

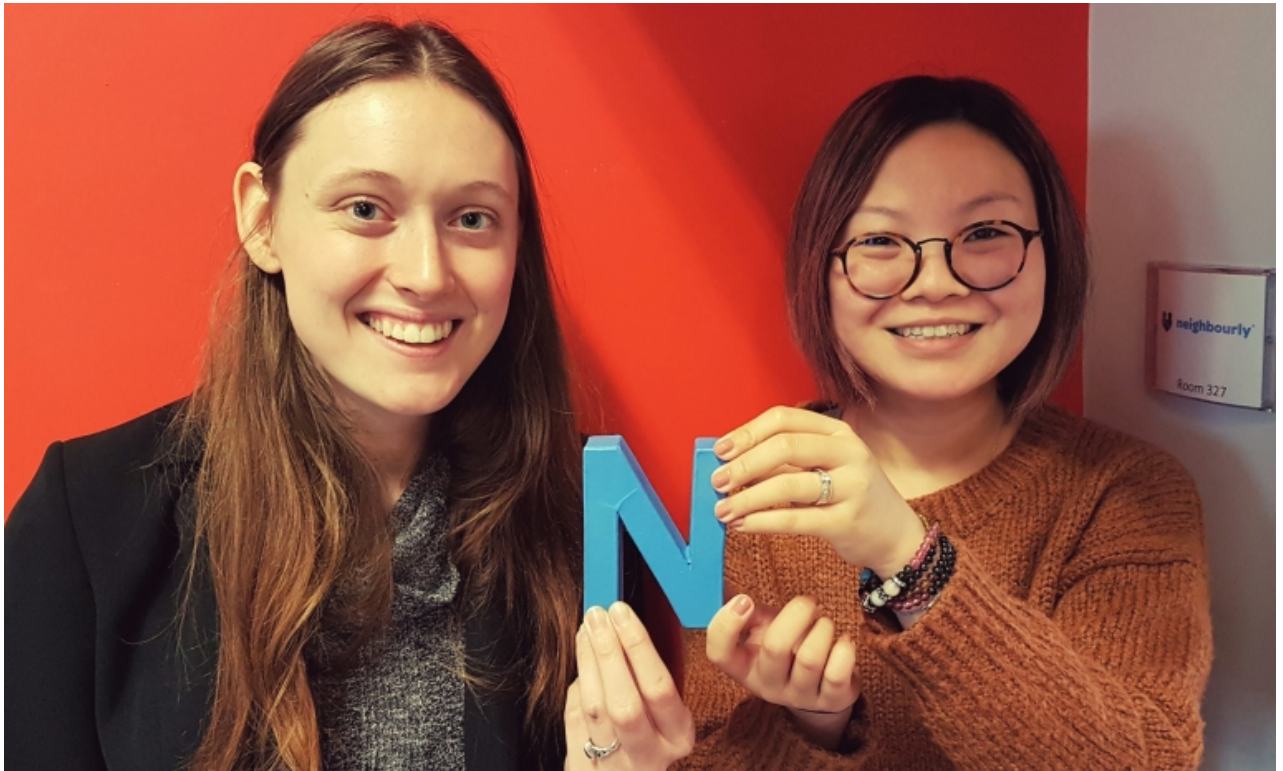
Interview

Beth Calverley: "There's no better feeling than being part of the positive changes that are being achieved all around us"



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Author: Núria Comas (Fundació Pere Tarrés)



Beth Calverley and Yang Yu are part of the Neighbourly team / Photograph: Neighbourly.

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Red nose day at Neighbourly / Photograph: Neighbourly.



Before and after weeding at Goblin Combe Eco Lodge! / Photograph: Neighbourly.



More than 500 tonnes of surplus food have been redistributed through Neighbourly / Photograph: Neighbourly.



Volunteering for Heineken's #BrewingGood programme / Photograph: Neighbourly.

Neighbourly is a social network that connects charities and community projects with local businesses and individuals in the United Kingdom. We talked with Beth Calverley about her experience as part of this organisation.

What is the mission of your organisation and what is your role?

[Neighbourly](#) is a social network that **connects charities and community projects with helpful local businesses** and individuals who want to empower local causes with donations of time, skills, money, or food surplus.

I'm Community Manager here at Neighbourly. I'm here to help project leads make their project pages shine and tell the remarkable story about their charity or group.

What is the best part of your job?

The best part of my day is talking to **project leads and hearing about the stories unfolding in communities** all across the country.

To give just one example, I recently learned a bit more about one of the projects listed on Neighbourly, a homeless youth shelter called **The Crash Pad** run by the [Pilion Trust](#). They give their young people a safe place to live while they recover the confidence and ability to pursue their independent futures.

While chatting to two former residents of The Crash Pad, I was moved how each of them individually spontaneously used the word "**family**" to describe what it's like at the hostel. This project stands out from other homeless youth projects because it offers more than just a place to crash – The Crash Pad team makes their young residents feel included, loved and supported long after they've moved on.

Projects like this are worth shouting about. The Neighbourly platform **empowers community influencers** to inspire people with their story and invite others to join in.

What is the social reality in your context?

There are organisers in every community who are working hard to make a positive difference for disadvantaged groups and inspire people to realise their potential.

Even so, there's only so much that a group or charity can do alone. **Collaboration is essential** to achieve sustainable, lasting change. That's why it's so important to build relationships between the building blocks of community – between families, schools, councils, community groups, organisations and businesses - that are based on mutual values, shared experiences and openness.

Social responsibility is no longer about ticking a box or being seen to 'do good'. It's about using our reach to involve as many people as possible in a shared mission to invest in local communities, to improve well-being and enhance people's lives.

By working together, we can build a movement towards a more helpful and neighbourly society where kindness is respected, valued and recognised for what it is.

What is the impact of your organisation?

So far, more than £4m have been pledged to local causes through Neighbourly, along with over twelve thousand volunteer days and 500+ tonnes of surplus food donations. And these are just the numbers!

For me, the real impact that Neighbourly has is empowering our community of over 4,500 projects to **achieve lasting changes** – money towards a new scout hut, exciting trips to the seaside for people living in isolation, healthy meals for people who might otherwise go hungry, and a council estate community orchard saved from closure.

Neighbourly gives users the space to build two way conversations with one another. They can post comments and images, create fundraising pots and volunteer events, and directly share their project across other social channels. This makes it easier for businesses and other helpful people to understand clearly where and how they can have

the most impact.

In a sector that holds clarity at its heart, the ability for projects and charities to **tell their story** in this way is incredibly powerful. As one project put it recently, "Through the use of the Neighbourly website, we've been able to raise our profile in a different dimension."

How do you expect your organisation to be in 10 years?

Neighbourly will be **the hub for community action** - a place where every socially minded business, individual and charitable cause will come together to make things happen.

We will have a strong and engaged community of projects, companies, volunteers, charities and helpful people from all walks of life who want to help. We'll have contributed towards a movement towards more sustainable, more neighbourly communities globally.

And of course, we'll be continuing to help projects and charities tell their stories while empowering businesses to use volunteering and other resources as tools to enhance well-being, improve the environment, and unlock the potential of their communities.

Could you tell us a special moment that you have lived in your organisation?

I love volunteering! Everyone here at Neighbourly gets free volunteer days to take part in volunteer events that inspire us.

In the summer, I helped out at a local environment centre for a day as part of Marks and Spencer's national volunteer programme [Spark Something Good](#). Together, we transformed the garden and hub where local groups come to learn more about the natural world. Our videographer knew about my other life as a Spoken Word poet – so he challenged me to write and perform a mini poem about the day on camera within a few minutes! There's no better feeling than **being part of the positive changes** that are being achieved all around us every day. I'm lucky enough to be able to see the 'before' and 'after'!

For more information, you can visit [Neighbourly.com](https://neighbourly.com).

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