



gifted®

CASE STUDY

The Lord Leycester Hospital

Achieving success with
the National Lottery
Heritage Fund

Exceptional fundraising partnerships

The Lord Leycester Hospital (LLH) in Warwick is a set of medieval buildings which is both a residence for retired servicemen and a visitor attraction in the heart of Warwick. Gifted's partnership with the Lord Leycester Hospital began in 2017, when the charity had little or no fundraising experience. However, the new Master, Dr Heidi Meyer, had transformational ambitions for a visitor attraction that would showcase an extraordinary heritage, spanning over 900 years.

Adapting the vision

From the beginning, it was clear that the most obvious route to significant funding would involve support from the (then) Heritage Lottery Fund. It was also apparent that Dr Meyer's ambitions for the project would need to be adapted to meet HLF engagement outcomes.

Gifted's initial priority was to articulate this synergy, so that a confident Round 1 application could be prepared. We knew that the case for undertaking a superb restoration of the site and creating an outstanding visitor attraction was compelling. What was initially less well-understood was how to weave in the engagement activities that would meet key outcomes for the HLF.

Using our expertise and experience, we worked with the charity to build this crucial picture of engagement and convince others that the project was worthy of significant support.

Achieving a Round 1 Pass

With Gifted's advice and encouragement, the Lord Leycester reshaped the scope of the project and received a Round 1 pass in 2019. We were then reappointed to develop a robust strategy for the required partnership funding, with a target of £1m from philanthropic sources of income. The creation of this strategy was fundamental to the LLH being granted permission to start the Development Phase of the project. Working quickly to meet new National Lottery Heritage Fund guidelines, Gifted delivered the strategy document within 4 weeks and permission to start was immediately granted.

Campaign planning

The intention was always that the strategic blueprint we created in partnership with the LLH would provide the template for a formal campaign plan. But, of course, the charity had to go through an open tender process before appointing a consultancy to deliver the campaign. Gifted went through this process and, in November 2019, we were appointed to begin the assignment on 1st December. The strategy document was then developed into the campaign plan which identified how the £1m partnership funding would be raised from grant-makers, individuals and community givers, over the following year.

Delivering the fundraising campaign

Our early focus was on grant-makers capable of making grants above £50,000, and the development of a recognition mechanism which would attract individual gifts worth £10,000 or more. It was agreed that individual gifts could be pledged over a period of 4 years, to match both the length of the campaign - 18 months - and the project delivery.

Using the research undertaken during the development of the original strategy, a list of trustees associated with all potential grant-makers was circulated to governors and campaign board members, so that we could establish any personal connections with the charity's own leadership. This opened a number of doors, and five priority major grant-makers were identified.

All were approached before the end of February 2020. One major gift (£210,000 over 3 years) was agreed, whilst the other four all expressed their willingness to support. Application timelines in the summer of 2020 were then arranged with each of the potential grant funders. During this period, we also created the concept of Lord Leycester's Guild (for individual donors giving £10,000 or more) and secured two initial pledges towards this. An initial Guild launch event was scheduled for April 2020.

Adapting to challenges

In March 2020, these plans were waylaid by the arrival Covid-19. Rather than suspend the campaign entirely, and risk delays in the application process, we were forced to adapt our approach. The LLH had to close to public visitors completely, face-to-face meetings moved to video calls and in-person events were postponed indefinitely. The four major grant-makers, in different ways, changed their fixed processes, which delayed our ability to submit formal applications.

However, we had to maintain what momentum we could, so that we could begin again in earnest, as soon as it was possible to do so. Not surprisingly, the deadline for the campaign had to be extended, but the date of the Round 2 submission to HLF remained in August 2021.

During this time, a lower-level recognition scheme - the Pathway of Support – was also created to secure gifts from the community, visitors and lower-income friends of the LLH. Alongside this successful giving programme, we were able to secure funding from Warwick Town Council, Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council from their various tourism related funds.

£4.5m of transformational investment

At the time of the Round 2 submission, the LLH was able to show that it had secured all of the partnership funding required. The campaign had raised £1,050,914.

Because of the pandemic, this campaign was challenging but, through best practice fundraising, focus and the ability to be both flexible and patient, the target was achieved. Due to inflation in contractor and material costs caused largely by Brexit and the Ukrainian conflict, the NLHF agreed to an increase in the level of its support.

After receiving its Round 2 pass in November 2021, the LLH reopened to the public in August 2023. Its unique buildings were fully restored, with new exhibitions spaces and modern interpretation throughout. The charity also used the funds to create a new gift shop, café and ticket office.

"From day one, we believed in the potential of the Lord Leycester to attract both heritage funding and philanthropic support," says Gifted's Chris Goldie. "The Lord Leycester is unique in so many ways - a medieval gem in the heart of Warwick with 450 years of continuous support for hundreds of military veterans. It fully deserved this level of fundraising success."

In total, £4.5m of transformational investment, including £2m from the NLHF and over £1m from other philanthropic sources, was the key to making this remarkable project happen. Meanwhile, the LLH continues to fundraise, with the Pathway of Support still to attract a healthy level of individual giving.

"We always knew that our project had the capacity to transform the Lord Leycester Hospital into a compelling heritage educational and cultural centre in Warwick" says Dr Meyer. "But convincing others securing step-change funding and approaching major givers is always more tightly focused when there's a trusted partner by your side. We have appreciated Gifted's professional support timely advice and lasting friendship along the way."

If your organisation is planning a global project and you need strategic fundraising support to help you achieve your goals, get in touch with one of our directors and find out more about our international experience.

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