

Achieving your dream

Robert Clements is 25 years old and has a disability, however this does not stop him being a devoted volunteer and contributing a great deal of his time to the Bournville Timebank. He was one of the first members when our time bank began in April 2007 and since then he has come a long way.

Rob has had a goal of becoming a youth worker and attending university for a long time, but there have been factors and issues which have hindered his ambitions. Using the time bank, Rob has given many hours to help the community youth club, out of school club,



Robert Clements, Bournville Timebank's highest 'paid' member

playschemes and senior citizens groups. In return, he has received time credits, but most importantly the experience and confidence to become a youth worker.

Rob has utilised his time credits to attend a health, safety and first aid course, which was funded by the time bank. Other members also provided him with help to attend meetings and complete his forms for an Open University grant, which he has received. Time bank members have also given lifts to Rob when he attended his placements, which was very helpful. He is now in the process of securing his own flat, which the time bank will help him to decorate.

From a time broker's view I can see a group of people who have all helped an individual follow his destined career choice. Without this help, he would not be in the situation he is in and there would have been no community interaction.

In nine months Rob has achieved so much for the Bournville Timebank and himself and has given a total of 287 hours. He has now begun his quest to achieve his dream of becoming a youth worker, whilst he continues to volunteer.

When we asked Rob what he would say to people unsure about joining the time bank, he replied, "Just go for it. It is a great opportunity!"

Becky Debenham
Bournville Timebank,
West Midlands

Time banking and mental health

A consortium of voluntary organisations in Camden is setting up a time bank within its mental health day-care services. The project is being hosted by the Holy Cross Centre Trust, based in King's Cross, and also involves Mind in Camden and the Camden Volunteer Centre.

Although at an early stage, this is a really exciting project for us – we see time banking as a fantastic tool for delivering co-production in mental health services and giving our clients the opportunity to access new resources. We're already seeing positive signs from people who are ready to start earning time credits, in particular by setting up and running their own groups and activities. Ideas so far have ranged from art classes to music workshops to coffee mornings.

Time banking is giving us the opportunity to focus on the interests and abilities of our clients, enabling client ownership of new projects, improving self-esteem and the quality of service we offer. The stigma around mental health problems often means that people become defined by their problems and labelled as passive receivers of a service – we want to use time banking to break this down.

Over the next few months, we hope to develop an adaptable time bank to meet various needs and aspirations giving: practical support and help through one-to-one exchanges, friendship and improved local networks, the opportunity to integrate within the wider community by engaging local partner organisations and the



A Holy Cross Centre session at lunch

chance to learn new skills and develop existing abilities. Whilst not ignoring the role of professionals, we believe our participants are often the real experts in mental health. Their interests and experiences mean they have the potential to play a crucial role in improving the well-being of each other and the wider community.

*Alex Jacobs
Kings Cross Time Bank*

Time banking's sublime!

Time banking's a doddle, so easy to do,

It's all about 'time' I spend working for you; No payment is made in a monetary sense, I just credit my hours, whilst fixing your fence!

Now, fencing's just one of available skills, With some of them modern, some old as the hills; A range of skills endless, all paid for with 'time', No cheque or cash payment, no debit 'online'.

A time sheet is needed, to credit the 'hours', And as these accrue I just send to the 'powers'; The 'powers that be' will then credit accounts, With hours I have worked, showing actual amounts.

Now, how can I spend them, these credits I own? I look down the list of the jobs that are shown; Um; will it be painting or fixing that tap? Or, walking my dog while I'm taking a nap?

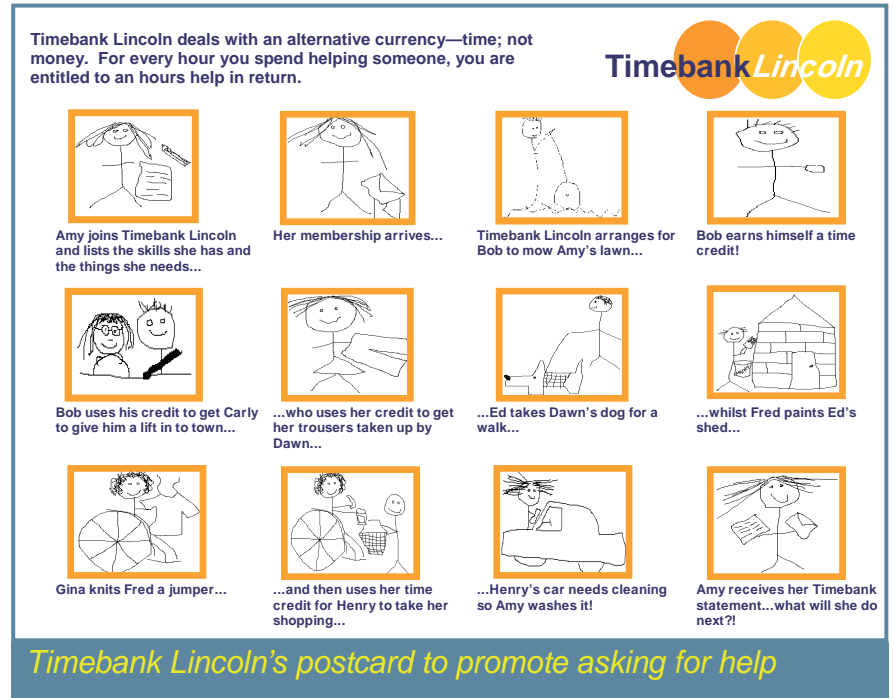
Whilst I'm taking a nap, I think of these things, Forty winks are amazing, the thought a nap brings; So sleep on the thought of your banking on 'time', It costs nowt to join us, Time banking's sublime!

*David A Leadbeater
'Poem from the Countryman'
Fair Shares North Cotswolds Time Bank*

Our time bank allotment

Timebank Lincoln has now been running for just over two years and with over 150 participants we are busy with referrals coming from different organisations such as social services and the NHS as well as people hearing about us through the Volunteer Centre. Our current challenge is encouraging the members we have to become more active and more importantly to ask for help! One way we've found of getting people involved is through events and projects.

In June 2007 we decided we would like to get a time bank allotment as many volunteers had mentioned they would like one but couldn't manage one on their own. Other volunteers wanted to gain more knowledge of running an allotment. Together with the Lincoln City Council, we have managed to get ourselves an allotment plot in the city centre and are now working on getting probation services to help us clear it. Even though we haven't got started properly yet, we already have a good team willing to work on the allotment who are getting to know each other.



With the volunteers taking a lead on the decision making for the project they feel an ownership of the allotment. We are hoping to get on with the planting next month and we've arranged for some more experienced gardeners to come along and give us some advice!

*Hazel Swan
Timebank Lincoln*

Is your time bank still on the old TimeKeeper?

Then now is the ideal opportunity to make the switch to Time Online, because for the first time you can now transfer absolutely everything over from TimeKeeper. Members' details, sites, attributes and services, assignments and hours can all now be uploaded onto Time Online thanks to a wizzy little program. All you need to do is send your TkUserData file to sarah@timebanks.co.uk.

Even if you don't want to go totally over to Time Online just yet, you could make it a handy backup where you can access your data from any computer anywhere in the world. Or you could just use this opportunity to try out all the reports available. Your data can be taken off or

downloaded onto a spreadsheet at any time, so you have total control over it.

Getting onto Time Online also gives you access to the National Exchange - just click on the purple button on the home page to see the time banks you could be swapping hours with all over the country! From getting B&B in Glastonbury, to giving hours to your granny in Newcastle - the National Exchange makes this happen at the touch of a button. Please call me for more information on (01452) 541035.

*Sarah Komnatskaya
IT Development Manager*

TIME TO GIVE AND TAKE

Stroke of genius

The loose medical definition of a stroke is either a bleed in the brain or a blood clot which can affect speech, mobility, comprehension (verbal and written) and social interaction. Why am I telling you this? Time banking, of course.

My first time banking experience was when I helped Norman with reading and writing after he had a severe stroke. I was approached to volunteer at the local Stroke Club, already a group member of the time bank in Royston, 13 miles from Cambridge.

The Stroke Club has around 12 members and four volunteers. We meet weekly in the most wonderful converted barn and for this we all

earn time credits. As a lot of our members live on their own and the strokes have left them with a range of communication difficulties, the meetings allow them to gain confidence and have fun with others similarly affected. I describe the members as a cross between ‘One Foot in the Grave’ and ‘Last of the Summer Wine’. They exchange time credits with others in the time bank and between themselves.

Two members who were professional photographers helped Norman convert black and white photographs to digital for a book he had written. The ones who can drive give lifts to others. I get my dog walked and my garden watered when on holiday. Several members have had help with computers and DIY from people of all ages and backgrounds who they would not otherwise encounter. Some have been out as part of a gardening team and to concerts (tickets cost two credits) by the local choral society, another group member of the time bank.

Royston Time Bank gives them an opportunity to feel less isolated, more useful and valued through community projects (like bulb planting at the local community centre) and individual exchanges.

Time banking has been nothing but a stroke of genius for us all!

*Mandy Byrne.
 Royston “Speak Out” Stroke Club.*



Photo of the Stroke Club by Frank Drake one of the photographers in the club