Shapes our  
priorities and  
projects.**

Keep coming back to the *Behaviours* until they're second nature. Next step is to build into project plans.

03

**Still evolving —  
and committed to  
keep going.**

It's not perfect. But it's happening, things are improving and it's shaped by us.

•  
WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

# What's next? Using our audience insight work

*01*

## **Listen to our supporters.**

Making use of the audience insight work that the team has already done and apply it to the supporter experience project.

*02*

## **Supporter persona chat bots.**


Stress test supporter journeys and stewardship ideas with our 'supporters'.

*03*

## **Test & learn.**

We will see what comes next!

We want to design a supporter journey after you've signed a petition calling for a national screening programme for prostate cancer. What are the key things and jobs we need to do on the journey to make you pleased you signed the petition?

 Supporter Bot - Isabel

I'll answer this **as Isabel**, because that's who you're really designing this journey for.

When I sign a petition like this, I'm already emotionally invested. I've raised my hand and said *"this matters to my family."* What happens next determines whether I feel proud and hopeful – or quietly forgotten.

Here are the **key jobs your supporter journey needs to do** to make me genuinely pleased I signed.

---

## 1. Reassure me immediately that signing was worthwhile

**Job to be done:** *"Tell me my action mattered."*

Straight after I sign, I want to feel:

- Thanked warmly and personally
- Reassured that this isn't just an online gesture
- Clear about **why petitions like this actually influence change**

## 2. Help me emotionally place myself in the cause

**Job to be done:** *"Help me see myself – and my family – in this fight."*

I didn't sign because of statistics. I signed because:

- My husband was lucky to be diagnosed early
- My sons might not be, unless things change

So early on in the journey, I need:

- A short, human story that mirrors my fears and hopes
- Language that recognises partners, carers and families – not just "patients"
- Gentle reassurance that **early detection really does save families heartache**

This builds trust and makes me feel understood, not processed.

---

## 3. Show me that progress is possible (and already happening)

**Job to be done:** *"Give me hope grounded in reality."*

I don't want doom and gloom. I want **credible optimism**.

You need to:

- Explain *what a national screening programme would actually change*
- Show me where research, pilots, or policy conversations are already moving forward
- Break big systems into understandable steps

# You can do *this too*.

*Three stages — what Harry described is one charity's version of it.*

STAGE 01

*Discover*  
**where you  
are.**

Honest baseline. Listen to supporters and the team. Don't skip this part.

STAGE 02

*Define* **what  
you stand  
for.**

A supporter promise and a team manifesto — written together, not handed down.

STAGE 03

*Activate*  
**through  
behaviours.**

Two checkable behaviours. Embedded. Reviewed. Then build from there.

FREE RESOURCES

# Take this back to your *team.*

*Three resources. Walk a team through Discover, Define, Activate in three 90-minute sessions. Find the blog and link to the resource here or by scanning the QR code: <https://threadfundraising.com/post/creating-a-supporter-experience-manifesto>*

Workshop  
deck

## Workshop slides

Editable deck that walks the team through the three stages — drop in your own examples.

Facilitator  
notes

## Facilitator notes

Timings, exercises, prompts, things to listen for, what "done" looks like.

AI  
prompt

## Socratic AI prompt

A guided prompt to develop your own promise, values and behaviours — together.



Your supporters  
won't read your  
*manifesto*. They'll feel  
your *behaviours*.

— PICK ONE WITH HARRY · PRACTISE · LAND IT

**Won** *'Best use of insight to improve the supporter experience'* **award at the CIOF Data & Insight Awards**

**Harry Ellison – [hellison@pcr.org.uk](mailto:hellison@pcr.org.uk)**

Head of Events & Community · Prostate Cancer Research

**Craig Linton – [craig@threadfundraising.com](mailto:craig@threadfundraising.com)**

Director · Thread Fundraising – [threadfundraising.com](http://threadfundraising.com)



**THREAD**

Fundraising



# Questions?

## SX PARTNER & PROCESS

### Craig Linton

Director, Thread Fundraising

[craig@threadfundraising.com](mailto:craig@threadfundraising.com)

[threadfundraising.com](https://threadfundraising.com)

## PCR SPECIFICS

### Harry Ellison

Head of Events & Community, Prostate Cancer Research

[hellison@pcr.org.uk](mailto:hellison@pcr.org.uk) | [pcr.org.uk](https://pcr.org.uk)



ALL RESOURCES →