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Providing intelligence through web

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Agenda

1. Aims
2. Introduction & Welcomes
3. Who are Oblongata
4. Context & Challenges
5. Considerations
6. Building for Success
7. Scaling With Your Technology
8. Round Up

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Aims

INNOVATION INSPIRATION

PRACTICAL IDEAS

WHERE TO BEGIN ON YOUR JOURNEY

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Introduction

Presentation by Andrew Wiltshire, Managing Director Oblongata

Career Experience

- 20+ Years in;
  - Commercial Growth
  - Business Strategy
  - Client Relationship Management
- Focus on technology
- International client experience

Trustee at Parkside Aldershot, a registered charity that provides support services for children and adults learning disabilities living in Hampshire, Surrey and surrounding areas.

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Who Are Oblongata

- Digital agency specialising in development within the third sector

CMS Development
CRM Integration
SEO Optimisation
Front End Design
Copy Writing & Content
Digital Ecosystem Integration

- Born out of a desire to create impactful change through the use of technology
- Core Business Pillars;

Innovation **Sustainability** **Accessibility**

- Invest our time in working with our clients collaboratively
- Look to organizational synergy with shared values to build relationships for the long term

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Context

The Pandemic to 2024

Increased Demand

Reduced Donation

Limited Resources

Source: NCVO Almanac 2023

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The Pandemic to 2024

- Witnessed the **‘perfect storm’** over the last four years
- Beginning in earnest with the Covid Pandemic through to the cost of living crisis and squeeze on public finances, charitable donations have declined along with the reduction in the number of charities operating in the UK.
- In 2020/21 – 1% **Decline** in charitable organisations (In line with 2018/19 levels)*
- 84% of charities have seen costs (excluding salaries) increase by at least 5% in the last year. 46% have seen costs rise by over 10% **
- The pandemic exacerbated the issues
  I. 91% of Charities reported financial difficulties
  II. 4,300 Closures

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Source: *NCVO Almanac 2023 **Kreston Global – UK Charities Report 2023

The Pandemic to 2024

- The affects have been **disproportionate**
- Smaller Charities experienced greater issues, with the most concentrated number of closures experienced in charities with turnover of less than £100,000 pa
- Charities with <£100,000 in revenue declined from 88% of the sector in 2000/1 to 80% now*
- Newly registered organisations dipped below the average during and post pandemic
- Cost of Living Crisis has further put pressures on charities with average disposable income decreasing in direct correlation with reduced household donations
- 2022 saw an **INCREASE** in closures at 5,500.

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Source: *NCVO Almanac 2023

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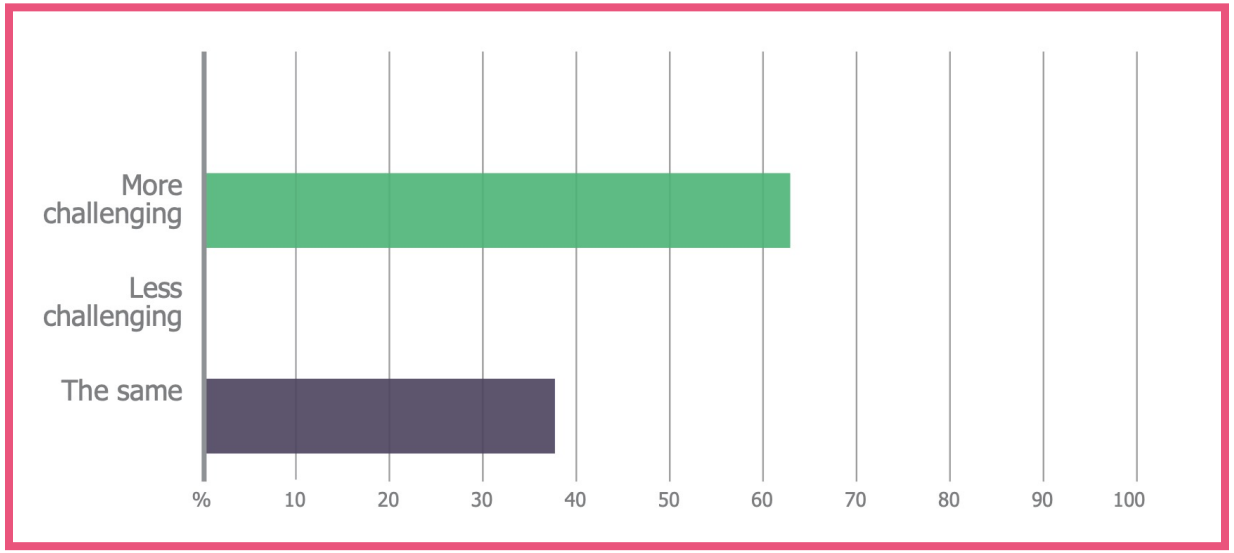
The Pandemic to 2024

- Staff recruitment has become more challenging
- 64% of Charities in the survey said it had become more difficult to recruit and retain staff now
- Increase in National Living Wage has further increased costs to charitable organisations



Source: Kreston Global – UK Charities Report 2023

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Wider Socio-Economic Context

£13bn lost from local authority funding to charities since 2010

28% of Charities that work with councils expect funding to fall further

Source: Pro Bono Economics & Nottingham Trent University Report, Feb 2024

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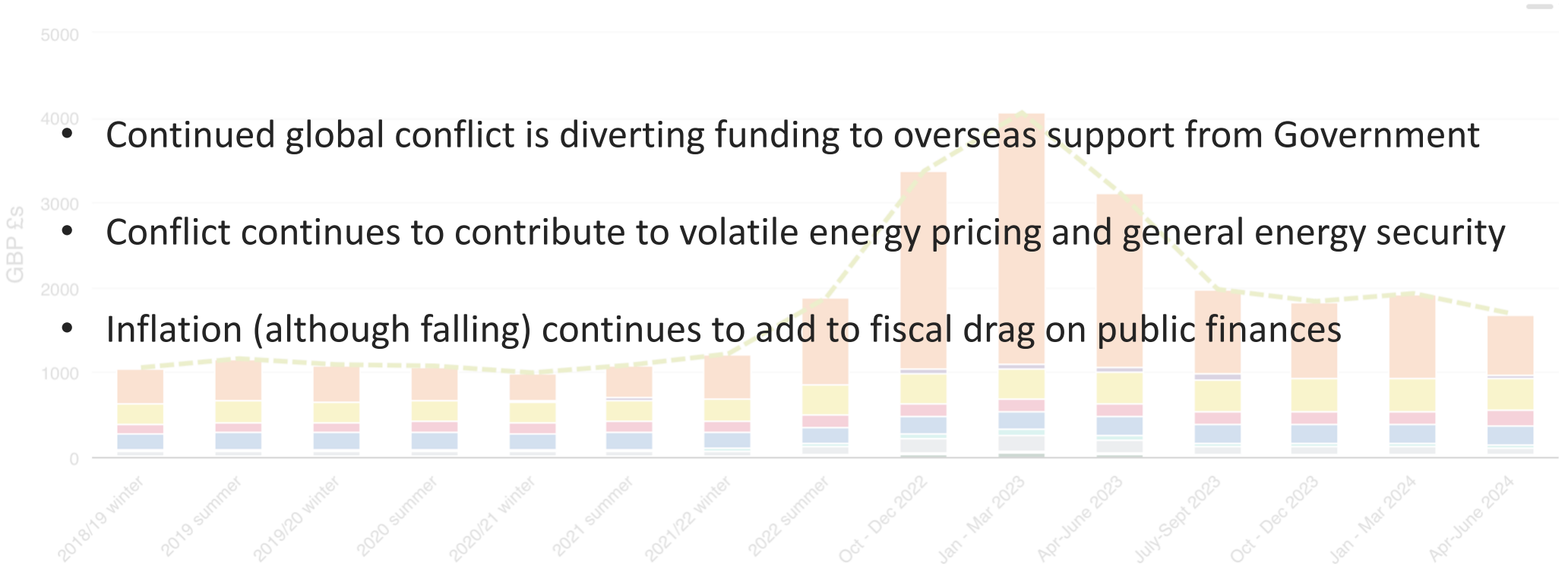
Wider Socio-Economic Context



- Continued global conflict is diverting funding to overseas support from Government
- Conflict continues to contribute to volatile energy pricing and general energy security
- Inflation (although falling) continues to add to fiscal drag on public finances

Source: Ofgem

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Considerations

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Considerations for Mitigation

IMPACT

COMMUNICATION

HARMONISATION

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Impact

Design **Accessibility** **Connection**

INNOVATION

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Impact

Design Accessibility Connection

INNOVATION

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Design

“We eat first with our eyes” - Apicius, 1st Century Roman Gourmand

- A key component of *any* website is design
- Successfully blending style with the businesses’ personality and ethos
- In a busy world, full of people who are time poor, ease of navigation, strong brand style and clear call to action(s) are key

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Design

A Case In Point

- Lifelites approached us to **review** their website design and **provide recommendations**
- It had been identified that in its current guise the the current website;
  - **Didn’t create an impact**
  - **Had a dated look and feel**
  - **Doesn’t capture and embody who they are and the work they do**
- We supplied a report of our findings along with conceptual designs

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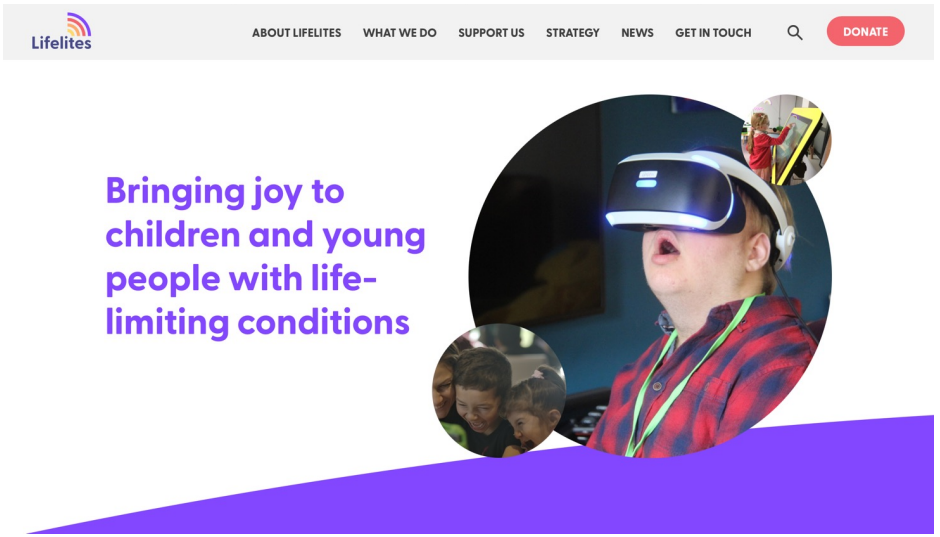
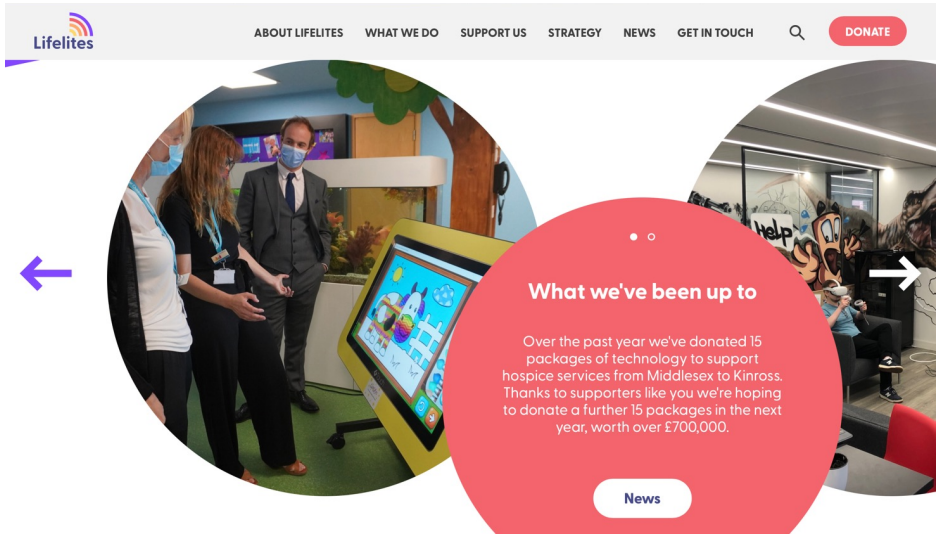
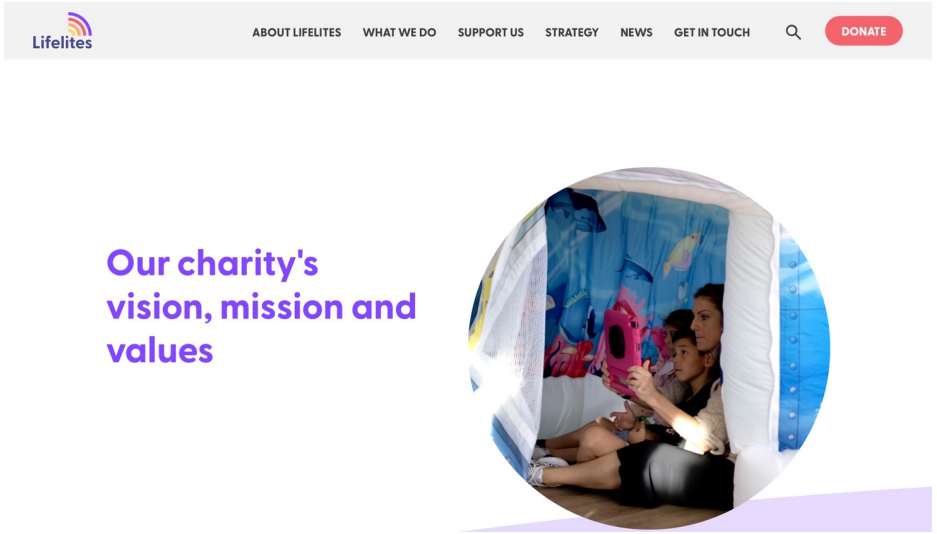
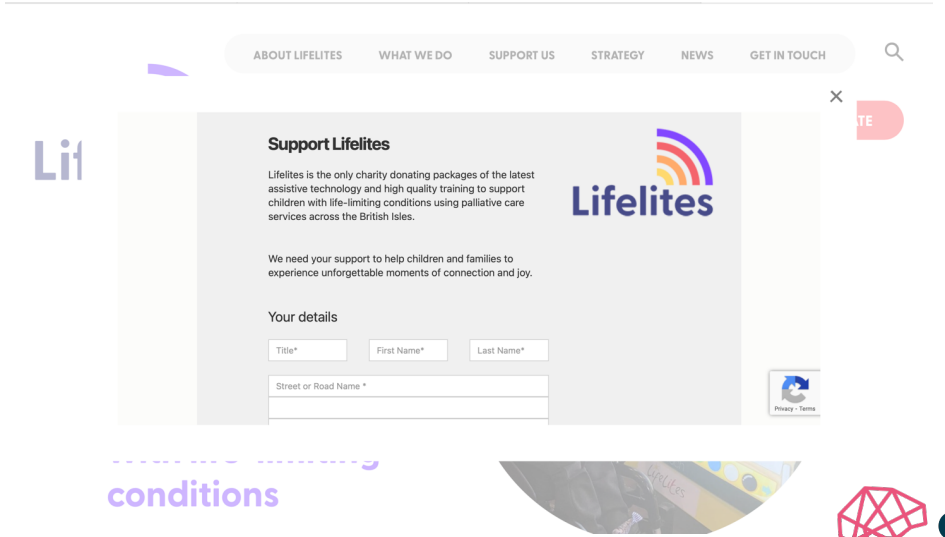
Design









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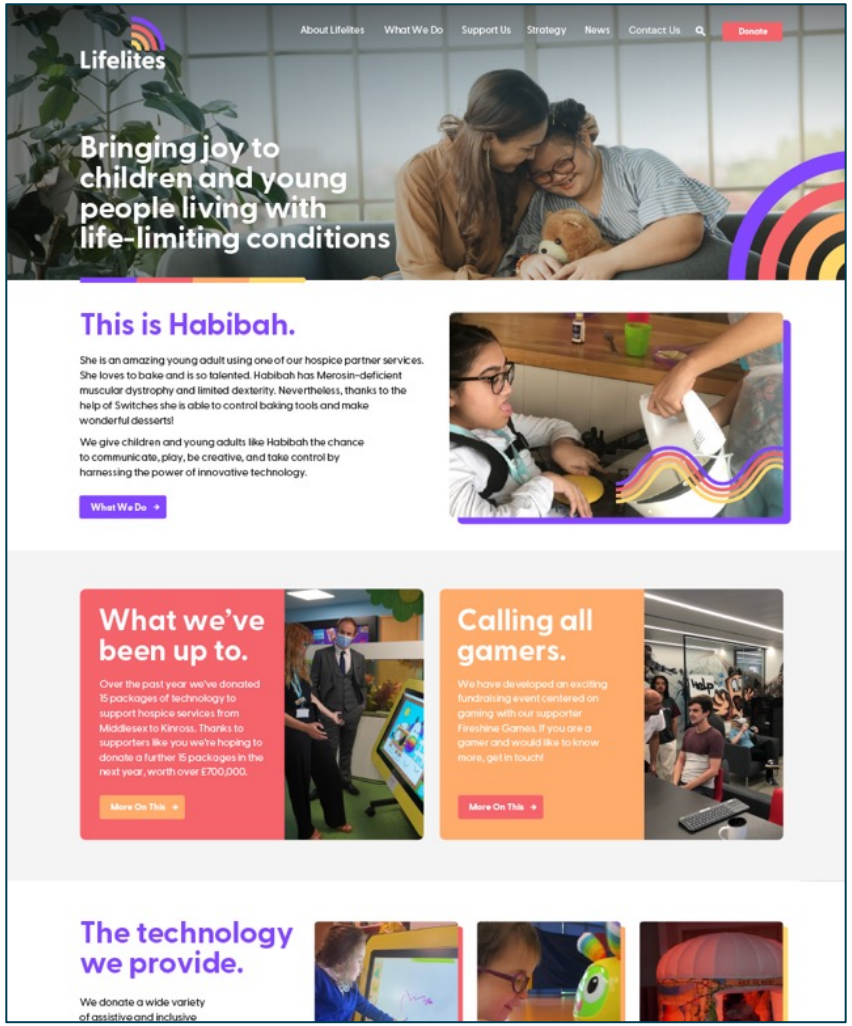

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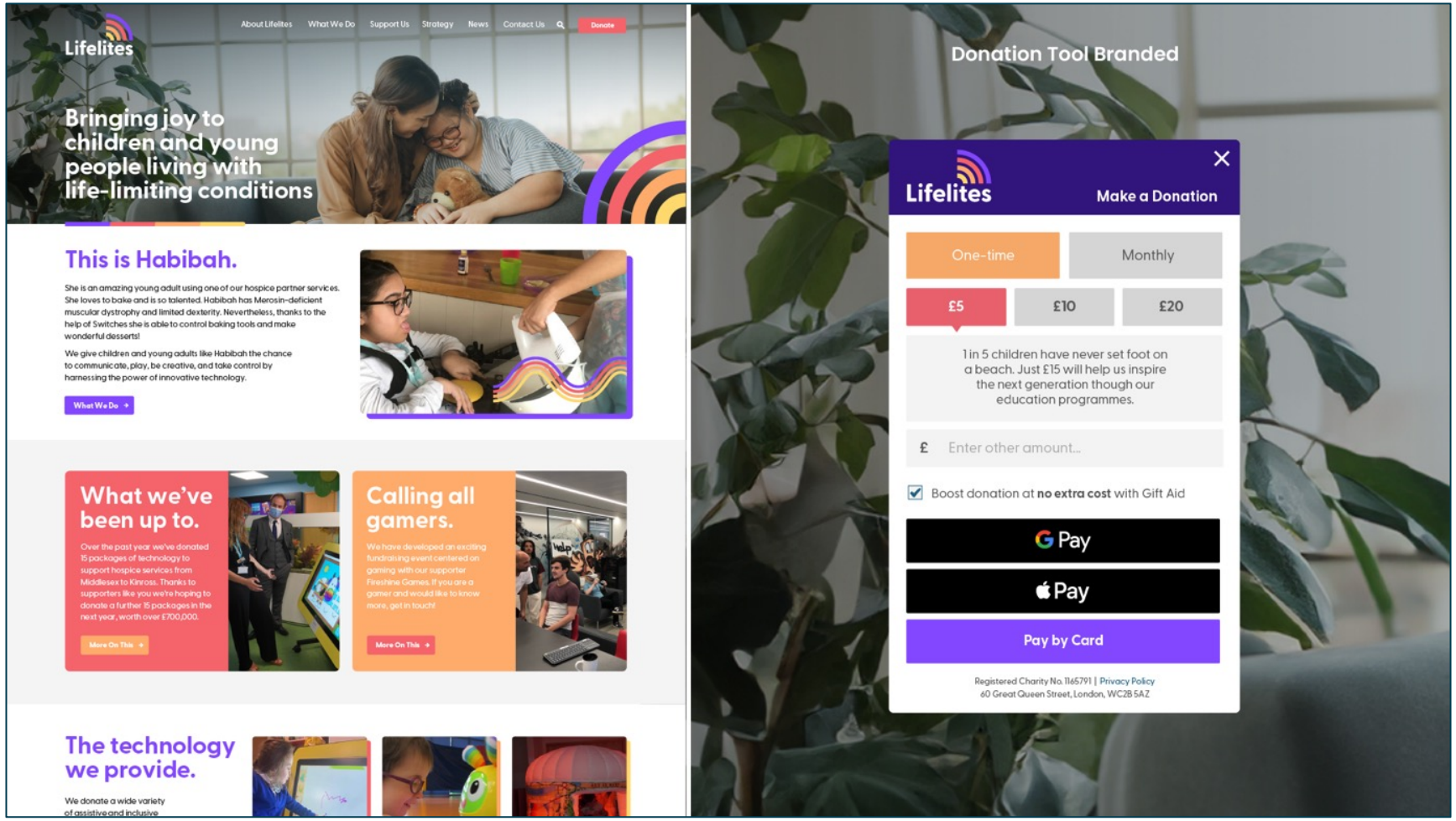

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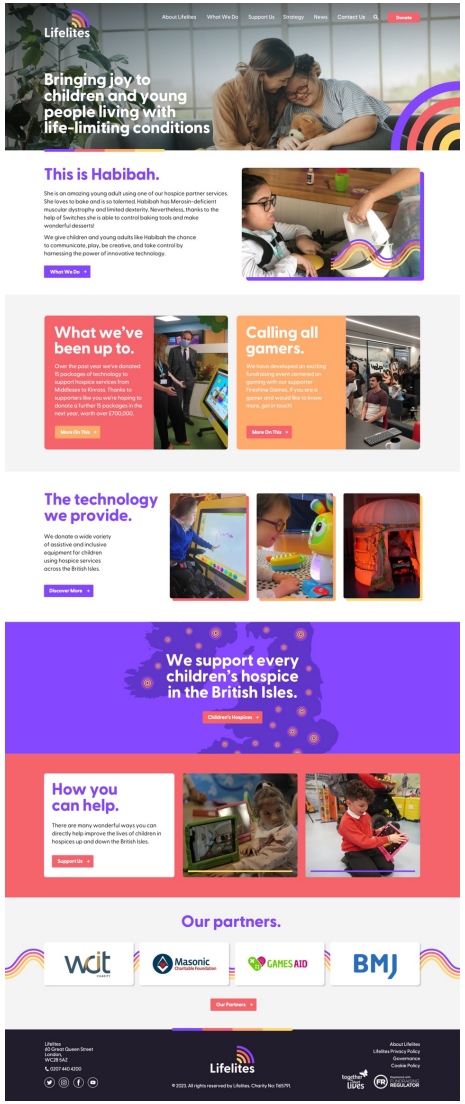

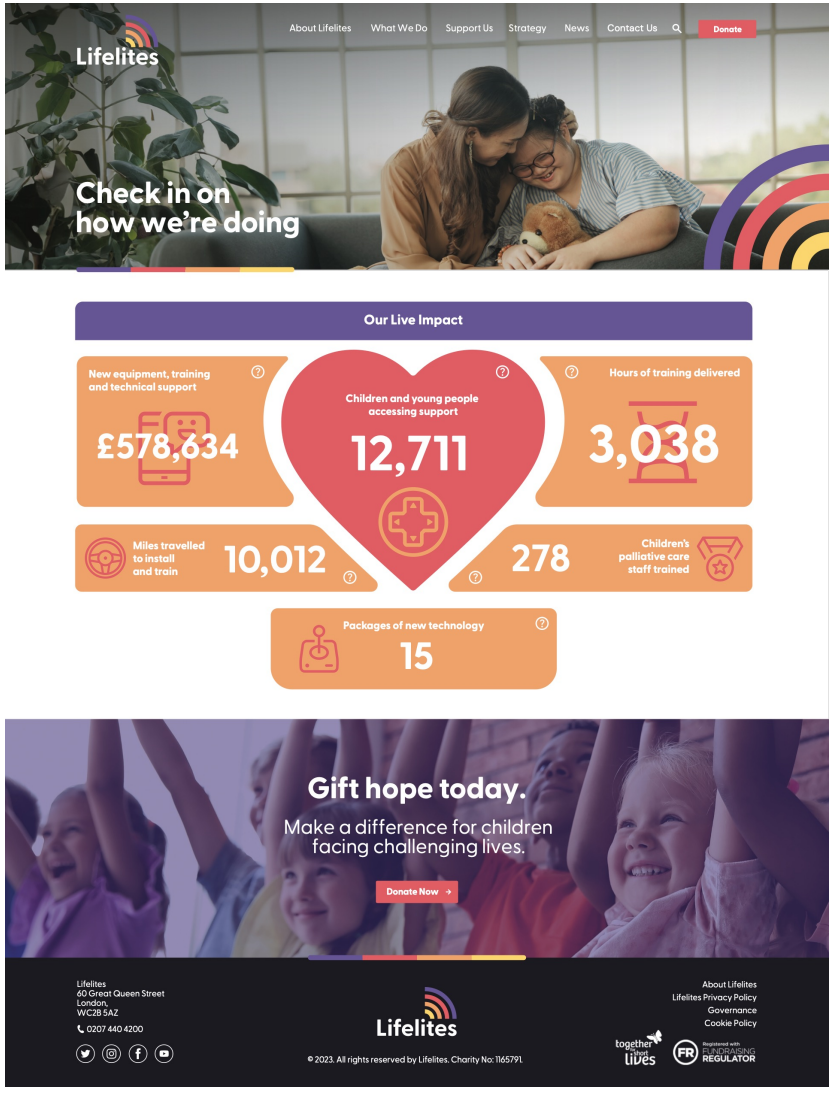

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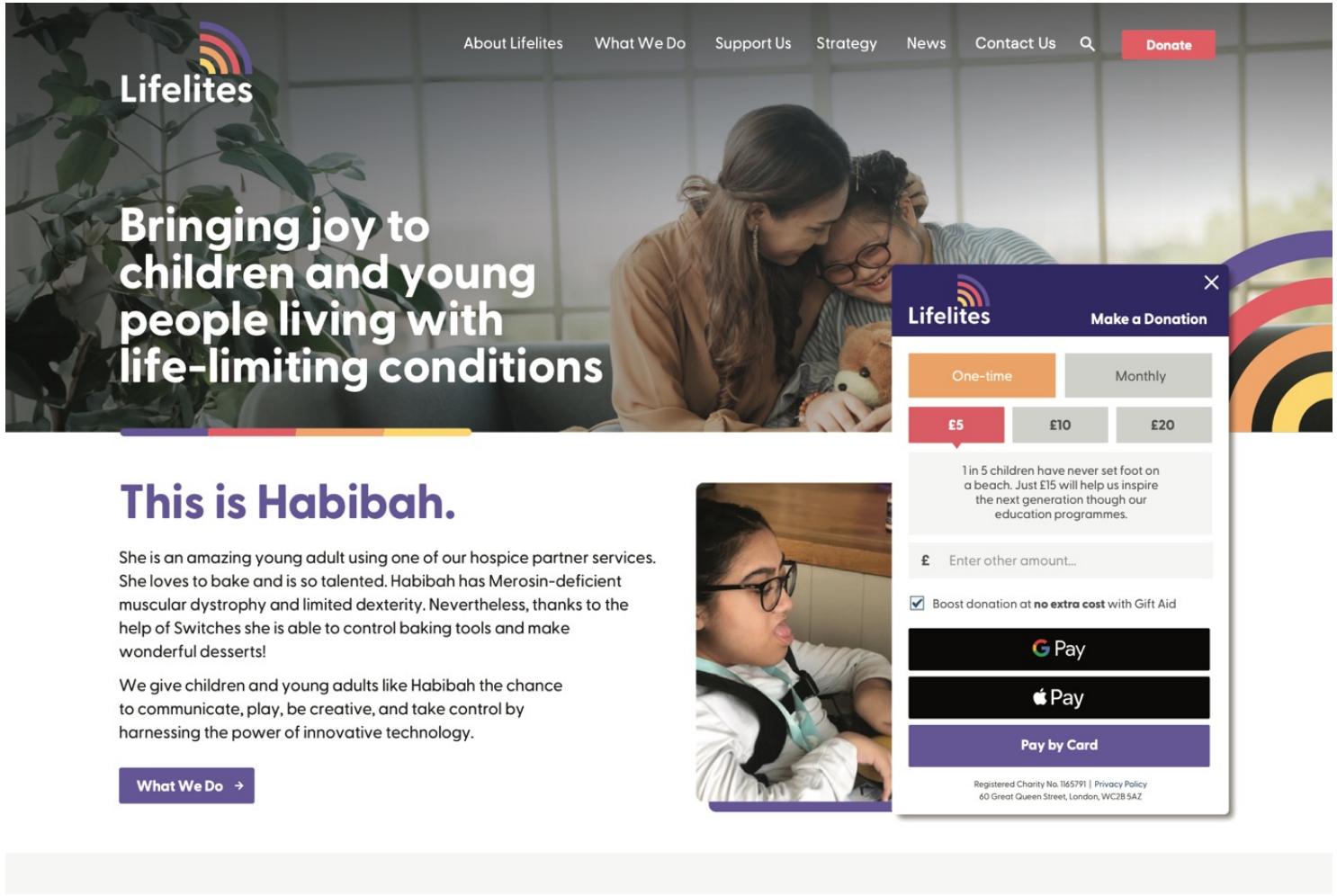
Design



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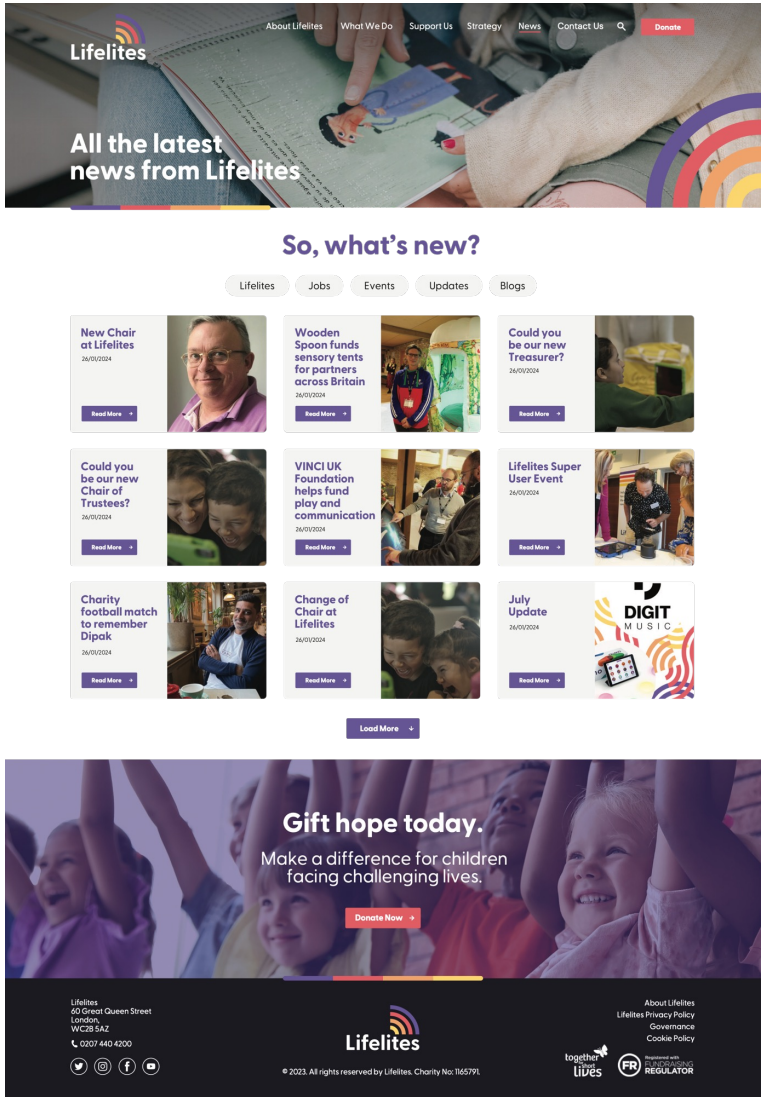

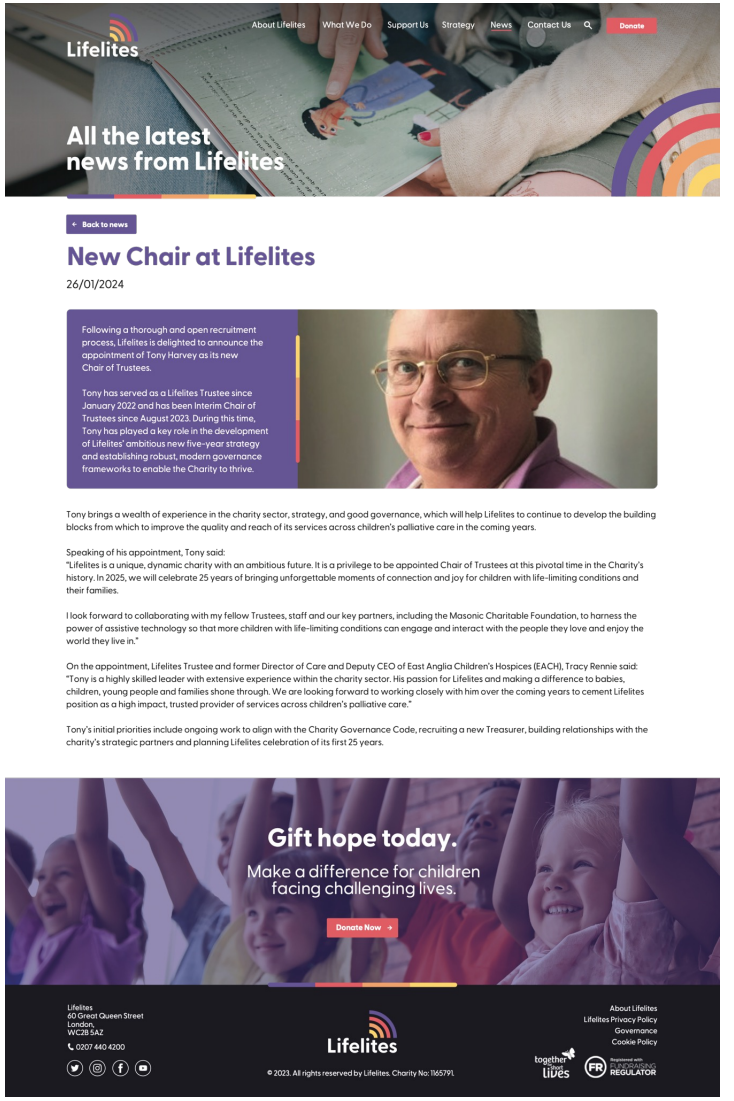

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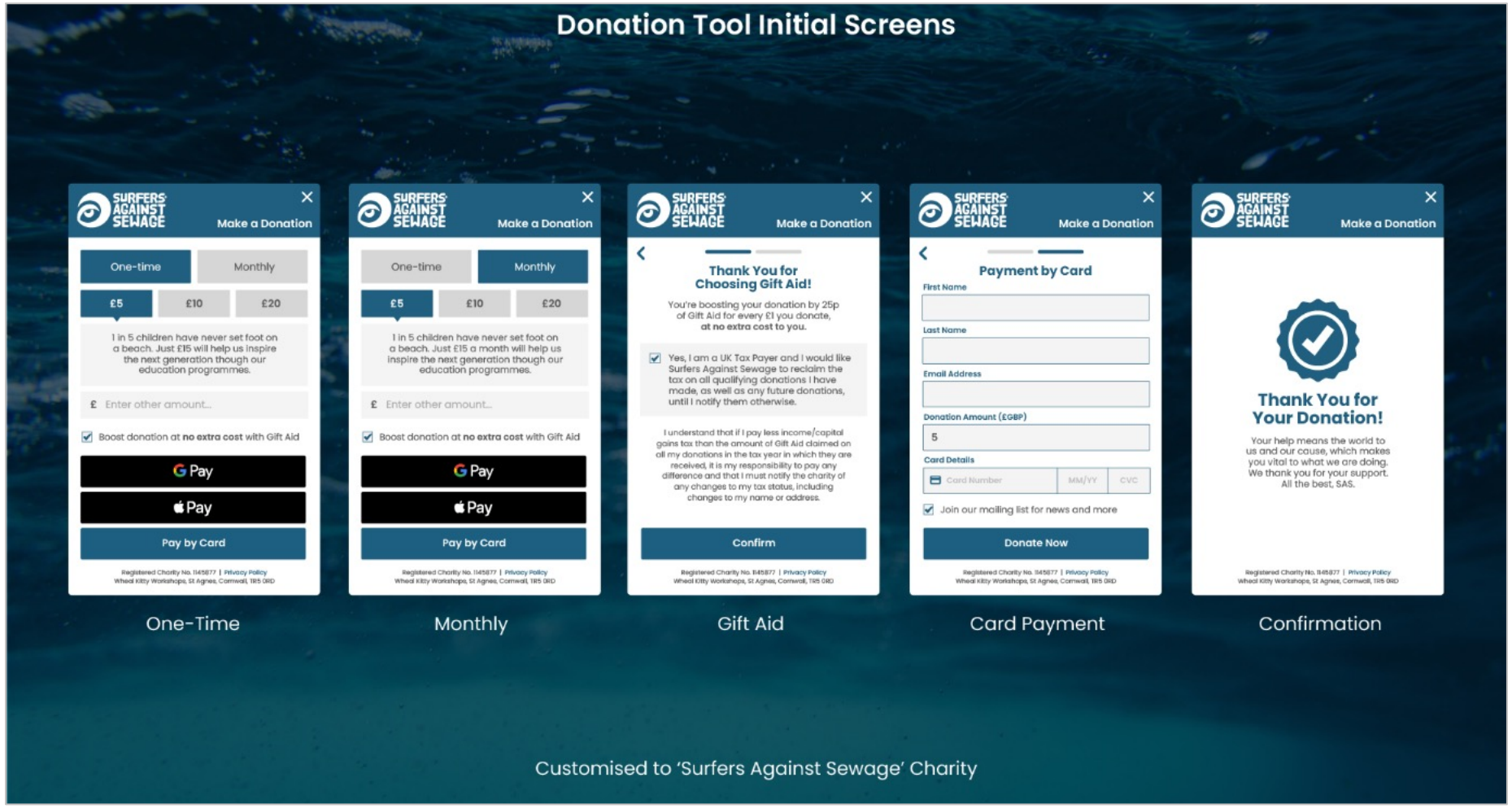
Design Innovation – Custom Donation Tool



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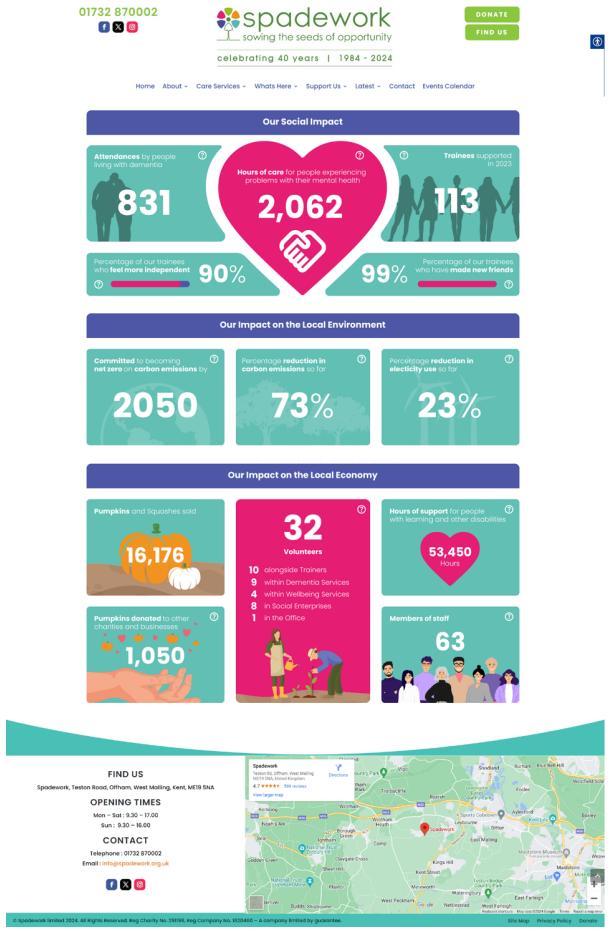
Design – Innovation

- Design through innovation can elevate digital properties to create lasting impact – This *doesn't* have to mean reinventing the wheel
- Subtle innovation which increases your websites impact through stylistic change and modernisation can increase user experience
- With more households finding themselves with less disposable income, donating to charities becomes a bigger consideration**. Bringing a real time, tangible impact to the users donation offers further opportunity to demonstrate the power of their donation.**
- Design innovation can also be a force for good for the environment. Technology can allow you to offer users the opportunity to change the intensity of images on your website.
- Fewer high resolution images loading **MEANS** reduced computing > reduced energy consumption > less CO_2



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Impact

Design **Accessibility** Connection

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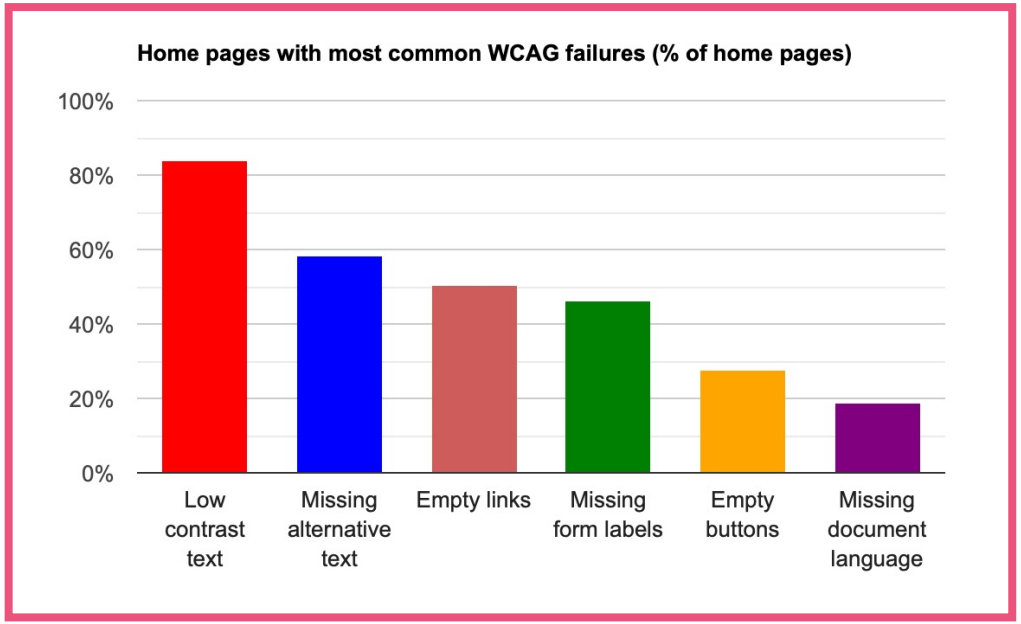
Accessibility

- Impact is not limited to style and design
- Creating positive impact by ensuring accessibility is hugely important
- Accessibility ensures an inclusive online experience, breaking down barriers and enabling individuals with disabilities to engage fully with digital content
- Ensuring web accessibility;
  Enhances customer engagement and experience
  Delivers legislative requirements
  Creates positive consumer impact
  Demonstrates the organisation is forward-looking and customer-centric.
- Features such as resizable text, intuitive navigation, and compatibility with screen readers are becoming standard practices. As a result, the user experience is improving for everyone, not just those with disabilities.

Accessibility – The Numbers

- 96.3% of Home pages in 2023 had **detectible homepage accessibility errors**
- -0.5% YoY (96.8% in 2022)
- The number of WCAG errors detected has **only declined 1.5% in 4 Years** (2019 – 2023)



Source: webAim.org 2023 Report

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Accessibility – Innovation

- Utilise on page scanning technology. OPST delivers automated reports (frequency set to user requirements) highlighting accessibility failures.
- This means solutions can be applied quickly ensuring that your website is truly open to everyone.
- Accessibility first consideration to digital design and implementation

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Accessibility – Innovation

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE WORLD OF ACCESSIBILITY

- Playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of accessibility
- Artificial Intelligence is poised to revolutionise digital accessibility
- It has the power to meet existing challenges and bridging the gap between technology and users with disabilities.
- AI-driven technologies like speech recognition, natural language processing, and image recognition improve communication and interaction for individuals with disabilities.

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Impact

Design

Accessibility

Connection

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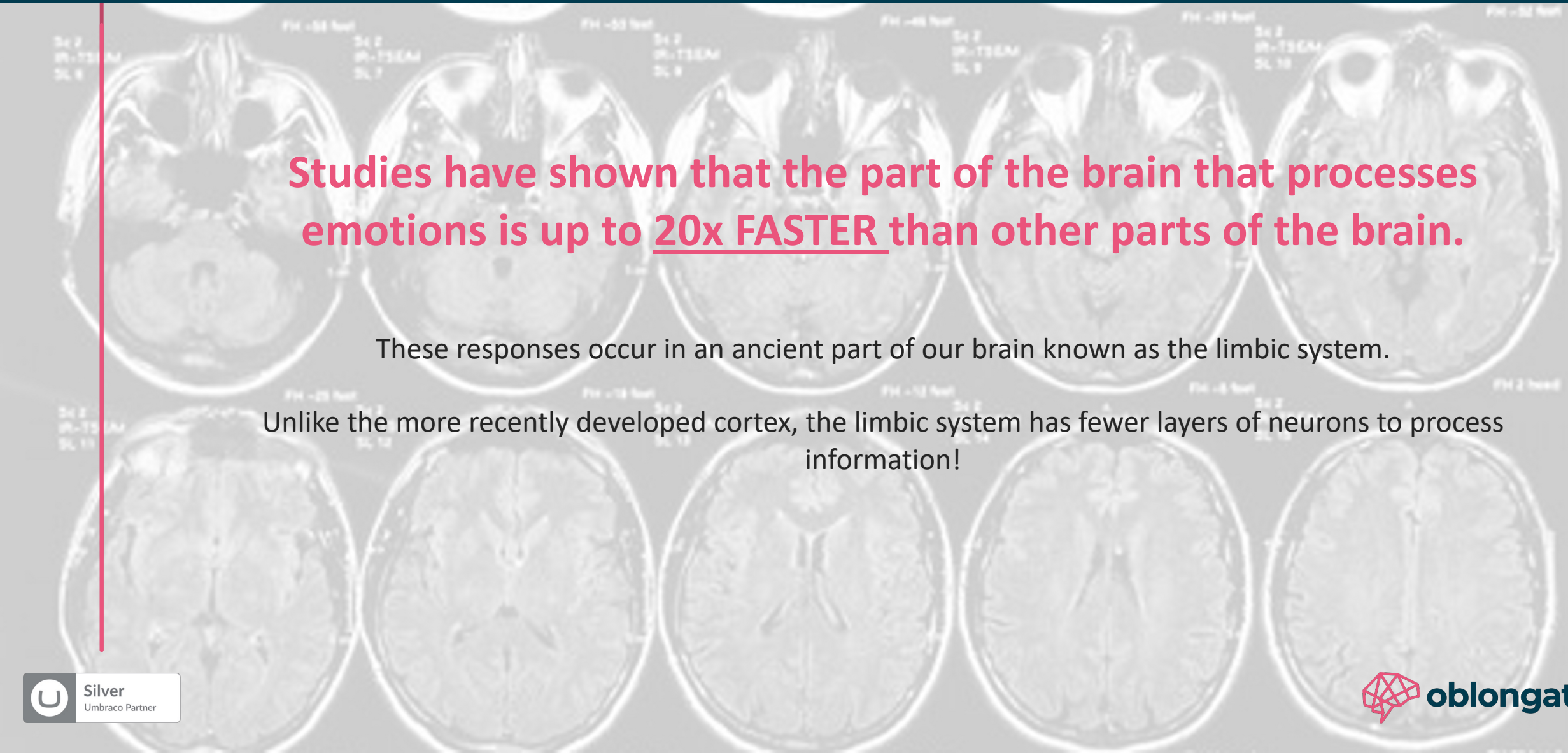
Connection



Studies have shown that the part of the brain that processes emotions is up to 20x FASTER than other parts of the brain.

These responses occur in an ancient part of our brain known as the limbic system.

Unlike the more recently developed cortex, the limbic system has fewer layers of neurons to process information!

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Connection

- When donors feel emotionally invested in a cause, they are more likely to give generously and to continue giving over time.

- **Q. What is your favourite film?**
- **Q. Why is it your favourite?**

- **A. Chances are it includes one or more of: A powerful story that invokes a wide variety of emotions, vivid and emotive imagery or it resonates on an emotional level to you.**

- The same can be done when telling a story about your organisation or cause while fundraising

- Your cause is more likely to be noticed and remembered by donors with emotional connections.

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Connective – Innovation

- Remember, the connection you make (or seek to make), should be accessible to **ALL**
- Utilise imagery and rich media to help deliver your emotional messages - Consider **Hero Visuals**
- *Personalised and Contextual Experiences* – through data capture (GDPR compliant and with associated consents), websites are able to **curate experiences for the user**, offering more vibrant website experiences attuned to the needs of the individual.

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Communication

Communication

AUTHENTIC

CONSISTENT

ENGAGING

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Communication

- The first written communication was in the form of marks and symbols – recorded more than **9,000 years ago**
- Communication, in many forms, remains an integral part of both personal and professional lives
- The ability to effectively communicate to your audience is crucial in helping **build the emotional connection** and rapport
- Digital estates must be able to **effectively** build communication with your audience

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Communication – Authenticity

- Your story is **unique to you** and your organisation
- Design should be complemented and augmented by communication that demonstrates the unique personality of charity and the work you do

authentic

/ɔːˈθɛntɪk/
adjective
1.1.
of undisputed origin and not a copy; genuine

- Stay **true to who you are, what you do and why you do it**

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Communication – Consistency

- All copy should be from one source and be derived from your top line mission and values
- Ask yourself the following questions for each piece of copy;

    1. *Does this succinctly put my message across?*
    2. *Does it reflect the personality of my organisation?*
    3. *Does it align to our missions and values?*

- If any of the above are a No, then **CHANGE** it.

“In everything the organisation does, owns and produces it should project a clear idea of what it is. This is achieved by consistency in purpose, performance and appearance.”

Wally Olins

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Communication – Consistency

- Consistency also takes the form of **frequency**
- Utilising your CRM, messaging should be consistently disseminated to your audience
- Maximise the data capture (following GDPR regulations) and utilise in consistent communications **to increase donor frequency**
- External communications should also be **consistent with messaging on your website and within your CMS**
- Whilst digital estate properties might seem disparate systems, **ensuring that they work in harmony, with you, not against you** is incredibly important

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Communication – Engaging

- The average attention span of someone in Generation Z is only **8 Seconds**
- Building on the authenticity and consistency, communication to your audience should be engaging
- Aligned to design, the use of imagery and rich media are powerful tools in story telling and information delivery
- With limited time, your communication(s) to your audience needs to engage and envoke an emotional response – **QUICKLY**
- The Rules of Engagement:

Mental Engagement

Linguistic Engagement

Physical Engagement

Source: Harvard Business Review

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Harmonisation

Harmonisation

E-Commerce

Event Management

Donation Funnel

CRM

CMS

Fundraising Integration

Mail Integration

Data Storage

HR & Finance

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Harmonisation

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Building for Success

Building for Success

- So far
  Challenges and headwinds
  Areas for mitigation

- Next up;
  Starting your transformation
  How & When
  Looking to the future

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Building for Success

Event Management

E-Commerce

Donation Funnel

CRM

CMS

Fundraising Integration

Mail Integration

Data Storage

HR & Finance

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Building for Success

- Digital transformation is **FAR** from a straight line process
- Likely that the current set up “works”
- Often there are budgetary and other constraints

Increased Demand **Reduced Donation** **Limited Resources**

- The pathway can be sequential, fitting around budget, resource and time lines to achieve the end goals

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Building for Success – Technology

- Your systems must work for you

- Isolate each software platform in your ecosystem and ask 3 key questions:
  Does it deliver what I need it to (rich media, content updates, integration of other systems)?
  Does it offer me the flexibility to change, edit, integrate etc?
  Will it scale with my organisation?

The most common challenges we see with clients/organisations are;

1. Site Navigation
2. Lack of any call to action
3. Poor Design
4. Disjointed copy
5. User Friction

- The most frequent issue we see with our clients at Oblongata is user friction, especially within the Donation Process/Funnel

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Building for Success – Technology

Client X

- Worked with one client who was adept at delivering external communications to their target audience via their CRM and social media channels

- Client X, on one particularly successful campaign, drove thousands of visitors to their website

However, it was identified that;

- Client X had adopted a design that didn't reflect the organisations work and personality
- Site navigation was awkward and poorly designed
- Limited use of imagery and rich media to convey the incredible work they do
- No clear call to action
- A donation funnel that put up barriers to conversion

Which meant……

Building for Success – Technology

c.15,000

Visitors to the website

c.10

Visitors went on to donate

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Building for Success – Technology

Accessibility

Design

Connection

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Building for Success – Technology

Accessibility

- The donation journey for the user was poor
- Took the donor off site, decreasing trust
- Limited functionaility commensurate with donation tools (Gift Aid, One Off/Monthly payments etc)
- The donation experience wasn’t accessible to the user

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Building for Success – Implementation

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Building for Success – Implementation

- Understanding the role each of your systems is the first step in identifying where to start making any changes to remove friction and harmonise your digital ecosystem

- Already answered these key questions;

  - ***Does it deliver what I need it to (rich media, content updates, integration of other systems)?***
  - ***Does it offer me the flexibility to change, scale etc?***
  - ***Will it scale with my organisation?***

- The next step is to prioritise which of the areas that need to be evolved, are done so and **when**

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Building for Success – Implementation

- Break it down into project phases
- 3-5 Phases
- Overlayed with a goal time line target – **Be realistic**
- Set KPI's
- Align to your strategic plan
- Define the scope of your requirements and **set a budget**
- Look to gain value by POC and/or show site opportunities from suppliers

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Connective – Innovation

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Scaling with your technology

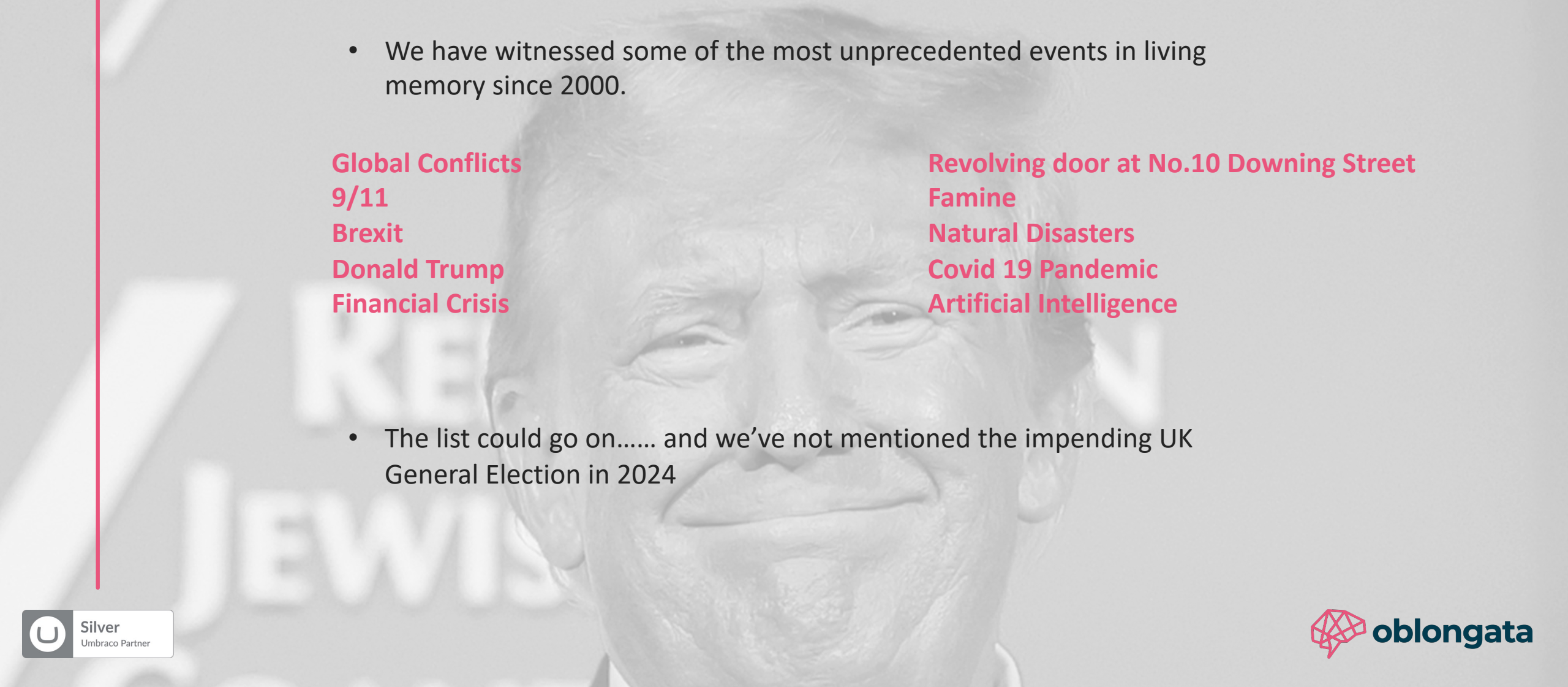
Scaling with your technology

- We have witnessed some of the most unprecedented events in living memory since 2000.

Global Conflicts
9/11
Brexit
Donald Trump
Financial Crisis

Revolving door at No.10 Downing Street
Famine
Natural Disasters
Covid 19 Pandemic
Artificial Intelligence

- The list could go on…… and we've not mentioned the impending UK General Election in 2024



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Scaling with your technology

- Just like your organisation, the technology you use will evolve
- The concept of future proof is **FALSE**
- Technology has, and will, continue to rapidly change in a rapidly changing world
- It is important that the digital properties within your digital estate meet, as a minimum, the following critieria
    - ***Does it meet my needs now?***
    - ***Will it give me >3 years of service?***
    - ***Does it have the capacity to evolve during that initial 3 years?***
    - ***Can it scale with me from Year 1 to Year 3?***
- If your digital properties are not ticking these key metrics then it is likely that any investment in services and the hard cost of platforms will mount up

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Scaling with your technology

INTEROGATE

RESEARCH

EXECUTE

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Round Up

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Round Up

- We live in **globally uncertain times**
- There is **continued** uncertainty
- There are steps that can be taken to mitigate the challenges; **IMPACT, COMMUNICATION, HARMONISATION**
- The technology you use is often **fragmented**
- Its important to have a cohesive digital ecosystem – now and in the future
- The path is **NOT** linear

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Round Up

- Do not be afraid to **INTEROGATE** the technology you use – is it the right fit? Does it 'works' ***actually*** work for you!
- Who ever tells you that technology is **'Future Proof'** is being **economical with the truth**
- Chart a manageable course that works for you and your organisation
- Set a clear pathway and budget for your goals and have metrics for success
- Understand that like your organisation, technology **EVOLVES**
- Have a **realistic** shelf life for the technology/project that is aligned to your strategic plan

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Aims – Round Up

INNOVATION INSPIRATION

PRACTICAL IDEAS

WHERE TO BEGIN ON YOUR JOURNEY

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“The best way to predict the future is to create it.”

Abraham Lincoln

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