

Chair's Report September 2019

The purpose of the Chair's report is to give a review of the previous year and to outline possible developments in the year to come.

The Past Year

The greatest and saddest event of the Timebank (TB) year was the death of our dearly loved and much respected Chair, Irene Thomson who did so much in all kinds of ways for the Timebank. In particular as well as being Chair she acted as membership secretary and looked after the software we use. More by good management than luck, we found Richard Wright willing to take over these particular duties which are so central to the running of the TB. However more work has fallen on Kirsty Carver as secretary though other members have offered their services to help with the administration. Sorting out the new division of tasks will take quite some time to accomplish.

We have continued our collaboration with partner organisations, particularly with LOOPS and Porty People. We have now formal partnership links with Bellfield which may well increase in volume during the coming year.

In regard to membership and activity statistics there are indications mostly of considerable growth in the last year. There are now 176 members an increase of 41%. In regard to hours 1:1 transactions accounted for 344 hours (54% increase), support (for admin and events) 290 hours (176% increase), and total number of transactions 402 hours (18% increase) though the community (such as litter picking and gardening) saw 178 hours (20% decrease). The latter should actually be seen as a sign of the success of previous years litter cleaning events, and interaction with the council and local businesses.

However, a more fine-grained analysis indicates a significant proportion of our membership are relatively inactive. Recent analysis shows that around 100 members have not done any transactions since 2017. Around two thirds of the members have not posted any offers of services on their profile nor given a profile of themselves, so they are virtually invisible to other members. There has been some discussion in the committee of the extent to which this is a problem and what we might do to encourage more members to participate in the activities of the TB.

The Year Ahead

The most important organisational issue in the coming year will be the application for incorporation of the charity. The aim of this will be to remove the individual liability of committee members who could be sued if something went badly wrong with the activities or the finances of the TB. We have been very fortunate in this process that Laura Plumb has accessed template application papers for this process and adapted them to the particular needs of the TB. If the application is approved by members at the AGM there will be work to be done to manage the finances of the change whereby one charity, the unincorporated TB is would up and its resources transferred to the new, incorporated charity. For this we are fortunate to have James Carver who has so well supervised the finances of the TB since its foundation.

In regard to committee membership Laura Plumb and Ursula Wright have indicated that they wish to step down from the committee. Both are founder members of the TB and we are grateful for all they have done over the years. I am glad to report that both have stated that they will continue to offer their skills as and when needed to the TB, Kirsty Carver and James Carver are willing to continue as Secretary and Treasurer respectively of the TB

and I am willing to continue as Chair if I am elected. Josephine Petersson, Richard Wright and Clodagh Ross have already been acting as co-opted committee members and are willing to service in the year to come if elected.

In regard to future activities there will continue to be debate in the committee (who will become named as Trustees in the incorporated charity) about whether and to what extent there is a problem of the large number of members for whom there is no information as to their offerings and of the number who do not seem to be active in the exchange of hours, Doubtless there will be initiatives to increase the range of activities of the TB and efforts to engage some of the 'silent' members. There may be some attempts to find out more about what all members would like to see as developments of the TB.

The TB is now well established in Portobello, it has a sound financial basis and has the possibility to further enhance the community spirit and activity of the local area. Long may it continue to do so.