The Balloon Race

This document explains how a virtual balloon race works including tips and case studies.

What is a Virtual Balloon race?

A virtual balloon race runs on the internet, no real balloons or helium are required therefore it's environmentally friendly and sustainable. It costs £39 to setup which includes a unique webpage and an easy to understand admin area that controls the race.

When setting up a race you'll be asked for a start and finish date, most races run for 7 days. Plan your start date at least 3 or 4 weeks into the future to allow time to sell your balloons. You can start selling balloons immediately after setup. Virtual balloons are usually sold for between £3-£5.

As your sales build, balloons are added to your leaderboard but remain on 0km. When the race starts the balloons move a random distance every hour until the finish date. The movement is calculated by an algorithm which guarantees a close finish with no runaway leader.

The fun starts in...

DAYS	HOURS	MINS
36	07	04

What to offer for prizes

Your prizes will be the greatest expense, Amazon vouchers work well as they can be emailed to winners. The race is online so you can have entries nationally therefore being able to email prizes keeps costs down.
A £30 voucher for 1st prize is most popular but this will depend on the number of balloons you're expecting to sell.

Admin Area

The admin area controls your race and is password protected. Features include:

Upload Logo/Crest
Change race dates
Add text & links
Upload Backgrounds
Upload/download CSV of entrants
Choose balloon designs from the list available
Add remove card payments
View sales dashboard
Edit balloon entry names & messages
Close sales
Add your bank details
Request Payout

Payment Options for your balloons

1) INTEGRATED STRIPE CARD PAYMENTS

Amount raised	
Total balloons: 133	Balloon value: £5.00
Total paid entries: 120	Stripe (card): 120 (£600.00)
Total active entries: 129	Total raised amount: £600.00 (excluding taxes)
Stripe total "Pay Out by BACS" (-12% fee) £528.00	
Request money transfer	

Your admin area has card payments activated by default. With this option sales are taken care of automatically for a 12% fee. Everything is automated, share your homepage URL and sales will take care of themselves. The sales total displays via a dashboard in admin.

The race offers free postal entry. This is clear and easy to find and a legal requirement for every race. If you sell balloons from other locations you'll need to advertise that free postal entry is available.

2) CASH PAYMENTS

Take face to face cash payments and add the balloons manually or by CSV upload. There's no limit to the number of balloons you can add.

3) YOUR WEBSITE

Use your own platform and upload entries with a CSV. Again unlimited balloons available but it does take time to build a form to collect the correct data.

Data required:

> Name
> Email (so you can contact the winners)
> Balloon Name
> Balloon Design
> Message

4) DONATION WEBSITE

Donation websites are amazing, especially if they include gift aid. The pitfalls are their limited customisation, usually they only allow a DONATE button.
Take advantage of your balloon registration page by changing your balloon price to £0 then request payment with a donation link from your text area.
This option clearly displays free postal entry which is a legal requirement.

Case Study 1

St Nicholas Church run a balloon race every year and use the card payment option within admin.

ORGANISATION:
St Nicholas Church and Berden Parochial Church Council (PCC)

CAUSE:
Raising funds for Churches in Berden, Manuden, Clavering, Langley, Arkesden, Wicken Bonhunt which form the clavering Benefice in Uttlesford, Essex

COSTS:
> Balloon Race - £39.00
> Prizes - 1st £100, 2nd £50, 3rd £25
> 12% Online payments of total sales

AMOUNTS RAISED:

> 2021 - £2085
> 2022 - £1500
> 2023 - £1000
> 2024 - £800

FEEDBACK:

> "The lockdowns during COVID really hit churches hard as we were unable to hold services which were the main way in which we raise the funds required to keep our church well maintained and open. We desperately needed to raise funds and we heard about the Virtual Balloon Race concept. We looked into it and thought it looked great. It was affordable, easy to manage and something fun and a bit different that hadn't been done before.

St Nicholas Church, Berden is one of 6 Churches in the Clavering Benefice – a rural community based in Uttlesford on the West Essex Border with Hertfordshire. We suggested the Virtual balloon race to all the churches within the benefice and we launched our first virtual Balloon race over Easter in 2021. We sold Balloons at £5 per balloon and offered a first prize of £100 and it was a great success raising over £2000!
People told us they really liked the concept and were pleased that it didn't have a negative impact on the environment.

Following on from the success of our first event we have run virtual Balloon Races at Easter every year since 2021. They continue to be a great way of engaging with our local communities and raising funds for our parish churches. We now offer a first prize of £100, a second prize of £50 and a third prize of £25.

I would highly recommend people to run a virtual balloon race as a fundraiser. Its very affordable, easy to manage, profitable, it doesn't cause environmental damage and its lots of FUN!"

<div align="right">
Mark Trapmore
– Churchwarden St Nicholas'
Church Berden and chair of Berden PCC
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Case Study 2

Worcester & District Macmillan Cancer Support Fundraising Committee use the virtual balloon & duck race twice each year and take funds via enthuse.com and upload balloons & ducks with a CSV. A google form is used to collect the buyers balloon details.

ORGANISATION:
Worcester & District Macmillan Cancer Support Fundraising Committee - Fundraising Analysis

CAUSE:
Macmillan Cancer

COSTS:
      Balloon Race - £39.00

      Amazon voucher - £25.00

AMOUNTS RAISED:

      £300 - £400 Each race

FEEDBACK:

      "For the last 4/5 years we have hosted online events such as a Christmas Balloon race and an Easter Duck race. (See link to our Enthuse page below). On average we tend to raise between £300 - £400 per race.

      This is a link to our Enthuse Donation page which the national Macmillan team prefers us to use. If you scroll down to the bottom of the page you will see links to

our current duck race and last December's balloon race. Sadly the links to other online events we have hosted have been removed. (Enthuse Page Link)

The costs incurred whilst undertaking our fundraising activities are minimal because they are hosted and conducted on the whole by our committee members and family & friends.

Our costs for the two online events are approx. £60 per event. (Balloon Race: £35 and Amazon Voucher £25) which makes the events very profitable."

Steve Booth

10% Discount Code

Run a virtual balloon race for your next online fundraiser. It's sustainable, fun and the colourful images are great for social media.

Get 10% discount with code **DS24601**.

Find out more here: https://www.balloon.co.uk/virtual-race/

Setup a race here: https://balloonrace.net/selfregistration/

Any questions email david@balloon.co.uk