

**Charity Retail Association®**

The voice of charity retail

# SHOP FOR THE FUTURE

## STRATEGIC PLAN



# Foreword

On behalf of the board of the Charity Retail Association (CRA) welcome to *Shop for the Future* – our strategic plan for 2017-2020. Charity retailing is an essential element of the high street and a vital part of the local community spirit throughout the UK and beyond. Not only does it support charities with around £270million of unrestricted income each year, but it has huge social impact, including keeping some 330,000 tonnes of textiles out of landfill, engaging 220,000 volunteers and maintaining 22,000 local and sustainable jobs.

We are grateful for government and local authority support for the sector that helps raise money for causes that the general public find important. Whether they be supporting local hospices, animal rescue, medical research, caring for children or any number of other

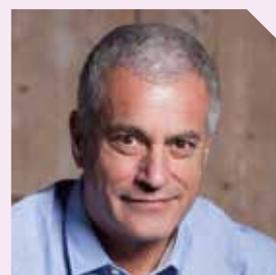
worthy causes, charity shops make a real difference. If you would like to find out more about the sector and CRA's support for it, please visit [www.charityretail.org.uk](http://www.charityretail.org.uk).

For 17 years now CRA has been the voice of the sector, supporting charity retail through a range of activities including member services, networking, training and lobbying for beneficial change. This plan describes what we want to achieve over the coming three years and we hope it will give you a clear picture of our vision, mission and objectives, and show you the vital role we play in supporting and developing this important part of the UK's heritage.

**Ben Merrett**  
*Chair*



**Robin Osterley**  
*Chief Executive*



# THE PLAN

## Values

**A successful, sustainable and valued charity retail sector in the UK.**

## Vision

### GENERAL:

- To act at all times with integrity, honesty, and with a sense of openness and transparency
- To consider the environmental impact of all that we do
- To act in the best interests of our members rather than ourselves
- To be the best possible partners with other industry and third sector organisations
- To maintain a culture of collaboration and co-operation with members and with other organisations from the wider sector

## Mission

**CRA's mission is to provide a range of services to its charity members to help them to thrive and provide the maximum possible benefit to charities and society at large.**

### WITHIN THE CHARITY RETAIL SECTOR:

- Be the voice of charity retail
- Be influential at all levels
- Be a platform for creating a sense of community across the membership.
- Provide a first class customer service experience
- Be the hub for all knowledge, research and expertise
- Identify, develop and promote best practice and innovation
- Be both proactive and responsive in dealing with developments affecting the sector



# Context

The context for this plan has been carefully considered. The world in which CRA operates is a highly pressurised one, where the traditional vagaries of retail and the high street have just as much impact on the charity retail sector as on commercial retailers. Further pressures derive from an increasing need to provide charitable contributions as other fundraising sources decline; from increasing costs, particularly in staffing; from difficulties in the recruitment, training and retention of volunteers of sufficient calibre; from a general move away from high street trading, from a need to keep abreast of digital developments; from aggressive and determined low cost commercial retailers; from a decline and uncertainty in the price of material sold to recyclers and re-use brokers; and from the increasingly commercial and financially driven policies of local authorities.

Against this, however, the traditional creativity and flexibility of the charity retail sector has been shining through. We have seen a growth in boutique and specialist shops providing a new and exciting retail experience even when compared to commercial outlets; a move to out

of town stores providing a much wider range of goods and services; an increased awareness and deployment of arguments around the social impact of charity retail; an increased investment (in many cases) in the training and recruitment of high quality staff; wider use of Gift Aid provision; and an improvement in shop standards across the board.

Overall we think the sector still thrives. New shops are opening all the time, and whilst at the time of writing growth is not what it was in the heady days of the late noughties, there is no reason to believe we are in crisis mode. The emphasis of this plan is therefore one of consolidation, and evolution rather than revolution.

CRA is a needed organisation, as is proved by its considerable growth over the years and its lobbying successes, especially in Wales (where business rate relief was saved from extinction) and with HMRC (where retail Gift Aid has been successfully defended and simplified). In this context it must maintain its strong balance sheet and continue to provide a range of services to members, as identified below.



# Strategic Objectives

As an organisation we have 5 strategic objectives which form the basis of our activities. Every activity that we undertake will fall into one of these 5 objectives:

## 1) LOBBYING, CAMPAIGNING AND ADVOCACY

- A** To be the voice of the sector and the “go to” organisation for the media, public and other infrastructure organisations
- B** To improve general awareness and favourable attitudes of the sector within government, local authorities, media, and the general public
- C** To undertake specific campaigns and create beneficial change in areas which are negatively affecting the sector and/or the world in which it operates
- D** To continue to develop and nurture positive and constructive relationships with other industry bodies, especially in the third and retail sectors

## 2) RESEARCH

- A** To be a trusted and respected repository of information about the sector and its performance
- B** To compile and publish regular benchmarking reports of the performance of the sector compared to previous periods and to commercial retail
- C** To identify a way of examining and possibly publishing data and opinions on future trends within the sector



### 3) MEMBER SERVICES

- A** To provide a range of services of benefit to members, and to keep these constantly under review for accuracy, relevance, and cost-effectiveness
- B** To compile and maintain a database of policy guidance available to members
- C** To consider, and where possible implement, schemes offering economies of scale to members
- D** To consider issues of wider retail trading, eg in online and new goods sale

### 4) PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS TO MEET AND SHARE INFORMATION

- A** To continue to run a flagship annual conference and awards ceremony to celebrate the sector's achievements, offer training opportunities, and provide opportunities to meet and network
- B** To run a series of events at which members with specific interests can discuss areas of mutual concern, share best practice and meet one another.

### 5) TRAINING

- A** To obtain regular input from members as to what sector training is required
- B** To create training opportunities for members, either by providing CRA courses or by signposting to existing training activities
- C** To ensure that training events are cost-effective for all members regardless of their resources



# Measures of Success

Given the above objectives, we have identified the following measures of success which will form the KPIs for the organisation over the next 3 years.

## 1) LOBBYING

- A** Respond to all relevant consultations UK-wide
- B** Keep keenly aware of all potential barriers to the success of the sector and take correcting action where necessary and possible
- C** Maintain close contact with all partner and potential partner organisations

## 2) RESEARCH

- A** Produce a range of reports with a specified rate of response according to a research plan agreed with the membership
- B** Undertake a new initiative identifying future trends and developments within the sector

## 3) MEMBER SERVICES

- A** Improve annually on current sector share of membership
- B** Ensure that small charities are adequately represented within the membership

- C** Ensure quality of members services is benchmarked and continually reviewed
- D** Produce an annual members survey to gauge the opinions of members and the success of CRA

## 4) PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET

- A** Run at least 5 Special Interest Groups at least twice a year in a variety of different topic areas
- B** Run at least 4 members meetings (excluding conference) at least annually
- C** Develop and continue to promote the Charity Retail Conference annually, with at least 350 paying charity delegates and with a sold-out exhibition each year.

## 5) TRAINING

- A** Run at least 6 training courses every year in a variety of locations and subjects
- B** Other measures TBA

## CONTACT US

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