

Timebank Ireland Strategic Plan 2026-2030

The Power of an Hour: Building a Resilient, Connected Ireland

Organisation: hOUR Timebank CLG (T/A Timebank Ireland)

Date: November 2025

Plan Duration: 1 January 2026 – 31 December 2030

1. Executive Summary

This five-year strategic plan (2026-2030) outlines a clear and ambitious path for Timebank Ireland (TBI) to transition from a single, high-impact regional organisation into a resilient and scalable national network.

Our strategy is built on a foundation of proven, exceptional social value. A 2023 Social Impact Study, funded by the West Cork Development Partnership (WCDP), quantified our **Social Return on Investment (SROI)** at **1:16**—for every €1 invested, €16 in tangible social value is returned to the community. Furthermore, the study found that **100% of our members reported improved mental and emotional wellbeing**.

Despite our proven success, we face a critical juncture following the closure of our primary social enterprise funding stream. This plan directly addresses this challenge, leveraging our strong track record of support from partners like the **WCDP and Rethink Ireland** to achieve two primary goals:

1. **Sustainable Growth:** To scale our membership from 245 to over 2,500 members by 2030, establishing a "Centre of Excellence" in West Cork as a replicable model for new hubs across Ireland.
2. **Maximising Social Impact:** To deepen our community value by investing in fit-for-purpose technology, diversifying our financial model, and solidifying our role as a key partner in Ireland's social prescribing and community development landscape.

This plan is organised around four interconnected strategic pillars:

- **Pillar 1: Deep Roots & Wide Reach (Growth & Hubs)**
- **Pillar 2: Financial Resilience (Funding & Sustainability)**
- **Pillar 3: A Platform for Connection (Technology & Infrastructure)**
- **Pillar 4: The Power of an Hour (Impact & Storytelling)**

By executing this plan, Timebank Ireland will not only secure its own future but will significantly enhance community resilience, reduce social isolation, and build a more connected and equitable Ireland, one hour at a time.

2. Our 2026 Vision

Our Mission

To connect and empower Irish communities by facilitating the exchange of skills, talents, and support, where every hour given is an hour received, building a resilient and equitable society based on mutual respect.

Our Vision

An interconnected Ireland where every individual feels valued and supported, and where the power of shared time and talent creates strong, resilient, and thriving local communities.

Our Values

- **Reciprocity:** We believe in a two-way street. Everyone has something to give and everyone has needs.
- **Inclusion:** We believe everyone is a valuable asset. We welcome and celebrate people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.
- **Respect:** We honour the time and skills of all members equally. One hour equals one hour, no matter the service.
- **Connection:** We are more than a service; we are a community. We exist to reduce isolation and build meaningful relationships.
- **Empowerment:** We provide a platform for individuals to recognise their own value and to actively participate in building a stronger community.

3. Analysis Summary: Where We Are Now

This plan is informed by a detailed analysis of our internal strengths and challenges, set against the opportunities and threats in the global social enterprise landscape.

Full SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- **Proven High Impact:** An independently validated 1:16 SROI and 100% wellbeing improvement.
- **Strong Foundational Partnerships:** A proven track record of securing competitive support from major partners, including the **West Cork Development Partnership (WCDP)**, **Rethink Ireland** (Social Enterprise Start-Up Fund), and **Milane Hill Wind Farm (TRIG)**.
- **Dedicated Community:** A core, active membership base (245 members) with a strong foundation in West Cork and powerful member testimonials.
- **Lean Operations:** Experience in running effective, low-cost operations with a dedicated volunteer team.
- **Brand & History:** An established and trusted name in the Irish timebanking sector.

Weaknesses

- **Financial Instability:** The recent closure of our social enterprise shop has created a critical funding gap for core operations.
- **Limited Human Resources:** Heavy reliance on a small number of key individuals and volunteers, leading to risk of burnout.
- **Member Inactivity:** A portion of the 245 registered members are not actively exchanging, indicating a need for re-engagement.
- **Technology Limitations:** Our current BuddyBoss platform, while functional, lacks the advanced filtering and scalability required for a national network.
- **No Physical Hub:** The lack of a central physical hub (since the shop closure) makes coordination, onboarding, and community-building difficult.

Opportunities (from Global Research)

- **New Funding Streams:** A clear global trend of timebanks securing public sector contracts (e.g., HSE for social prescribing, local councils for community integration) to fund core coordinator roles.
- **Hybrid Models:** Opportunity to launch a new, more sustainable social enterprise (e.g., B2B timebanking for corporate volunteering, paid workshops) that complements our core mission.
- **Modern Technology:** New, affordable timebanking platforms (e.g., hOurworld, TimeRepublik, or a re-evaluation of Made Open) offer better user experience, mobile access, and admin tools.
- **"Loneliness Epidemic" Narrative:** Growing public and political awareness of social isolation provides a powerful narrative to attract funding and partners.
- **Hub-and-Spoke Model:** Proven scaling model from the UK and USA, where a central admin body supports multiple local, semi-autonomous hubs.

Threats

- **Coordinator Funding "Cliff":** The primary risk to all timebanks is securing consistent, long-term funding for the paid coordinator roles that are essential for growth and activity.
- **Volunteer Burnout:** Without funded coordination, the burden falls on volunteers, which is not sustainable for scaling.
- **Competition for Funding:** Intense competition in the non-profit sector for the same pool of grants.
- **Member Apathy:** Risk of members losing interest if the platform is clunky or if there isn't a critical mass of active users and diverse offers/requests.
- **Technology Failure:** A repeat of the difficult migration to the Made Open platform could alienate members and halt momentum.

Strategic Gap Analysis

1. **The Funding Gap:** We are 100% grant-reliant for operations. Global best practice shows a diversified model (60% contracts/enterprise, 40% grants) is essential for resilience.

2. **The Coordination Gap:** We cannot grow without funded coordinators ("brokers"). Our immediate priority is to fund a coordinator for West Cork to re-ignite the hub.
3. **The Technology Gap:** Our current platform is a barrier to national scaling. We need a solution that supports geographic filtering, a better mobile experience, and easier administration.

4. Core Strategic Pillars & Action Plan (2026-2030)

Pillar 1: Deep Roots & Wide Reach (Growth & Hubs)

Core Objective: To create a replicable, scalable "Centre of Excellence" in West Cork and expand to a national network of active, supported hubs.

Key Initiatives (2026-2030)	Year 1 (2026) Priorities	KPIs
1.1: West Cork "Centre of Excellence": Re-launch and solidify the West Cork hub as the blueprint for all future hubs.	1.1a: Secure grant funding to hire a dedicated, part-time West Cork Hub Coordinator (Broker) for 12 months. 1.1b: Coordinator to run a "Re-Engagement Campaign" to reactivate dormant members. 1.1c: Secure a new physical hub premises in West Cork (co-located with a partner).	• Active members in West Cork > 150 • Monthly Hours Exchanged > 200 • West Cork Coordinator funded for 2026
1.2: National Hub Development Plan: Create a "Hub-in-a-Box" toolkit for launching new hubs.	1.2a: Research and finalise the hub-and-spoke governance and financial model. 1.2b: Identify and begin initial conversations with 2-3	• "Hub-in-a-Box" toolkit completed • 2 strategic partnerships for new hubs identified

	potential partner communities for Hub #2.	
1.3: Targeted Member Growth: Achieve national membership of 2,500+ active members by 2030.	1.3a: Launch "Refer-a-Friend" programme. 1.3b: Develop partnerships with key member sources (e.g., Tidy Towns, Men's Sheds, Family Resource Centres).	• Total Members: 500 (2026), 1,000 (2027), 2,500 (2030) • Member Retention Rate > 70%

Pillar 2: Financial Resilience (Funding & Sustainability)

Core Objective: To secure the long-term financial future of Timebank Ireland by diversifying income and moving from 100% grant dependency to a balanced hybrid model.

Key Initiatives (2026-2030)	Year 1 (2026) Priorities	KPIs
2.1: Secure Core Funding: Create a 3-year "Pathfinder" grant proposal to fund the central TBI team (CEO/National Coordinator) and core tech/admin costs.	2.1a: Develop a "Case for Support" built on the 1:16 SROI data. 2.1b: Identify and submit high-value, multi-year grant applications (e.g., Rethink Ireland, Pobal, Sláintecare).	• Core operational costs funded for 2026-2028 • 1x multi-year grant secured

2.2: Public Sector Contracts: Position TBI as a key service delivery partner for the HSE (social prescribing) and Local Authorities.	2.2a: Develop a formal "Timebanking for Social Prescribing" service package. 2.2b: Pilot this service package in West Cork in partnership with the local Social Prescribing Link Worker.	• 1x pilot contract secured with HSE or Local Authority • Revenue from contracts = 0 (2026), 25k (2027)
2.3: Social Enterprise Development: Launch a new, viable social enterprise to generate unrestricted income for TBI.	2.3a: Conduct feasibility study on 2-3 social enterprise ideas (e.g., B2B Timebanking, paid skill-sharing workshops). 2.3b: Select and business-plan one concept for launch in 2027.	• Feasibility study completed • Business plan for new social enterprise approved by board
2.4: Corporate & Philanthropic Giving: Build relationships with Irish businesses and philanthropic donors.	2.4a: Launch a "Friend of Timebank" corporate sponsorship package. 2.4b: Secure 2x corporate partners.	• €10,000 raised from corporate partners in 2026

Pillar 3: A Platform for Connection (Technology & Infrastructure)

Core Objective: To implement a user-friendly, scalable, and secure technology platform that members love to use and administrators can easily manage.

Key Initiatives (2026-2030)	Year 1 (2026) Priorities	KPIs

3.1: Technology Review & Decision: Select the right platform for our 5-year national scaling plan.	3.1a: Establish a board sub-committee for technology. 3.1b: Conduct a 3-month review of three options: 1. Upgrade BuddyBoss (via plugin development) 2. Re-evaluate Made Open (with new support) 3. Migrate to new platform (e.g., hOurworld)	• Tech review completed by Q3 2026 • Board approval for final platform decision by Q4 2026
3.2: Platform Implementation & Training: A phased and fully-supported rollout of the chosen tech solution.	3.2a: Secure funding for the chosen technology solution. 3.2b: Begin planning for migration/development (to start Q1 2027).	• Funding for technology secured • Detailed migration/dev plan created
3.3: Strengthen Governance: Build a robust board and governance structure capable of managing a national organisation.	3.3a: Recruit 2-3 new board members with specific skills (e.g., Finance, Tech, HR). 3.3b: Review and update all governance policies.	• 2x new strategic board members recruited • Governance review completed

Pillar 4: The Power of an Hour (Impact & Storytelling)

Core Objective: To capture and communicate our profound social impact to drive growth, secure funding, and influence policy.

Key Initiatives (2026-2030)	Year 1 (2026) Priorities	KPIs
4.1: "1-to-16" Marketing Campaign: Make our 1:16 SROI our core public message.	4.1a: Create a simple, powerful "1-to-16" marketing toolkit (one-pager, social media assets). 4.1b: Relaunch TBI website and social media to focus on this message.	• New website launched • 2x PR/media features secured
4.2: Impact Measurement Framework: Move from one-off studies to continuous impact measurement.	4.2a: Define 5-7 core monthly impact KPIs. 4.2b: Integrate KPI tracking into the new tech platform. 4.2c: Publish our first Annual Impact Report.	• Annual Impact Report 2026 published
4.3: Policy & Advocacy: Establish Timebank Ireland as the national thought leader for timebanking.	4.3a: Join relevant policy networks (e.g., The Wheel, Social Enterprise Ireland). 4.3b: Present our SROI findings to at least one government department or Oireachtas committee.	• 1x policy presentation delivered

5. Implementation Roadmap: Year 1 (2026) Priorities

Initiative	Q1 (Jan-Mar)	Q2 (Apr-Jun)	Q3 (Jul-Sep)	Q4 (Oct-Dec)
Pillar 1: Growth				
1.1a: Fund West Cork Coordinator	SUBMIT	SECURE		
1.1b: Re-Engagement Campaign			LAUNCH	ONGOING
1.1c: Secure Physical Hub	IDENTIFY	PARTNER	LAUNCH	
1.2b: Identify New Hub Partners		RESEARCH	CONNECT	PLANNING
Pillar 2: Funding				
2.1a: Create "Case for Support"	COMPLETE			

2.1b: Submit Multi-Year Grants	SUBMIT	PITCH	SECURE	
2.2a: Develop Social Prescribing Pkg	DESIGN	PITCH		
2.2b: Pilot Social Prescribing			LAUNCH PILOT	REVIEW
2.3a: Social Enterprise Study		BEGIN	COMPLETE	
2.4a: Corporate Sponsorship Pkg	CREATE	LAUNCH	SECURE 2	
Pillar 3: Technology				
3.1a: Form Tech Sub-Committee	FORM			

3.1b: Tech Platform Review		BEGIN	COMPLETE	
3.1c: Board Decision on Tech				DECIDE
3.3a: Recruit New Board Members	IDENTIFY	INTERVIEW	APPOINT	
Pillar 4: Impact				
4.1a: "1-to-16" Marketing Toolkit	COMPLETE			
4.1b: Relaunch Website		DEVELOP	LAUNCH	
4.2c: Publish Annual Impact Report				PUBLISH
4.3a: Join Policy Networks	JOIN			

6. Risk & Mitigation

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Strategy
1. Failure to Secure Core Funding	High	Critical	Aggressive Diversification: Do not rely on one grant. Pursue the multi-year "Pathfinder" grant, social prescribing pilot, and corporate sponsors simultaneously. Use the 1:16 SROI as the core "ask".
2. Inability to Fund Hub Coordinators	High	High	Prioritise "Coordinator-First" Funding: Frame all grant applications around funding the <i>people</i> (coordinators) who deliver the <i>impact</i> . Build this cost into the social prescribing and social enterprise models from day one.
3. Poor Technology Choice / Failed Migration	Medium	High	De-Risk the Decision: The Tech Sub-Committee (Pillar 3.1a) must include a member who experienced the failed Made Open migration. The review must include deep engagement with <i>current users</i> of all platform options.
4. Low Member Activity & Engagement	Medium	Medium	Coordinator is the Solution: This is a direct symptom of not having a funded coordinator. Prioritise funding the West Cork Coordinator (Pillar 1.1a), whose primary job is to re-engage members, broker

			"first-time" exchanges, and run social events.
5. Volunteer & Staff Burnout	High	High	Invest in People: Secure core funding (Pillar 2.1) to ensure all key roles are funded. Implement clear role descriptions, strong board support, and realistic, phased targets