



Kilburn Good Neighbours case study: George and Wael

Wael, 69, has lived in Camden for over 40 years, working as a structural engineer – you can see his work on many of the bridges on the North Circular. George, 31, has lived in Camden for the past four years, moving to the West Hampstead area two and a half years ago. He works as a lawyer in Wembley.

Wael signed up for Kilburn Good Neighbours after searching for IT classes in his local area and coming across Abbey Community Centre. George came across the opportunity online and has been visiting Wael once a week since February.

They meet for an hour and chat about everything – from history and politics to football (‘though Wael prefers rugby’, George adds). ‘I learn so much from Wael – his knowledge of history and languages in particular is unbelievable.’ George also comments that seeing Wael is a relaxing way to spend time as it gives you a different perspective on life.

Wael feels the same. ‘It’s good to see how younger people think... about politics, fashion and everything else. I’m 69 so most of the people I know are over 50 and George is my link to a younger generation, I’d have no connection otherwise. Although we found out that George’s girlfriend likes the same 60s and 70s music as me, like Fleetwood Mac!’

As well as the joy of learning from each other and widening their social networks (George has now met some of Wael’s friends and vice versa) Wael is especially grateful for George’s companionship as he has difficulty walking nowadays. ‘For someone in my situation, if you want someone to talk to, Kilburn Good Neighbours is the best way to get an introduction to someone. It’s very hard to meet anyone new otherwise.’

And George is equally happy to be a part of the scheme. ‘You definitely get more out of it than you put in.’