THE ART OF FUNDRAISING | THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2026

MAKING THE ASK

A practical masterclass

Beth Upton, Money Tree Fundraising

MONEY TREE FUNDRAISING
Growing your high-value giving

POLL 1

“Asking someone face-to-face for a donation scares me.”

Yes

Maybe

No

1 IN 4

said yes. Asking face-to-face scares them.

25% yes. A two-year snapshot, June 2024 to June 2026. The scorecard is still open.

NEARLY HALF

are not comfortable making the ask.

Yes 25%. Maybe 21%. No 54%.

THE OLDEST ADAGE IN FUNDRAISING

IF YOU DON'T ASK, THEY WON'T GIVE.

85% **of gifts follow an ask.**

Bryant et al., 2003, reported in Bekkers and Wiepking's review of 500 studies of giving, 2011.

TODAY

READY.

How to know it is time

SPOKEN.

How to ask out loud

WRITTEN.

How to ask on paper

One structure for a person, a company or a trust.

BEFORE YOU ASK

ASKING CHECKLIST

WHEN?	Right time
WHERE?	Right place
WHAT FOR?	Right project
HOW MUCH?	Right amount
WHO?	Right asker
	Right home team
	Right donor team

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BEFORE YOU ASK



RIGHT TIME

BEFORE YOU ASK



RIGHT PLACE

BEFORE YOU ASK

WHAT FOR?

RIGHT PROJECT


THE TWO ANNES
RNLI
RNLI
EVERYONE WANTS TO FUND THE LIFEBOAT.


NOBODY WANTS TO
FUND THE FUEL.

BEFORE YOU ASK



RIGHT AMOUNT

THREE PROPOSALS, TAKEN TO LUNCH

£80,000

£90,000

£100,000

“We will do this one.”

BEFORE YOU ASK



RIGHT ASKER. RIGHT HOME TEAM. RIGHT DONOR TEAM.

£50,000 The chair

£25,000 The chief executive

£10,000 The fundraiser

WHO DECIDES ON THEIR SIDE?

DON'T GUESS. ASK.

PART 2: THE SPOKEN ASK

YOU ARE READY.

NOW ASK.

POLL 2

What do you usually do straight after you make the ask?

- Explain why it is important
- Have someone else back up your ask
- Say nothing

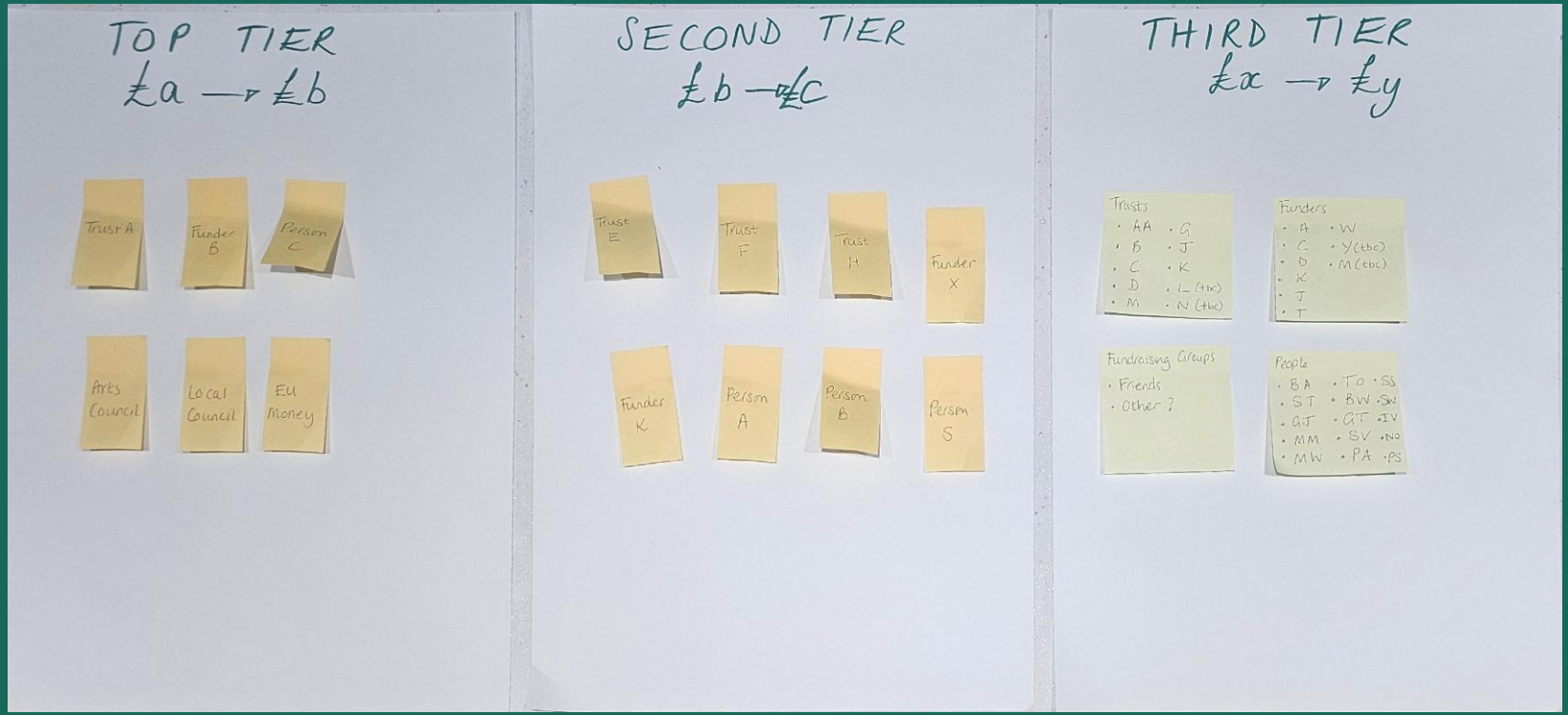
THAT WAS

8 SECONDS.

It felt longer, didn’t it?

PART 2: THE SPOKEN ASK

MY FAVOURITE ASK



“

Yes, I do think I would consider that.

After what felt like a lifetime of silence.

NUMBER.

A specific one. Not a range.

NUMBER.

A specific one. Not a range.

PURPOSE.

What the money does.

NUMBER.

A specific one. Not a range.

PURPOSE.

What the money does.

QUESTION.

One that invites an answer.

PART 2: THE SPOKEN ASK | FOUR ELEMENTS

NUMBER.

A specific one. Not a range.

PURPOSE.

What the money does.

QUESTION.

One that invites an answer.

STOP.

No softening. No second ask.

SAY IT LIKE THIS | PATRON

“

I’d like to invite you to join us as a Firefly Patron, with a commitment of £10,000 a year for three years.

SAY IT LIKE THIS | LEAD DONOR



Would you consider being a lead donor, with a gift of £500,000?

SAY IT LIKE THIS | COMPANY

“

We are looking for one partner to fund our schools programme next year, at £45,000. How does that sit with next year’s budget?

AFTER THE ASK | REPLY 1



Thank them. Agree how and when. Thank them again.

AFTER THE ASK | REPLY 2



Thank them.
“Could you tell me a little more about what you had in mind?”

AFTER THE ASK | REPLY 3

LET ME THINK.

Thank them. Not a no. A diary entry.

PART 3: THE WRITTEN ASK

ON PAPER, THE SILENCE IS WHITE SPACE.

A real number. A full stop. Then stop.

POLL 3

You are the trustee. Which opening gets your vote?

A

"We would be most grateful if the Trustees might consider making a significant contribution towards the costs of our vital work with families."

B

"We are asking the Trust for £23,000 towards the £61,243 cost of two family support workers in Kent over two years. The remaining £38,243 is already secured."

We are asking the Trust for **£23,000** towards the **£61,243** cost of **two family support workers in Kent** over **two years**. The remaining **£38,243 is already secured**.

white space

1. Your share
2. The whole cost
3. What it buys
4. How long for
5. Proof it will happen

PART 3: THE WRITTEN ASK

FOUR WAYS TO RUIN IT

DOUBLE ASKING

"…although any contribution would be gratefully received."

APOLOGISING

A paragraph explaining why it is not much.

VAGUENESS

"A significant contribution towards our costs."

ROUND NUMBERS

£20,000 here, £5,000 there. It looks like a guess.

WHEN THE ANSWER IS A LETTER

ASK WHY.

Some will answer.

MAKING THE ASK

READY.

Five questions. Seven rights.

SPOKEN.

A number. A question. Then nothing.

WRITTEN.

Real numbers. A full stop. White space.

THIS WEEK

MAKE ONE ASK.

1.15pm	Members live chat with me. Bring your questions.
Your pack	The guide to everything today.
The report	majordonorscorecard.co.uk/2026-report

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