

How to give it

Peter Mallinson



Peter Mallinson, 52, heads the London office of alternative investments specialist CDK Group LLC. He is a vice-president of Save the Children UK, a governor of Wellington College, chairman of the Tennis and Rackets Association and a trustee of the charity consultancy and think-tank New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) (www.philanthropycapital.org).

What is the first charity you can recall supporting?
Other than sponsored walks at school for Guide Dogs for the Blind and suchlike, the first one I supported was the Save the Children's tennis

tournament about 25 years ago. That initiative has now raised about £25m.

Which cause do you feel most passionately about?

Education. That's a broad concept, ranging in my case from supporting schools and universities – the ones I went to and others – but also my interests in Africa are a lot to do with children's education. Education is critical in ensuring the world can continue to support itself and grow, particularly in the developing world. It improves decisions and makes conflict less likely.

Do you ensure that your donations are used effectively?

As well as helping charities to operate more efficiently, NPC encourages them to communicate to donors where donations have gone. So my involvement with NPC has made me much more questioning of charities, and I support them because it helps others to do the same

Why do people give to charity?

First, whoever you are, there are always people who are worse off than you. It's basic human nature to want to help in some way. Second, I think we enjoy a connection to a group, be that a local theatre or a hospice. Third, just the act of giving itself, as well as public recognition for it, makes one feel better.

What do you get out of your giving?

I like being involved with a third strand of activity, away from business or family. I also get comfort from seeing the results and understanding the impact of giving, either physically or through reports.

Have you ever regretted supporting a charity?

With smaller donations solicited by friends, I have regretted sometimes that I haven't guided them to seek deeper analysis of the charities they support. But I don't regret the giving itself.

Why do private schools enjoy the benefits of being classed as charities?

Schools like Wellington were set up as charities by philanthropists to educate both better-off and less well-off children. At Wellington it was for the sons of army personnel. Some schools drifted away from the core rationale but I think there has been a discernible shift back in the past decade: not just due to pressure from the Charity Commission. Many schools are involving themselves in the community, giving bursaries to less well-off children and sponsoring academies. Also, I think public schools are, like some of the great art institutions, a strength of this country.

Interview by Angus Watson
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