



The happiness issue!

Winter 2010

# Argyll Voluntary Action

## Mid Argyll—newsletter.

### Measuring happiness with the timebank

Timebankers have been asked to tell us how happy they are for funding purposes—why is this?

Some projects are not about money, but money is the way we measure things. So funders are trying to find new ways to find out if the work they pay for is making a difference to your and my life.

So how do you measure things like: feeling safer, or feeling more confident?

There are lots of ways that have been devised, and they all involve questionnaires. Some of them are pictorial, some need written answers and some use a scoring method. The Argyll timebank crew have decided

to use the "Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale", as we think it is the easiest one to use and captures quite a lot of information about how someone might be feeling about how their life is going, without being nosy about their personal circumstances.

#### What happens to my questionnaire?

The questionnaires go directly to the funders, without being read by any of the staff at AVA. They only have an identifier to go on (your initials, for example) and do not have any way of tracing who you are. They want us to do some more questionnaires later in the

year so they can measure if timebanking is making you happier!

You can use the questionnaire yourself to keep a record of your personal development—if you would like to see a copy or would be happy to measure your own happiness, call us!



Feeling good!

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#### Special points of interest:

- Volunteering makes you happy—proven!
- Timebanking makes places special
- We have training courses to help you move on with your life
- Argyll's contribution is global as well as local.
- Find out about the Volunteering Fair..

### Timebank Christmas get-together

We've got a lot to celebrate as we come up to Christmas 2010 as the next article demonstrates.

So, let's get together one last time this year, on Thursday 16th December, in Lochgilhead at the Red Cross Hall from 6 till 8pm.

If we bring something christmassy, we can have tea and mince pies and have a chat while meeting new timebankers and reminding ourselves of what we have done this year.

I wondered if you would like to bring a donation in a blank sealed envelope—as

little or as much as you like—and we could decide on what our favourite local charity is - and make that our collective Christmas donation.

If I don't see you—have a great holidays, and look forward to catching up in the new Year!



## Mid Argyll Timebank—a special rural network.

Since it started up in mid Argyll in march 2009, the timebank has grown to 51 members, who, between them have exchanged over 350 hours. This does not count the hundreds of other hours that they do for other charities, which could be added to individual totals - this is simply the local exchanges.

Exchanging hours is a great thing - the main thing it achieves is the increase in your personal, and a community's "social capital". Social capital is the word for your social and family networks - and we use these networks every day to get things we need, such as attention and affection, as well as favours.

A community with high social capital is one where people like to live and one where people can pull together to get things done, or to overcome troubles, like flooding or a bad economy. Loch-

gilphead timebank is already helping overcome cuts in funding and helping people to meet each other.

In April, August and October lots of timebankers (14) volunteered to support 4 local events - they baked, leafleted, minded stalls, supported health walks and generally made these events possible.

28 timebankers attended our occasional "get-togethers", which consisted in all ages meeting up for a laugh - and highly successful they were too. Far too much cake was brought, and now we have a standing order for the baking done by G - we are now stalking him in the street - and there was a lot of chatting and laughter. People went on for a beer or coffee after and popped round each other's flats to help out with a favour the next day.

But most successful of all has been the health volunteering. It's the area the timebankers have talked about the most - we can all see a real need. Now we are receiving referrals from health organisations to help local people who just need a wee extra hand. This is very low level support and complements the valuable work done by the professional health services, and ensures its success. Timebankers have made small repairs, fetched prescriptions or shopping or just met for tea to help overcome loneliness and isolation. Timebankers are making a difference - in multiple ways and in sustainable ways. Join in, and make mid Argyll a better place to live.



## Steps to Excellence- courses to improve your happiness.

Steps To Excellence for Personal Success is a motivating, life-changing course run locally by AVA. Louise has just completed the course, gone on to facilitator training and last helped run a course in Tarbert. If your life needs a change, a bit of "get up and go", then contact Louise on 01546 606808 for details of the next course which will be

run in Lochgilphead starting on the 8th December—places are filling up so be sure and book your opportunity. Call for more information on how the course is run.



## What we got up to in the Summer:

Here are just a taster of the stuff we do in our office:

- We have had 2 timebank get-togethers, so people can get to know one another and be more confident about making swaps.
- Organized timebank swaps that include housework, packing, repair of a bike, and stewarding at Discover Dalriada events.
- Recruited 16 Millennium volunteers—young people aged 16-25 can accumulate points and earn

certificates by volunteering. So far, there are over 500 hours of volunteering recorded at Lochilphhead Joint Campus, including music, sport and youth work—and more of the same from local young undergraduates and school-leavers!

- We delivered Digital Switch-over training to 9 community groups and ensured that no-one was left out when the tellies switched over on 27th Oct.

- We did "Funderfinder" funding searches for several organizations.
- We gave website training to local groups so they can have a free presence on our website, and put up what they want.
- Training : Outcomes; Committee Skills and STEPs.
- Representing you at regional for a, including the LACPGs (Local Area Community Planning Groups).



## Charity Shops in Argyll

Did you know that the S.I.R. shop in Lochgilphead raises £800 - £1000 per week from the generous people of Mid Argyll? This goes towards Mary's Meals which feed over 430,000 children a day. In addition, Mid Argyll raises £10,000 per year towards the running of a school in Zingwangwa, just outside Blantyre in Malawi. Mary's Meals operate in 15 countries around

the world delivering over 75 millions meals a year.

There is a little charity shop in Tarbert run by the Church of Scotland. Although its takings are not as much as S.I.R. it helps maintain the church in that area.

Volunteering in a charity shop, or delivering meals in a far off land are all services to our community, local and global. Volunteering is good for you and

the people you help. Well done, volunteers of the world!

**"Mary's meals delivers over 75 million meals a year..."**

## Spotlight on our funders—and thanks!

Timebanking is fortunate to enjoy the support of Argyll LEADER funding. LEADER is European money which specifically supports projects which are pilot or innovative in nature and is aimed at rural communities. It targets community and economic development and is administered under the umbrella of the SRDP.

It is unique in that it is driven by its

own communities—each area has a LAG (or Local Action Group), which makes decisions on local applications. Therefore local knowledge and expertise are applied to judging your project.

The idea is that LAGs from all over Europe can share best rural practice and swap good ideas in a challenging environment.

Timebanking aims to improve health

and offset social isolation that is common in rural areas. Info available on: [www.argyllandtheislandsleader.org.uk](http://www.argyllandtheislandsleader.org.uk)



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### Volunteer Fair—ExtrAVaganza!

Friday 21st January Lochgilphead Com Centre

10:30-2:30

Celebrate the European Year of Volunteering by coming along to the largest ever gathering of local volunteer organizations and volunteers in Mid Argyll.

Stalls!

Demonstrations!

Volunteer Café! - & more!



## New Chair of Board of Argyll Voluntary Action:

Argyll Voluntary Action (AVA), incorporating Argyll and Bute Volunteer Centre and Argyll CVS, is the leading Third Sector intermediary organisation in Argyll and Bute, and is currently Lead Partner of the Argyll and Bute Third Sector Partnership (TSP). AVA and its Third Sector Partners have the remit to support and encourage volunteering, and to strengthen the Third Sector through, *inter alia*, communication, representation and knowledge transfer.

Our Chair of many years, David Price, will be retiring from this position in November 2010 and therefore AVA is currently seeking a special person who can take up this position.

The post requires someone with drive and vision who can work with the board and staff of AVA to ensure the continued growth of the organisation during challenging times.

This requires someone with:

- excellent communication skills
- the ability to lead and support the board,
- build relationships and link with community partners to effectively represent Argyll Voluntary Action and the wider Third Sector.

The Chair will need commitment to the organisation and to the role of infrastructure support to the wider sector.

Some attendance at meetings additional to AVA board meetings will be required. The post is not remunerated although reasonable expenses are payable; travel across Argyll and Bute is essential so the post is open to anyone living within the area. The post requires a commitment of an average of 5 days per month. Some of the work can be carried out from home and by email or telephone.

For more information please contact

David Price, current Chair, on 01866 833455, or Glenn Heritage, Manager AVA, on 01631 564839



PHOTO BY: GORIT LESGTON

**We need someone of drive and vision...**

Look at our lovely supporters!