

TIMEBANKING IN ACTION

Stories From Our
Members & The Media



TIMEBANKING CONNECTING COMMUNITY SUPPORT WITH PEOPLE EXPERIENCING DISABILITY & ISOLATION

DERBYSHIRE TIME SWAP

Mahes, a full-time carer, dedicates her time to looking after her husband, Graham, who is completely blind. They actively engage in timebanking, finding immense value in the assistance they receive in return. Mahes is deeply involved in shaping the commissioning and policies of Derbyshire County Council, aiming to support carers within the community. Her efforts in this regard earn her time, which she utilises to seek support for both herself and her husband at home.

The aid they have received from Time Swap encompasses various tasks such as gardening, DIY assistance, and house cleaning. Additionally, Time Swap members kindly accompany Graham on brief walks when he is able, engaging in conversations and reading to him, thereby granting Mahes much-needed respite and the opportunity to attend to other matters.

Reflecting on their experiences, Mahes expressed,

 The support Graham receives through Time Swap is contingent upon my contributed hours, although currently, Derbyshire Time Swap does not expect any contributions from him. However, what he truly cherishes is the compassion shown by Time Swap members, who generously offer their time to assist both of us and have cultivated friendly relationships with us. In the past, when Graham's mobility was not as limited, members took him for short walks, engaged in conversations, read to him, and even conducted chair-based exercises. One member even provided a reclining chair, and we are hopeful that others may offer complementary therapies. Moreover, it provides reassurance to know that if I fall ill, a member might step in to ensure that Graham attends his medical appointments. 

Mahes recognises the positive impact of timebanking, stating,

“ It is a wonderful way to foster friendships and build communities, benefiting isolated and vulnerable members. ”



TIME BANK THURROCK

Time Bank Thurrock received a request for assistance in supporting a gentleman in his 60s, who had been confined to his bed for a span of eight years and had recently undergone the amputation of both legs. Although he had been assigned an adapted residence, he lacked the means to transport himself or his possessions, as he had no support from friends or family. His circumstances were truly dire.



To address this urgent situation, an email was dispatched to all members of Time Bank Thurrock, asking for helpers. Remarkably, within just ten minutes, several responses offering assistance were received. Time Bank members promptly visited the gentleman to assist in sorting through his belongings, returning another day to take care of the packing process.

Recognising the urgency and significance of the situation, a local organisation dedicated to supporting individuals with special needs generously provided a van and driver for the day, enabling the Time Bank to facilitate the gentleman's move. On the designated day, Time Bank members, accompanied by representatives from a local church, gathered at the property, diligently loading the gentleman's possessions onto the van before settling him into his new apartment.

Notably, one of the Time Bank members who contributed to the move happened to be acquainted with an existing resident within the same block of flats. Seizing this opportunity, the Time Bank member organised a heartwarming "get together" to extend a warm welcome to the gentleman in his new home and community. In addition, the Time Bank member began visiting David on a weekly basis, providing companionship and support. This act of kindness also proved mutually beneficial, as the Time Bank member had previously been forced to give up employment due to health concerns - and a friendship was born.

In a further display of community compassion, the resident living in the block of flats prepared a Christmas dinner for David, marking the first festive meal he had enjoyed in five long years. This gesture reaffirmed his sense of belonging and integration within the community.

When queried about his experience, David expressed deep gratitude for the impact that Time Bank Thurrock had made on his life. **David said,**

 During all those years confined to my bed, I believed nobody cared, but I have come to realise that people do, even strangers. 

TENDRING TIME BANK

Jackie Wise speaks with passion about the support provided by Tendring's timebanking community to an elderly gentleman who had been blinded as a teenager. The gentleman, who had once harboured high hopes of exploring distant lands and experiencing the world as a young man in the merchant navy, had his dreams shattered by a tragic workplace accident on his very first day. The accident left him nearly blind, and for many years, he believed that his disability had permanently taken away his chance for adventure. However, upon joining his local time bank and finding guidance from Jackie, an dedicated and resourceful co-ordinator, he discovered a newfound purpose in life and rekindled his long-forgotten ambition.

With the unwavering support of the time bank, he was able to meticulously plan, organise, and embark on his journeys, visiting every continent through various cruises, including an extraordinary six-month global voyage. Now in his seventies, he has managed to regain the independence he thought was lost forever during his teenage years and he firmly thanks timebanking for making that possible.



TIMEBANKING RETURNING AGENCY TO OLDER PEOPLE

WEST WIGHT TIMEBANK

A member joined the time bank when in her 80s, seeking assistance to visit the local hairdresser. Due to her limited mobility and the unavailability of suitable volunteer services in the area, she faced difficulties, especially since her wheelchair was too heavy to be lifted into a car.

After engaging in discussions, arrangements were made by the time bank coordinator to have a wheelchair available at the hairdresser's premises, which had a steep slope. To reach the car, she relied on a walking aid from her home. This arrangement lasted for approximately six months, during which she made occasional trips to the hairdresser. However, she expressed concern about not being able to contribute anything in return, despite being reassured that there would come a time when she could make use of her strengths and give back. Sceptical about this prospect, she felt disempowered relying on caregivers who visited her home three times a day to provide assistance.

During conversations held at the hairdressing appointments, it was revealed that she had been a domestic science teacher in her younger days. The time bank had established a community garden dedicated to growing vegetables, and it became evident that the lady had valuable skills that could benefit other members. With the help of her caregiver, they located a delicious favourite recipe for a simple potato pie and transcribed it, earning time credits in the process. The recipe was then shared in a monthly newsletter, allowing members to make great use of produce from the community garden and enjoy the dish she had contributed.



TIMEBANKING IMPROVING EMPLOYABILITY & SELF-ESTEEM IN YOUNGER PEOPLE

ACTION FOR CHILDREN

Richard, an 18-year-old, dedicates himself to helping his community through active participation in his local time bank. One of his most frequent and favourite activities is mowing lawns for elderly people in the neighbourhood. To date, he has contributed a total of 48 hours of his time, and in return, he has received 9 hours of assistance taking various forms. Engaging in such endeavors has allowed Richard to acquire a variety of valuable skills and gain experiences that he says has improved his confidence to search for employment.

Richard left school at the age of 16 and strongly believes that his involvement in the time bank has been his first genuine opportunity to showcase his capabilities. He expresses deep gratitude for the help and support he has received and the opportunity to help others in return, recognising the chance it has provided him to bolster his self-esteem and develop his social skills.

Through his local Job Centre Plus network, Richard was connected with a local entrepreneur seeking to hire a member of staff for his barbershop. As a result, Richard now finds himself in a work placement and eagerly anticipates what lies ahead in his future. He emphasises that timebanking, facilitated by effective partnership collaboration, has remarkably transformed his prospects, opening up a multitude of possibilities and untapped potential.



TIMEBANKING REHABILITATING OFFENDERS

HMP & YOI AYLESBURY

Prisoners at Category C Aylesbury willingly took on peer support roles, according to David Parkinson, the Safer Prisons Hub Manager. After assuming these roles, they were informed about timebanking. Parkinson explained that this involved earning a timebanking hour for every hour they spent supporting one another. These accumulated hours were donated to Timebanking UK, which then distributed them to local individuals in need through the UK network of time banks. The positive impact of these hours on people's lives was documented and shared with the young offenders, accompanied by expressions of gratitude.

Parkinson noted,

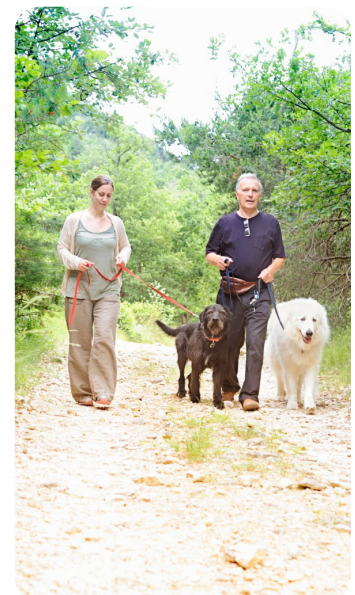
“ As young offenders, they might be less inclined to openly express their emotions and the significance of their actions. They usually respond with a simple ‘yeah, that sounds good.’ However, I believe they gain much more from this experience, developing a sense of self-worth and contributing to their community. Many prisoners have never had such an opportunity, and I think they learn about their own capabilities as individuals. ”

Some of the timebanking hours earned by the prisoners were donated to the time bank in Stratford-upon-Avon and had demonstrable value to local residents.

The hours were gifted to a member of the time bank who required surgery to remove a cancerous tumour. These hours formed part of a support package that proved invaluable when she returned home, as her ability to perform various tasks was severely limited. Other time bank members assisted her with various activities, including shopping and dog walking.

The member in question was extremely anxious before the surgery, not only due to the cancer diagnosis but also because she couldn't afford dog walkers for the recommended 12-week recovery period. Thankfully, the compassionate time bank members rallied around to support her and her beloved dogs. Since she lacked local family, the time bank's assistance was a tremendous relief.

By donating their earned time for use in the community, the young prisoners had made it possible for the recipient to benefit from support without feeling the weight of responsibility to repay with her own efforts – giving her the extra benefit of much needed peace of mind.



The time bank coordinator said

“ We extend our gratitude to those who generously contributed these hours! ”

David Parkinson made a comment that sums up how this affected the prisoners who gave their time,

“ When I explained to the young lads exactly how they had helped others, that’s when the true impact struck them. There was one lad whom I provided feedback to, and he remained silent, struggling to hold back tears. That silence says it all! ”



TIMEBANKING INSTILLING SELF-WORTH IN PEOPLE WITH EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS AND LOW INCOME

TIMEBANK SOUTH WEST (Stonehouse)

Tony, a member of the Time Bank, resided at the Ship Hostel in Stonehouse. The hostel served as a facility used by the Devon and Cornwall Food Association to distribute surplus food, preventing it from being discarded in landfills. Working alongside Stonehouse Time Bank, Tony and his companions embarked on a project to construct a greenhouse using plastic bottles. Additionally, they established a games club called the “Shed” in the garden. The entire community became actively involved in tending to the vegetable garden.

Expressing his gratitude for the local church’s provision of meals to the homeless and individuals with limited incomes, Tony expressed a desire to raise funds as a token of appreciation. With the support of the time bank, Tony pursued his fundraising efforts.

Recently, in response to a call for assistance at Soup Corner, Tony found himself occupied three days a week, engaged in tasks such as vegetable preparation, dishwashing, and table clearing. Plymouth Community Homes, the time bank’s partner, sponsored Tony to obtain a Food Safety Certificate, enabling him to contribute to the community by assisting with free Sunday roast dinners.

When asked about his thoughts on the Time Bank, Tony enthusiastically described it as “brilliant!” He regarded it as the most remarkable initiative ever undertaken in Stonehouse. Tony appreciated the opportunity it provided to step out of his flat and interact with previously unfamiliar neighbours from his community and for all the other opportunities to lead a fulfilling life that it membership had led him to.



Between October 2021 and the end of September 2022, the time bankers of the Isle of Wight diligently packaged and delivered 110 well-being boxes. These thoughtful gifts were primarily provided to carers and new families who relocated to the West Wight.

Their compassionate efforts extended beyond this initiative, as they also crafted and distributed more than 776 food parcels to families experiencing hardship. These food supplies were sourced from The Real Junk Food Project IW. Led by Sally Gaeta, the time bank group receives referrals from schools and family liaison officers, establishing themselves as an essential force in combating poverty and meeting the island's various needs.

TIMEBANKING AS A SOLUTION TO WASTE

Isle of Wight Time Banks

Members of the Isle of White time banks are driven by a strong desire to promote environmental issues. They have implemented an eco-refill scheme to assist individuals in minimising their reliance on single-use plastic. Gina, the initiator of the scheme, expressed her thoughts on the matter:

“As a community, we recognise the importance of contributing towards saving the planet... The scheme operates every Friday afternoon at the Parish Hall, where customers can bring their empty bottles for refilling with eco-friendly products. We have recently introduced new items, such as toothpaste in glass jars, deodorants made on the island and packaged in cardboard, delightful handmade glycerine soap bars, and loofah cleaning pads. Additionally, we continue to offer the usual range of washing up liquid, toilet cleaner, cream cleaner, multipurpose cleaner, liquid soap, shampoo, shampoo bars, conditioner, laundry liquid, and fabric conditioner.”

Furthermore, the group is actively addressing the issue of food waste. In 2022, they committed to collecting bread, cakes, and vegetables on a daily basis, which would have otherwise been discarded despite being perfectly edible. These food items were sourced from Sainsbury's and the Coop, and the time bankers distributed them weekly to 14 local organizations. Beneficiaries included a nursery, schools, as well as numerous local groups such as Our Place (the West Wight Sports & Community Centre), churches, and residential establishments. Through this initiative, thousands of loaves of bread, countless cakes, and various vegetables have been redistributed, resulting in a significant waste reduction and financial savings for the participating individuals and organisations.

It's an astonishing effort by this island community, and one we at TBUK would love to see replicated across our membership.





TIMEBANKING IN TIMES OF CONFLICT

VERKHOVYNA TIMEBANK, Ukraine

With support from Timebanking UK a group of locals in Verkhovyna municipality, Ukraine, have launched their own time bank with a goal to promote social integration and stronger communities through mutual support and inclusivity.

Looking to foster community cohesion during challenging times, the group considered timebanking the best way to achieve their goal. A collaboration was formed with their counterparts in the UK and the USA, leaders in the global Time Bank movement, to share experiences and guidelines for launching a community based on paying it forward.

In mid-May 2022, an introductory workshop was held under the guidance of Oksana Voronina, a renowned Ukrainian business trainer, with the support of the NGO "Verkhovyna - the flower of the Carpathians." Local residents and internally displaced persons jointly established a community, recognising Timebanking as an additional avenue to fortify their community and expand opportunities for assistance.

The Verkhovyna TimeBank community is already benefiting from participation. For example, Oksana coached Kostiantyn, who then helped by mowing Nadia's grass. Natalia teaches cheerleading to children, and Anna gives guidance on launching an online business to Ksenia. With each step, the community grows stronger, welcoming new talents and addressing challenges. They are actively exploring ways to involve children, youth, and foster trust between internally displaced persons and local residents.

Here is what members of TimeBank Verkhovyna had to say about their experience.



TimeBank is an amazing platform for me to do cheerleading with kids in my free time or prepare them for competitions. It allows me to unleash my creativity and see the results. Plus, I get to exchange my hours for services I need. For instance, my son wants to learn fishing, and luckily, there are people who would love to teach him.

-Natalia 

“ Timebanking is more than just a way to help. It’s a community that brings people together and gives us a sense of satisfaction. TimeBank is all about live communication, making new friends, and receiving valuable advice!

-Maria ”

Following an appeal by Timebanking UK the Ukrainian time bank has received generous contributions of hours to be used within the embattled community from various sources, including Stratford, Tendring, Woolmer, Forest Chesterfield, and Newcastle. Together, these contributions have accumulated a remarkable total of well over 6,500 hours to date.

Encouragingly, the initiative maintains its onward momentum as time banks continue to demonstrate interest and make further donations. Time bankers in Chesterfield have emerged as the standout contributors, displaying exceptional dedication and support in this endeavor.

TIMEBANKING IN THE PRESS

NEW COMMUNITY WARM SPACE IN HOUGHTON FULL OF ‘FRIENDSHIP’

Houghton and Wyton Timebank have set up a welcoming Warm Space at St Mary’s Centre, Houghton, bringing their community together in a safe, warm and friendly environment.

Cllr McAdam attending the lunch said:

“ It’s so good to see, coming here today, that there is so much friendship and camaraderie. It is not just about providing a Warm Space for residents, but a place where people can get help and information to improve their lives. With such low temperatures in December, I am glad warm spaces like this have been launched. ”

Speaking to The Hunts Post, Houghton & Wyton Timebank co-ordinator, **Rose Williams, said:**

“ It is open to everyone in our community regardless of their need, and although most people are attending on their own, they have found it a great place to meet others. ”

“ We are really feeling it, it is so cold out there, so hopefully, we can continue to encourage people to come and connect with others and make connections that will make us all more resilient through the colder months. ”

Reverend Geoff Boucher also in attendance said:

“ It extends that sense of social engagement but also dealing with the heating issue and people coming out to a place of warmth, so there’s a physical warmth and also the warmth of the hospitality and sharing of life. It’s just a lovely thing to do. This is community at its best, and it is happening very naturally. ”

ATTRIBUTION: <https://www.huntspost.co.uk/news/23193345.new-community-warm-space-houghton-full-friendship/>

WHY DUNSTABLE MOTHER-OF-FOUR IS SO ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT TIMEBANKING - THE PERFECT ANTIDOTE TO FEELING ISOLATED

Former adult education teacher Lorraine Ward, 67, is an enthusiastic member of Timebanking because, **she says:**

“...it opens all sorts of doors and there’s no pressure to do anything.

It’s a way of exchanging skills without any money changing hands, doing what you love when you want to – and getting a little help when you need it.

For every hour you spend helping someone, you earn an hour back from your timebank.”

“Lots of people are reluctant to sign up because they don’t think they have anything to offer,” Lorraine says. “But once you join you realise ‘I could do that.’”

Lorraine has taught a sewing group, run free yoga classes and offered help with composing letters and CVs.

“It’s so relaxing,” she smiles. “We have a weekly get together, have a cup of tea and a chat about what everyone’s doing. There are no expectations and no pressure at all.

“New members like the fact there’s a focus, where they can meet in a safe environment. Because sometimes it’s difficult to ask people you don’t know to do something.”

ATTRIBUTION: <https://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/people/why-dunstable-mother-of-four-is-so-enthusiastic-about-timebanking-the-perfect-antidote-to-feeling-isolated-3923844>

BBC COVERAGE - THE PEOPLE TURNING TIME INTO CURRENCY

Timebanking UK offers assistance and software to help communities and organisations across the UK set up their own timebanking schemes. The platform allows users to post offers and requests, log hours and leave feedback.

Timebanking UK's chief executive Sarah Bird highlights the built-in safeguarding features, such as users being able to flag any problems.



So if something goes wrong with the local timebank,
we can just jump in there and see if we can fix things.



Ms Bird also explains that while timebanking does not replace professional services or government programmes, it can underpin them, and engage people who would not usually do traditional volunteering. She adds that the Department for Work and Pensions allows jobseekers to claim timebanking hours towards their time spent looking for paid employment.



Timebanking might be the first step that someone will take
from long-term unemployment before they go on to maybe
volunteer or on a training course, because it's a method of
making that person feel more confident about themselves.



ATTRIBUTION: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-65397192>



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