

# Deidre Brock MP leads debate on timebanking

## Paying tribute to the work of the Leith Time Bank, the Edinburgh North and Leith MP says the neighbour support networks “really can change people’s lives”

Deidre Brock MP led a debate this week on the benefits of timebanking, and called for support from government to help develop the community skill sharing model to more high streets, towns and villages right across the UK.

Timebanking is a way for neighbours to support each other through a two-way exchange of time, knowledge and skills, without money changing hands. For every hour you help someone you earn an hour in ‘credit’, which you can get back when you need it. It’s based on a reciprocal model, where everyone’s time is valued equally and everyone has something to give. One example from the Leith Time Bank in Ms Brock’s constituency was an 80 year old man with visual impairment, living alone with no family or friends nearby. He earned credits by providing one-to-one Spanish and French lessons in a local cafe to other members. In exchange, the other members can earn credit by accompanying him to medical appointments, social activities or helping with daily tasks.

Ms Brock is a long term supporter of the Leith Time Bank which has been operating for over a decade, run by local charity the [Pilmeny Development Project](#). While its primary focus is support for older people, carers and adults with chronic health conditions, there are over 200 members from different

generations, cultures and walks of life. Ms Brock says the group has been “remarkably effective at breaking down barriers and forging connections between old Leithers and new arrivals, forming friendships between people who might not otherwise have ever met.”

Ms Brock said:

“Timebanking deserves much more recognition, so I was delighted to raise the fantastic work of Leith’s Time Bank and the wider network during the debate.

“We all have skills, knowledge and experience to offer that could be beneficial to someone, whether it’s gardening, sewing, simple repairs, language teaching, running errands, tech skills, or whatever it might be. Timebanking is a great way for people to exchange expertise without any money changing hands, and it can have such a positive impact on community cohesion and tackling social isolation and loneliness.

“The minister was very complimentary about timebanking and I’ve secured a meeting with him to discuss the concept further. We’ve also had a lot of interest from people keen to learn more and even set up new timebanks in their own area.”

Timebanking first started in the UK in 2002 and has grown to more than 24,000 members, with over six and a half million hours of skills exchanged. Support and training for local groups to set up and develop is provided by the charities [Timebanking UK](#) and [Timebanking Scotland](#).

Responding for the Government during the debate was Rt Hon Stuart Andrew MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Culture, Media and Sport who is also the Minister for Loneliness. He recognised the value of timebanking in reducing social isolation and agreed to a meeting with Deidre Brock MP to discuss the issues further.



Deidre Brock MP speaking during the Westminster Hall debate she led on timebanking.