

Bringing the Boldre Hoard home

Community engagement sparks fundraising success



Image courtesy of St Barbe Museum and Art Gallery

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St Barbe Museum and Art Gallery



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Bringing the Boldre Hoard home

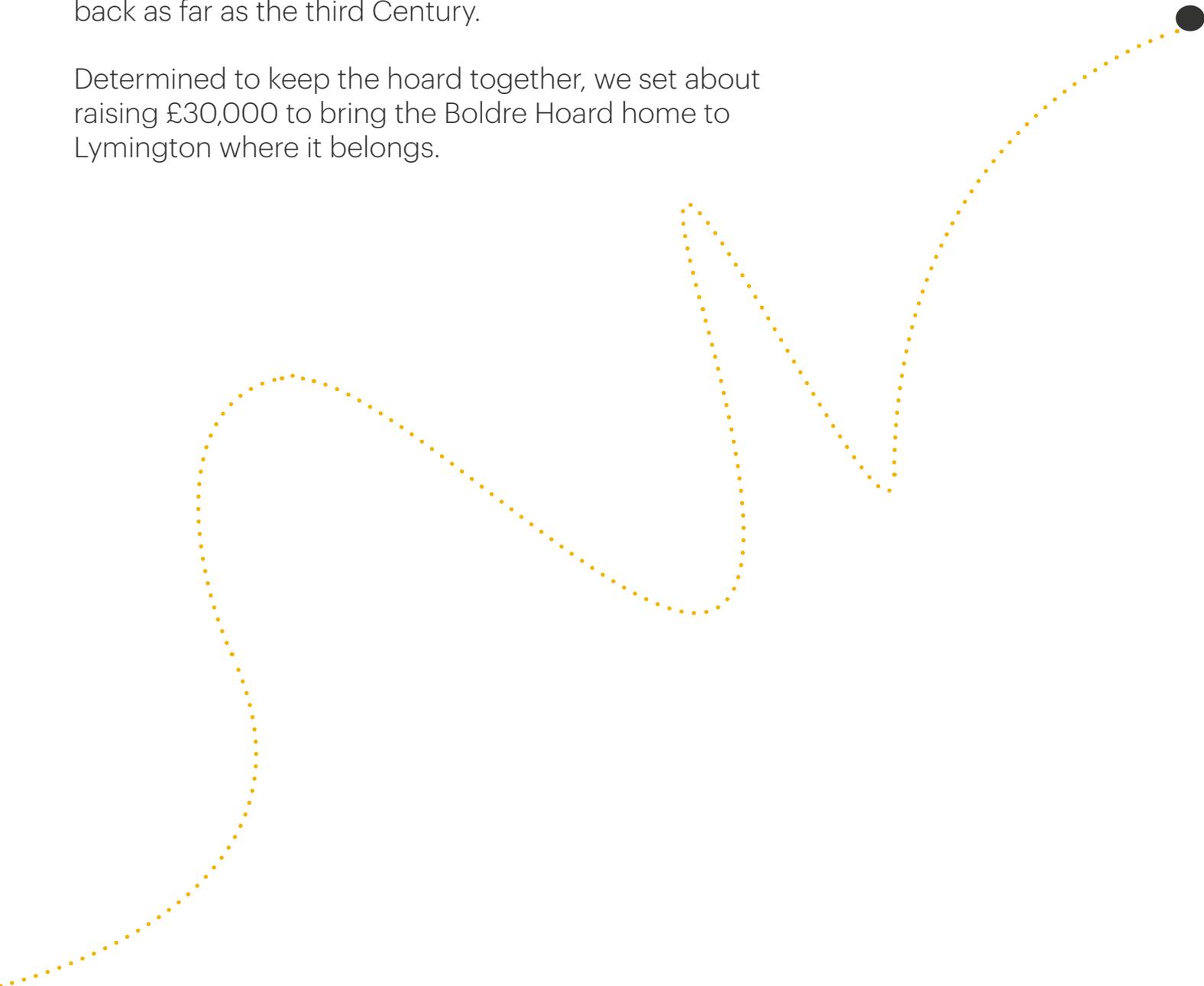
Community engagement sparks fundraising success

St Barbe Museum and Art Gallery is located at the heart of the historic coastal market town of Lymington. It is a dynamic museum and highly regarded art gallery that appeals to both locals and New Forest visitors.

The museum explores the history of Lymington and the New Forest Coast. Inspired by local pride and supported by the local community, its collections and colourful hands-on displays offer a fascinating insight into the area for all ages.

In 2014, an incredible hoard of 1,600 coins was discovered by metal detectorists in the museum's home town. Buried in a Romano-British pot, the coins dated back as far as the third Century.

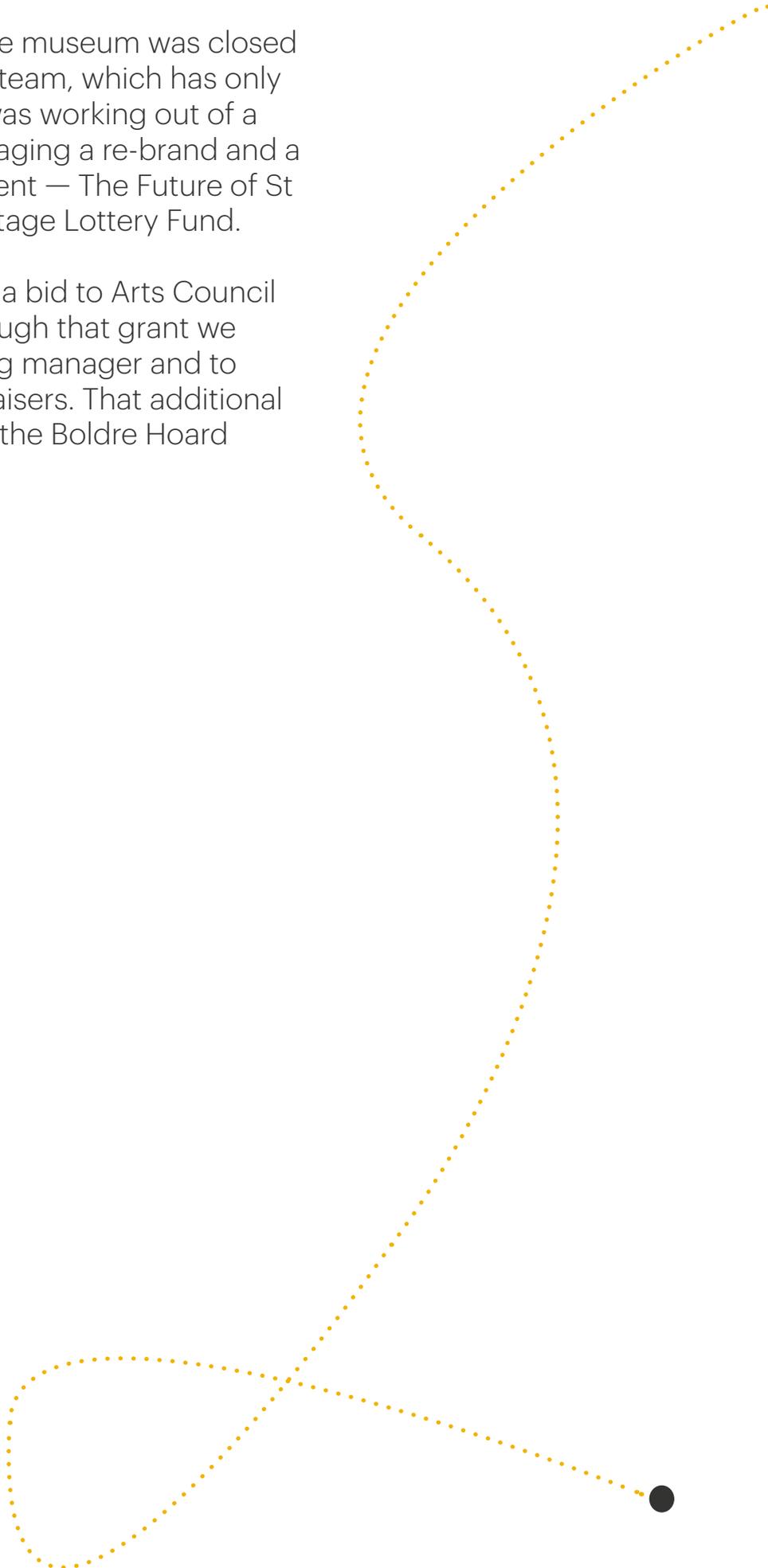
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Our context

At the time of this campaign, the museum was closed for major renovation. Our small team, which has only one full-time member of staff, was working out of a temporary office. We were managing a re-brand and a £2.3 million capital redevelopment — The Future of St Barbe — supported by The Heritage Lottery Fund.

We had also been successful in a bid to Arts Council England's Resilience Fund. Through that grant we were able to employ a marketing manager and to work with commissioned fundraisers. That additional capacity proved vital in making the Boldre Hoard campaign a success.



The discovery

We were first notified of the Boldre Hoard by the Hampshire Finds Officer in 2014. It had been taken to the British Museum for assessment so we contacted them to request information.

The British Museum was interested in one particularly rare coin, but we wanted to keep the hoard intact. British-Romano finds are very unusual in the New Forest so the hoard tells an important part of our local history.

The British Museum generously shared their knowledge about the hoard and agreed that it should return to Lymington. We just needed to raise £30,000 to bring the hoard home.



Championing the campaign

We were keen to find a figurehead to champion the campaign. TV presenter and historian Dan Snow was an obvious choice. He had brought his kids to the museum before and had recently moved to the area. We approached him and he kindly agreed to help us.

Because the hoard forms such an important part of our local history, we also wanted to involve the local community. We talked to local schools and the owner of the land where the coins were found.

With the community behind us, we set up a special launch for the campaign. The landowner gave us access to his field and local schools came along dressed in Roman costumes. They were able to see elements of the hoard and Dan Snow gave a talk about the importance of bringing it home.

Students from Highbury College filmed the launch day and that film became a central part of the fundraising campaign and the event that evening.



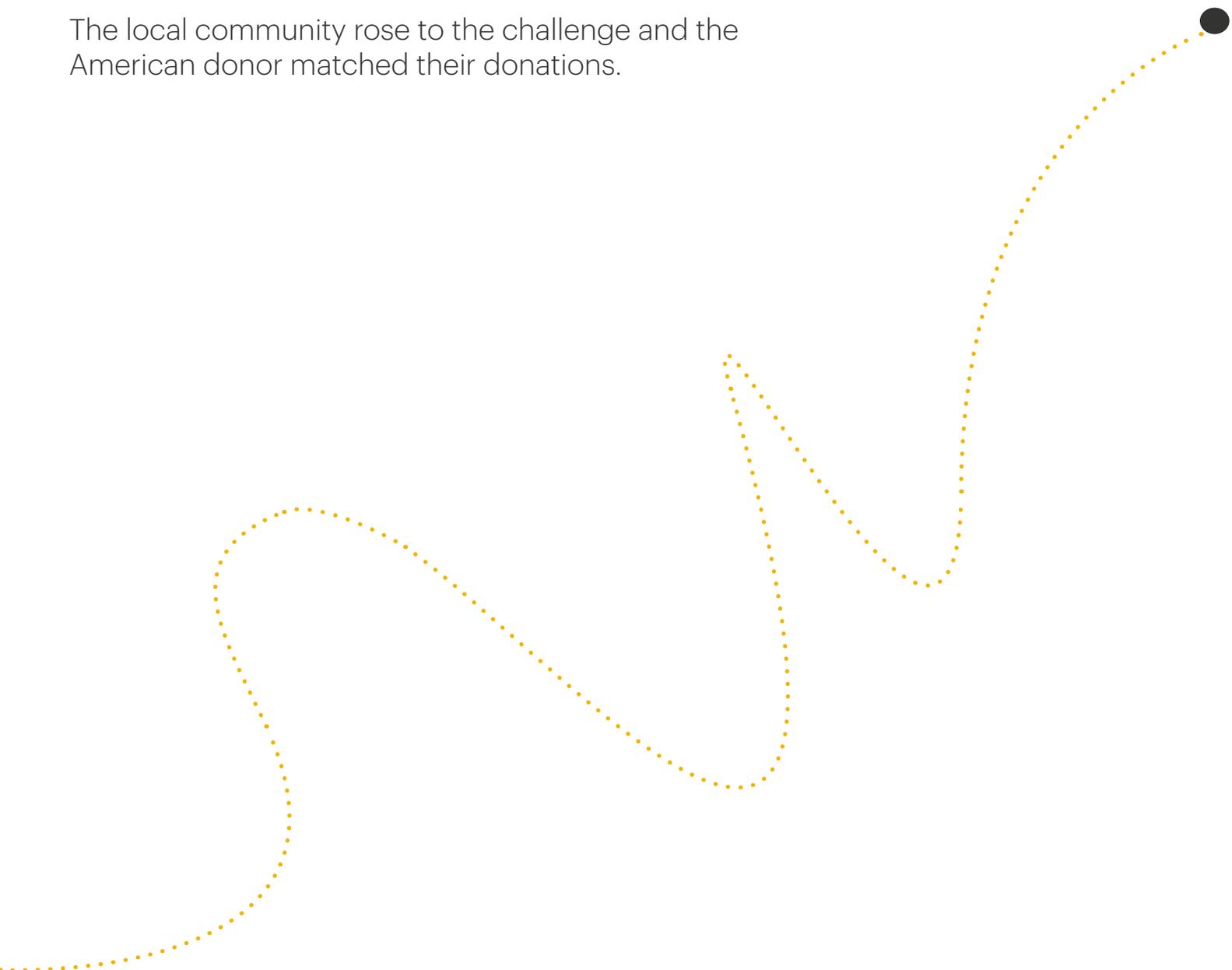
The power of digital

During the evening of the launch, we held a ticketed event hosted by Dan Snow at the Baptist Church. We showed the Highbury College students' film and Dan and a Roman Studies lecturer gave talks about the hoard and Romano-British history.

As well as hosting the physical audience in the room, Dan broadcast the event via Periscope on his phone. That enabled us to reach a far wider audience and engage Dan's online followers.

Several weeks after the launch we realised the potential of digital channels when an American donor contacted us wanting to support the appeal. He saw the film of the launch on our website and was so inspired by the children's reaction to the hoard that he offered to donate up to £7,500 if the local community raised the same.

The local community rose to the challenge and the American donor matched their donations.

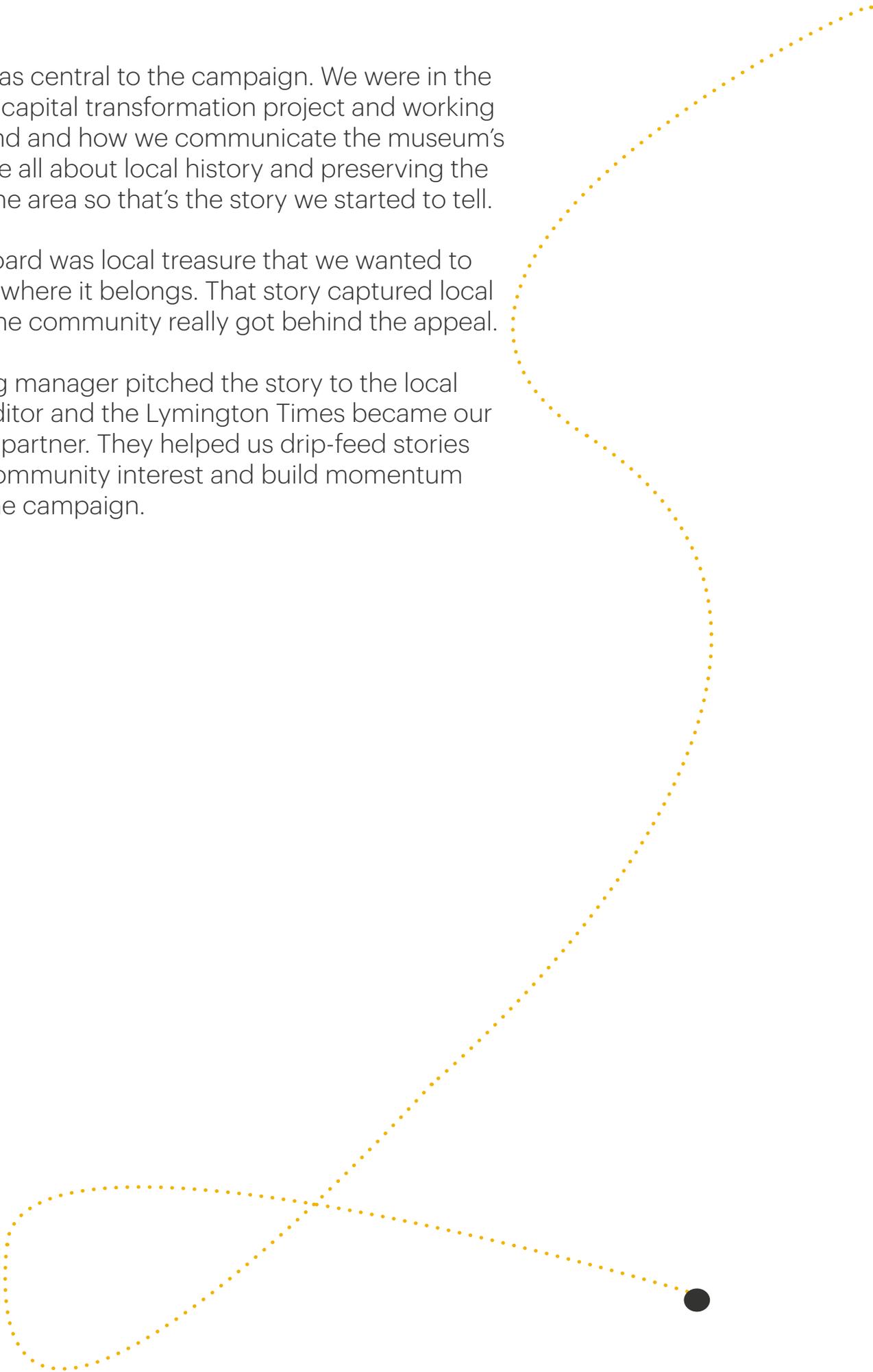


Storytelling

Storytelling was central to the campaign. We were in the middle of the capital transformation project and working on the re-brand and how we communicate the museum's purpose. We're all about local history and preserving the treasures of the area so that's the story we started to tell.

The Boldre Hoard was local treasure that we wanted to bring back to where it belongs. That story captured local interest and the community really got behind the appeal.

Our marketing manager pitched the story to the local newspaper editor and the Lymington Times became our official media partner. They helped us drip-feed stories to maintain community interest and build momentum throughout the campaign.



Recommendations

Make it connect with your community — involving local schools, the church, the landowner and students from Highbury College built interest in the campaign from the outset.

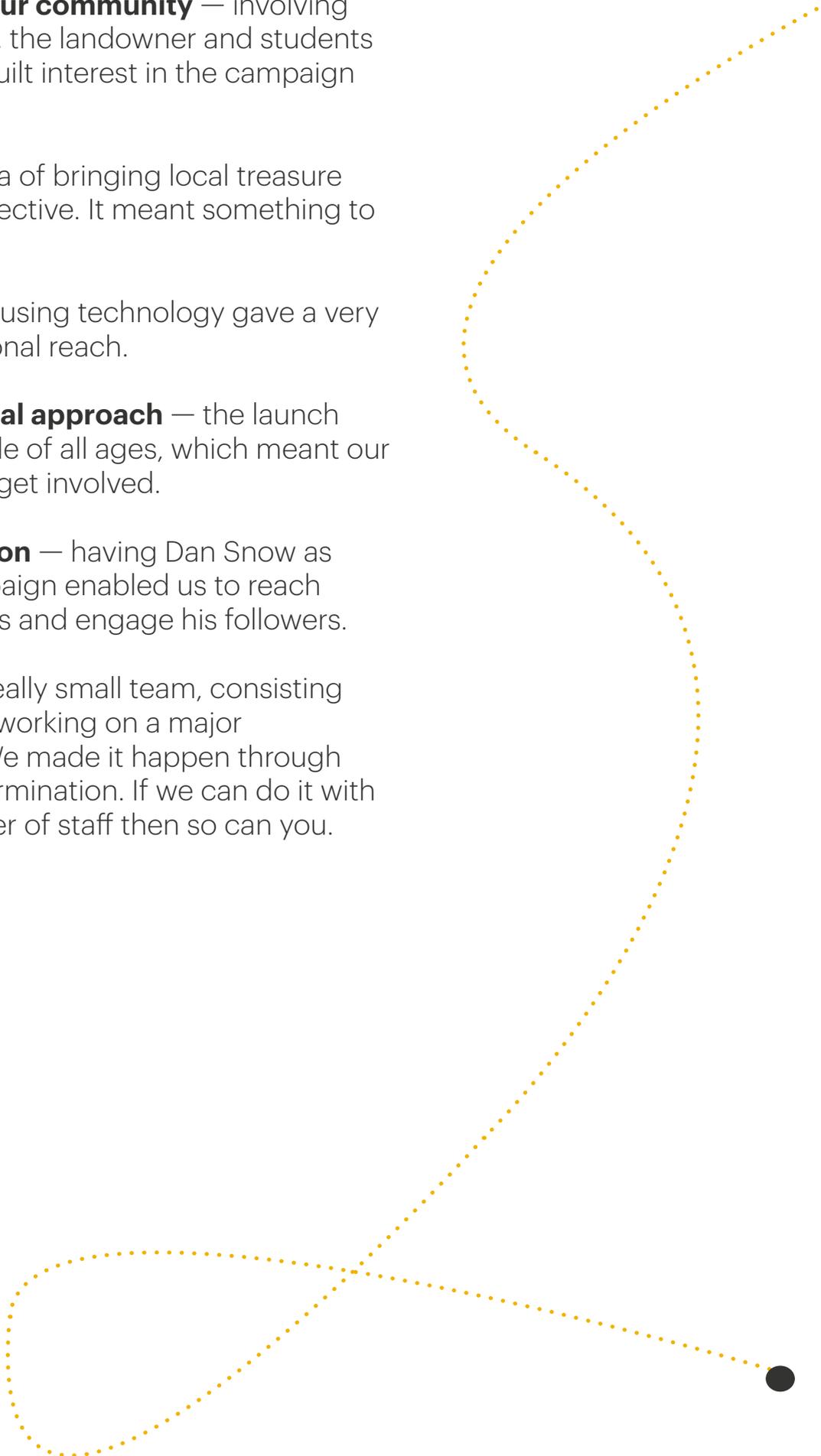
Keep it simple — the idea of bringing local treasure home was simple and effective. It meant something to our community.

Embrace technology — using technology gave a very local project an international reach.

Take an intergenerational approach — the launch events appealed to people of all ages, which meant our whole community could get involved.

Find a celebrity champion — having Dan Snow as a champion for the campaign enabled us to reach beyond our own networks and engage his followers.

Be positive — we are a really small team, consisting mainly of part-time staff, working on a major transformation project. We made it happen through positive energy and determination. If we can do it with only one full-time member of staff then so can you.





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