



MEMBERS' HANDBOOK

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Version 2 Sept 2017	Complaints procedure re-written. hOurworld Quick Start Guide written (as separate document)
Version 3 Feb 2022	5 hour credit on joining is no longer automatic, but added manually on completion of the induction.
Version 4 July 2025	Quick Start Guide removed (no longer relevant to TNTv2)
Version 5 June 2026	Induction now a requirement of membership

Our website <http://www.portobellotimebank.co.uk>

[Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)

Contact admin@portobellotimebank.co.uk

Welcome to Portobello Timebank

In this handbook, you will find lots of information about Portobello Timebank, how it works and the rights and responsibilities of our Members. By joining the Timebank, our members agree to follow the guidelines set out in this handbook. Please read through all the sections carefully, take a look at the FAQs, and if you still have questions or concerns please contact us by email at admin@portobellotimebank.co.uk

What is Timebanking?

Timebanking enables members of a community to help each other by doing small jobs, favours or tasks. It works on the principle that everyone has some talent, skill, hobby or interest that would be useful to share with another person. For every hour you give, you will receive an hour's credit that you can then redeem when you need something in return. Apart from the inherent value of this alternative, cashless mini-economy, you will benefit from more personal ties with people who otherwise you are unlikely to meet under normal circumstances.

Our Timebank Policies

- The minimum age for becoming a member is 16; otherwise Portobello Timebank welcomes anyone resident in EH15 and surrounding areas, whatever their age, gender, religion, nationality, ethnicity, physical ability or socio-economic status.
- Timebank Members give and receive all sorts of practical services including: visiting, gardening, form filling, sharing skills in music, knitting, using computers, simple clothing repairs, shopping, ironing and DIY. If necessary we can arrange for a group of timebankers to work together to tackle a bigger job for someone. A full list of typical activities can be found on the [Time & Talents login page](#).
- Certain personal services are **not** offered or undertaken such as childcare, babysitting and personal care for vulnerable people.
- Timebanking is not a substitute for services that you would normally pay professionals for, but is a way of local people using their time to do helpful tasks for others, **such as you might ask of a neighbour or family member**.
- As a member of a timebank you are not a volunteer, because you expect time credits in return for your services. In order for the scheme to work you must be prepared to receive from others as well as to give. (Think of the cash equivalent – if everyone hoarded all their money and never spent anything, the economy would stagnate.) On the other hand, in the eyes of the Department of Works and Pensions and the Department of Social Security, your time credits do not constitute earnings, so they are not taxable and do not interfere with eligibility for benefits.
- You may 'bank' the credits you earn by helping someone, then spend them on services offered by another member when you need to. You do not have to have a credit balance before you 'spend', but should try to avoid having either a huge positive or negative balance. Every new member is awarded 5 complimentary hours after completing their profile on Time and Talents by providing a photo of themselves (for identification) and their bio.
- All Members, while performing or receiving services, are representatives of Portobello Timebank, and as such should act in accordance with the high standards of conduct expected by the Timebank, by always showing respect for the person and property of the other member(s). Persistent unacceptable conduct may lead to the restriction, suspension or withdrawal of your Timebank membership.

About Portobello Timebank

Portobello Timebank was set up in 2013 with around 10 members, and membership has grown steadily every year. While it has no physical home, as a community organisation we are allowed to use the Rosefield Library as a postal address, but ideally you should contact us

- via our website contact form: <http://www.portobellotimebank.co.uk>,
- via email to admin@portobellotimebank.co.uk
- by 'contacting the coordinator' in Time and Talents

Portobello Timebank is governed by a committee who are nominated by the membership and who may be elected by a vote at the AGM.

It became a registered charity in 2017, and converted to a SCIO 10/03/2020. Membership consists of individuals in the community, plus 'organisational' members – commercial firms and community organisations – all of whom may exchange skills, time and assets. We also do work in the local environment, which is recognised by Edinburgh City Council.

Communicating with You

The current status of members and their skills (offered or requested) are accessible by logging into our database: **The Timebank Engine: Time and Talents (TNT)** - see below.

In addition we will advise you of special events, meetings etc. by:-

- Email / Newsletter
- Publishing at 'Portobello Timebank' on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

From time to time you may also receive direct email messages from an administrator. Please ensure the domains [@portobellotimebank.co.uk](#) and [@tnt2.hourworld.org](#) are not rejected by your spam filter

The Timebank Engine: Time and Talents (TNT)

Just as in regular banking, all our Timebank 'transactions' are recorded on a central computer system. Think of Portobello Timebank as a branch office, with its own *local* shop window, www.portobellotimebank.co.uk, showing the public who we are and what we do. However, when you join the Timebank **as a member** we will open an online account for you on a *central* system, an application called *Time and Talents (TNT)* by hOurworld (it may be referred to as **hOurworld**). This is an international application used by timebanks across the world, and it automates a lot of the complicated administration. It's the **engine** that powers our timebanking.

You will have attended an **induction** when you became a member not only to familiarise you in the ways of the timebank, but also to explain how to get the best use out of the Time and Talents system.

Through your Time and Talents account you will be able to see all the job offers and requests that have been posted by Portobello Timebank members, add a picture of yourself and post a short biography to improve your integration into our community. You will be able to advertise your own offers and requests and contact other members to arrange an exchange of service. After an exchange has been completed you will be able to record the time you have earned, and see an up-to-date statement of your balance.

The Engine Drivers: You!

No community activity succeeds if everyone waits for someone else to make the first move. The more pro-active you are, the more benefit you will get from your membership. Here are some tips:

- In TNT you will see the most recent offers and requests (Ads) on the homepage, and you can go to Ads on the menu to see (and search) all offers and requests by other members, and your own (when you have some).
- In TNT go into your profile (your name in the top right corner) and add a brief bio and photo to help other members to get to know you. Also, you may like to select the service categories in which you have 'Talents' and/or 'Interests'. AND go to Notification Settings where you can fine tune how you receive notifications. Note the "Help" button on all these pages, and if you are stuck with anything you can always "**Contact a Coordinator**".
- Attend our organised meetings/talks/events. Once you know other members personally, they're more likely to approach you.
- Join one or more Groups (see later) for the same reason.
- Keep your Offers and Requests up-to-date.
- Make sure you respond promptly when another member contacts you.
- Train yourself to consider the Timebank as a possible solution to some of your problems. Remember, your request allows others to earn credits.
- Don't be downhearted if no-one immediately responds to your first offer, or answers your first request. It may be just a matter of time until you get a response.

Carrying Out an Exchange

Your first transaction may be either offering or receiving a service. Here are some typical **responsibilities** to consider:

OFFERING to do a job	RECEIVING work done
Confidence: each member has been vetted via 2 references which are always followed up. However, if you would like a 3 rd party to be present at your exchange, please contact admin@portobellotimebank.co.uk	
Specification: Ensure the task is within your capabilities. It's better to decline than to take on something beyond your skills.	Provide clear details of the task(s) to be done, what tools are needed/available etc.
Estimate: Agree roughly the time it is likely to take	
Expenses: If monetary expenses are expected, <u>agree in advance</u> how much, and how / when reimbursement should be made (eg material cost, fuel / mileage etc). This is reimbursement of cost NOT payment for work.	
Punctuality: Be on time and suitably prepared	Make sure the job is accessible/ ready to be done
Cancellation: If cancellation is necessary, give as much notice as possible	
Safety: Do the job with due regard to your own and others' safety	Ensure a safe environment. See Health and safety tips below
Confidentiality: All information obtained about the other participant must be kept confidential	
Recording: Once the job is done, agree the number of hours and who will do the recording (a +ve entry for the provider of time creates an equivalent -ve entry for the receiver.) The member who doesn't record the transaction receives a message with details of the exchange; duration and optional comments. There are optional links to Endorse the other member or to Dispute the record and the provider can delete it.	
Endorsement: Be sure to use the 'Endorse' function if the transaction has gone well. This helps to build trust in the community.	
Dispute: In the unlikely event of either party being unhappy with an aspect of the transaction, the issue should be discussed as soon as possible – it might just be an oversight or misunderstanding. If this isn't possible or if no resolution	

has been reached, you should refer the matter with full details to admin@portobellotimebank.co.uk	
Housekeeping: Be sure to delete or suspend your Ads if you're going away for a length of time	Delete (or hide) your completed Request from TNT (unless it's ongoing)

Accessibility

Some members may not be able to use computers/email. We will endeavour to find and ebuddy to help.

Timebank Groups

Portobello Timebank supports several special interest groups which you can join whenever you want. Some groups provide earning opportunities (eg litter picking) while some have a small attendance charge (eg craft evenings) to cover expenses. Groups are a great way of meeting more members.

From time to time we run events such as coffee mornings, and we appreciate members coming along to help, in exchange for hours.

Community Projects

Members can claim up to a maximum of 4 hours a month for helping with Community Projects. [More details here](#) including how to claim your time credits.

APPENDICES

Frequently Asked Questions

Who runs the Timebank?

The Timebank is a constituted group and a registered charity which is managed by a committee. The committee is made up of local people just like you. If you would like to be involved in the day-to-day running of the Timebank or just a one-off event, please let us know by emailing admin@portobellotimebank.co.uk

How much does it cost?

The Timebank is free to join and there is no subscription. It should not cost you anything to gain time credits.

How do I get started?

You can join via our website www.portobellotimebank.co.uk – you will need to supply two referees who have known you for at least one year and who are not family or household members. Once your application is approved you will be invited to attend an induction session to learn how to get the most out of *Time and Talents*, the computer system that drives our timebanking. Your TNT account will be activated at or immediately after your induction, and you will receive 5 hours 'New member credit' as soon as you have added your photo and bio to your TNT profile.

How will the Timebank deal with information about me?

Your data is not used for any purpose other than to allow timebanking to function. By logging into *Time and Talents* you can see all your own data but, by design, you only share it with other members on a need-to-know basis. A more detailed statement, 'About Your Data' is published on our website.

Am I insured?

We have public and employers' liability insurance that will cover defence costs and compensation in the event of claims for bodily injury, property damage and personal injury. However, you are advised to take every precaution to ensure your own safety and that of others while taking part in Timebank activities (see **Health and Safety Tips** below).

Can I give Time Credits away?

If you do not want all the time credits you earn, you can donate them to:

- another member
- the Timebank itself, which pays new member credit (5 hours to each new member), and any member who supports the timebank.
- the community pot which is used for 'Community Projects' e.g. conservation, litter cleans and volunteering for other local community organisations e.g. Bellfield and the Community Fridge.
- Community Support Fund - used to help members who are unable to earn enough time credits to pay for specific extra help they need.

What about petrol costs if I give someone a lift?

If a job incurs a cost (like petrol) it's reasonable for the recipient to pay the cash value as well as the time credit. This should be agreed before the job is undertaken. The same goes for baking ingredients, wool/fabric and other consumables.

What if things go wrong?

The Timebank welcomes constructive comments and complaints. It aims to listen to them and take them seriously and with respect. It is committed to dealing with comments and complaints thoroughly, fairly and effectively, because this puts things right for people who have received a poor service and allows the organisation to learn from experience and improve.

If you have a comment or complaint about the Timebank, please raise it first with a Coordinator, by emailing admin@portobellotimebank.co.uk. For full details see our [Complaints Procedure below](#).

Health and safety tips

These are some general guidelines to ensure the safety and comfort of all Timebank Members. Please bear them in mind when doing any tasks.

- ☐ Do not put yourself at risk. If you are not sure that something is safe – DO NOT DO IT!
- ☐ Trust your judgement. If anything concerns you, get it sorted or leave as quickly and safely as possible.
- ☐ Do not stand or climb on anything unstable, such as a rickety chair or an unsteady table. **We are not insured for working at heights above 3m.**
- ☐ Have a way to contact someone, such as a mobile phone, if there are any problems.

Fire

- Do not create a fire hazard with either flammable materials or things that can light or spark a fire (including cigarettes).
- If a fire does happen, take no risks and leave immediately.
- Take everyone present to a safe place and call the Fire Service by phoning 999.

Cooking

- Keep pan handles away from flames and not overhanging the front of the cooker.
- Do not fill a chip pan more than half way.

Gas

- If you smell gas and cannot locate the source, extinguish all flames and do not use any electrical switches.
- Open doors and windows, and turn off all gas taps.
- Evacuate the property
- Call the National Gas Emergency Service free on 0800 111 999 at any time.

Work equipment

- Use equipment only if it is in good working order and you know how to use it.
- Repair equipment only if you know how to do so safely.

Electricity

- Do not overload power points.
- Do not trail wires or flexes across hot or wet surfaces.
- Do not use any appliance with a plug (such an electric fire or a hair dryer) in a bathroom.

Safe movement

- Be aware of possible hazards and point them out in a friendly way. In someone else's home, please remember that you are a visitor and can only make suggestions.
- Doorways, halls, passages, stairs and landings should be free of clutter and kept well lit.
- Floors should be sound and strong enough for any loads expected.
- Surfaces that have holes or tears, or are uneven or slippery, may be hazardous.
- Fixtures and fittings should be secure, with things stored and stacked so that they are not likely to fall.
- All areas should be free of wires that might trip someone up.
- Anything spilt on the floor should be cleaned up at once
- All waste should be put into a bin or other container.

Lifting and handling

- Avoid lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving loads where this might cause a hazard to you or someone else.
- Only move a load that you can easily manage, or move it with someone else.
- Use any aids and equipment available, such as a trolley or wheelbarrow.
- If you are moving things, take regular breaks.

Complaints Procedure

Breaches of membership standards

We do not anticipate any challenging situations involving breaches of membership standards amongst the Timebank Membership and expect that any that do occur will be resolved by informal discussions. Nevertheless, it is important to set out a policy so that all members are aware of the expectations and procedures should such a situation arise. Before taking formal action we will make every effort to resolve the matter informally.

Informal Procedure

Where a breach of membership standards is alleged, we will encourage direct communication between the individuals concerned. If requested, a Trustee may

provide support to facilitate discussion. If direct communication is not appropriate for whatever reason, a member of the Board will hold an informal discussion with you to discuss the issue and decide on an appropriate course of action. The kinds of things we would identify as minor problems could be persistently being late for agreed exchanges or inappropriate behaviour e.g. giving a misleading or inaccurate description of what is required that turns into a much longer job than could have been anticipated.

You will have the opportunity to put forward your point of view and the Trustee will work with you to reach an agreement regarding your future membership.

Formal Procedure

Where more serious problems of conduct are alleged, or where the informal procedure does not resolve earlier issues, the formal procedure will be followed.

- A Trustee will investigate the matter and prepare a report for the Board.
- Two Trustees will hold a meeting with you. You will be advised in advance of the matters to be discussed and given time to respond. You may, if you wish, be accompanied to the meeting by a supporter, this supporter could be a friend or family member.

If it is not possible to reach agreement or a satisfactory conclusion at this meeting, the Trustees may suggest to the Board that your membership be discontinued. Other possible outcomes might be to issue a formal warning (to be confirmed in writing) advising you of future expectations, a specified review period if appropriate and an indication that your membership will be terminated if expectations are not met.

Very serious problems

If a very serious problem is alleged, the organisation may suspend your membership of the timebank immediately while the case is being investigated. Where the Board considers the allegation to be upheld, your membership will be ended with immediate effect. Examples of the actions, which we would consider to be very serious problems, are set out below. This list is neither comprehensive nor exclusive:

- theft or fraud
- harassment, violent behaviour or assault
- deliberate damage to a member's property
- any other illegal act

The committee may be obliged to inform the Police

Appeals

You may appeal against formal action taken under this Procedure. You should put the grounds of appeal in writing to the Board within one week of the Board's decision. The Board will then select 2 different trustees to review the situation. They may ask to meet with you to discuss the matter. Depending on the outcome of their review, they may uphold the original decision or reinstate your membership.

Should the matter remain unresolved, the final decision rests with the membership as per paragraphs 25 and 26 of the constitution.