

Well Being - coming your way soon.

Have you heard that your local council is to transform itself into a sort of business centre for purchasing *well being*?

Yes really, town halls all around the country are busy discussing how to deliver *well being* direct to your door.

Some people are saying it's the least they can do, given that they are slowly winding down what services they do provide at a time when there will soon be millions more of us in need of them.

No matter, *well being* is coming.

So how do you think they are going to do it - we know they do not often venture far away from their offices so it's going to be tricky. They seem to do most things by e mail these days, maybe that's the way they are going to do it? Surely they are not planning more meetings, there are more than enough of them already and meetings are not good for anyone's *well being*.

They say they want to become sign posts – but it is not clear where they are planning to direct us to? I hear that they are particularly keen right now to improve the way they respond to enquiries, good telephone techniques and all that. Maybe they hope that will make us all feel better.

To the casual observer most of the activity so far seems to be in sorting out how they buy cheaper services from voluntary organisations and various care businesses. If you are one of the lucky ones who receive any services then I suppose it will be good – but how will it help the *well being* of the other 85% of us who have almost no contact with the public and voluntary services?

I do know they are having conferences in swanky hotels and that there will certainly be lots more of those. There are bound to be strategy documents already. Trouble is I have never seen any of them, have you? If you want to improve my *well being* then let's talk about it, please.

I suppose they are only being sensible because talking about it could be a bit dangerous. A few of us might say we would prefer to have the cash it will cost to employ our 'well being managers' to look after our own *well being*.

Building local social networks would be the best thing to do with the money. It only takes a little, time banking could do the rest.

Thinking about it, if we all got together through time banking we could look after their well being far better than they could ever look after ours – there are more of us for a start.

That means more variety, more spontaneity, more love, more openness and more skills to share.

We would not feel pressurised by targets.

No risk management to worry about, after all its me and you and our friends and neighbours – were OK – and they seem relatively safe bunch of people.

How about this, scrap all the meetings that are not concerned with arranging to actually do something and with all that spare time they could come outside and promote the active citizenship they say they want by helping to set up local time banks.

We all know that depression, loneliness and isolation are the main things that we have to get rid of if we want to be well. Maybe they could call round and cheer us up.

That's got to be better than risking being depressed and lonely in their offices. We can help each other out, relate as equals – after all I am the only one who can really manage my *well being* – ask any therapists.

Mind you, belonging to a social network definitely helps.

People smiling and saying hi to others in the street would be good too.

Exchanging acts of kindness and doing favours for each other would also help. Feeling good about ourselves, having the chance to feel needed, making a difference to someone else, bringing give and take back into the heart of our communities would improve our *well being* for sure.

So come on then you public servants, if you are serious about this *well being* stuff then put on your hats and coats, get out of your offices and join your local time bank. Don't be socially excluded, you know that's not good for you.

Be careful though, people may think you a little strange at first.

You may be related to as a paid, professional stranger – that will be tough.

Better that you stay within the safe environs of the time bank for a while.

That way you can learn how it feels to be valued for what you can do on an equal basis with those around you. That's got to be good for community cohesion don't you think. The time bank would also act as a letter of introduction to all sorts of local people you can rely on and trust.

The rest would be quite straight forward. You will be a part of life as it happens, earning and spending your time credits in your local community and helping support local people and building mutual respect - *being well*.