

In this episode, Brian Langton from Earl Shilton and Barwell Lions joins Samantha Boffin to talk all about Community Radio Stations, followed by some hints and tips that you may find useful in preparing to be interviewed on your local station.

For those of you who aren't familiar with the term FM and DAB as these are mentioned. FM stands for frequency modulation – a method of broadcasting high quality sound by radio. DAB stands for Digital Audio Broadcast. DAB radio uses digital technology to transmit sound.

Be uplifted, be inspired. This is Step Forward and Volunteer.

Welcome to the latest episode of the popular Step Forward and Volunteer podcast brought to you by Lions Clubs British Isles.

My name is Samantha Boffin and I'd like to thank you for tuning in.

If you haven't listened before, our aim is simple. We want to celebrate the positive difference volunteering makes to communities across the British Isles and beyond. To do that, we'll be speaking to those who give up their time to help others, inspiring more people to step forward and volunteer.

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But first, I have a favour to ask. We'd like your help in getting the word out about Step Forward and Volunteer. Tell your family, tell your friends - and if you're a Lions member, why not let other members of your club know about the podcast - and how easy it is to listen. All you need to do is either go on the website www.lionsclubs.co where you will see a link to the podcast, or you can search for Step Forward and Volunteer on apps like Spotify, Podbean, Apple podcasts and Google podcasts.

You can listen on-demand or subscribe so that you never miss an episode. We publish a new programme on the second Wednesday of each month, and we're really keen to spread the positivity and get as many people listening as we can.

So today we're talking to Brian Langton, a member of Earl Shilton and Barwell Lions. Brian is a volunteer broadcaster for something I love, an online community radio station.

Hello, Brian. Hello, how are you? I'm fine. Thank you. Can you tell us, Brian, exactly what is a community radio station?

Well, there's two types of community radio stations, there's one that you might call the official radio stations, and they're the ones that are licensed by Ofcom. And they have an

allocated frequency, either on the FM or the old AM radio so they used to have, and some are now moving towards DAB broadcasting. And there's the other part of it, which are basically just principally online.

Right? And so, which one are you, out of interest?

I used to be on FM. Now I work with a radio station or volunteer with a radio station that's purely online.

Very Interesting. So there must be a sort of range, a transmission range of a community radio station, or is there and does that differ depending on the station?

Well, if you have a look on the Ofcom website, which is really good, they say that, basically, a community radio station is given a frequency to transmit on, often with a low power transmitter, which gives them access to around five kilometres, just enough to be a city wide radio station.

And that's on the middle. That's from where the radio station is it. It has a sort of circular ring around it, if you like five kilometres.

That's absolutely right. Yes. And the idea being that, a, that you won't really interfere with other radio stations or try to steal listeners from another source, but it also allows other community stations to have a kind of slice of that radio spectrum, too. So you can have a number of community radio stations in a city for instance?

Yes, of course, yes. You don't want to have more than one potentially. So how did you become involved in your local community radio, what's your role there?

I've always had an interest in music from a very early day, my dad was in the forces. And I would sit on a Saturday afternoon and listen to all Glenn Miller recordings with him. And since then, that style of music has stuck with me. But in my early 20s I did some work in nightclubs and various mobile discos and things like that. So I got a flavour for music and broadcasting in a kind of way. Back 15 years ago, I was offered the chance to do some volunteer work for a radio station in Leicestershire, which I absolutely loved. And I then went on to do one or two other stations locally, I then broadcast to a station down in Bristol which was a dance music radio station. That was still in the early years of lockdown, and then I kind of moved on. And now I broadcast jazz, from a station just outside of Leicestershire.

Right. So you're a DJ at heart are you.

Loosely speaking, yes. But I grew up listening to the likes of Terry Wogan and Kenny Everett, which I think I've probably got my strange sense of humour from.

So they were very much personality led, you know, radio shows, so yeah. So the music was part of it, but their personality is that how you work yourself?

Absolutely, I love to broadcast live. I love to, to have audience feedback as well. So not just broadcasting music. We also have a simultaneous chatroom, so I could chat to the people

actually listening to the music and it's just good. It's nice to have that kind of oh how exciting.

So they come and be part of your radio show.

Yes, most definitely. Yeah. I love the interaction. I love to talk about music, and you get to meet some fabulous people as well.

So yeah, yeah, absolutely. So what does a community radio station have to offer a community group like, like a Lions club?

Well, it's interesting. I'm going to quote you from Ofcom. The community radio station caters for whole communities of different interests and particular ethnic groups, it could be an age group or an interest group. For example, you can listen to stations which cater for urban or experimental music or aimed at people and in religious communities or armed forces, etc. So you will find that a license, shall we say an official radio station by Ofcom is often community led, and it's by a non-profit organisation. That's the definition of a community station has to be non-profit. And as part of that, you'll generally find that they are a charity or have a specific interest at heart. So you might have, for instance, where I live in Leicestershire, there's a fabulous radio station called Take Over Radio. The incredible thing is, all of the presenters and all of the broadcasters are children.

Oh, how amazing. Wow, how exciting.

It's a wonderful experience. Listening to that. It shows that community radio stations, the license ones at least, tend to be kind of towards the charities that are of interest.

Right. So sounds perfect. Actually, for Lions.

Most definitely yes. And it is something that you need to bear in mind as a Lions Club. If you're thinking of working with a radio station, you really need to know what their focus area is, or parts of the community that they particularly want to service. Yes. And that is key to understanding that.

Yes. Well, absolutely. So would you advocate working with a radio station? So? I don't know. So getting involved with the advertising or the sponsorship? Or would you advocate creating one?

Both? Is the answer that one, I think the first one is interesting, because having talked about the segmentation of a community radio station into a various target audience. But to give you an example, on the children's channel, if you are a Lions Club, and you're creating a wellbeing event for the over 60s, then that channel may not be appropriate for you to work with. Because your target audience, probably just isn't there. Yes. However, Lions has a number of different kind of silos of activities that they're really focused on, and one of them is supporting children and their families who have cancer. So if you're looking at offering some sort of paid for services or counselling services for children, for instance, and their families, then a radio station that has children serving it is an ideal complement to your activities.

Yes, I see. Would take part of what you're offering is, as that Lions Club and utilise that part of it, if you like, within that radio stations remit?

Yeah absolutely. Right. Yes. Because if you're paid for advertising, for instance, then you need to get as big a hit for your money as you can. Yes, and but the interesting thing is that community radio stations are run by volunteers. And they generally tend to find that their remit is to provide a service based around a particular market audience. But by the nature of volunteers, they do have problems collecting, shall we say, information that is anything other than music, because it's very difficult to do. So if you're looking for features for your radio station, or you want to go out and talk to the public, it's quite difficult for a community radio station because it's very resource intensive. And it can cost an awful lot of money, right? So you will often find that if you are offering content to a radio station in the community wise, they will be very interested to hear from you because it gives them the opportunity to do something other than music, and to put out what they're supposed to be doing, arguably, which is outspoken content about the causes that they're very passionate about.

So Brian, I'm intrigued is a community radio station something that a Lions Club could set up themselves?

The answer is yes, there's a number of ways to do it. But probably the most effective way currently is, over the past year or so, Ofcom have been allocating what they call DAB access, which is the very high quality radio access for community stations. And there are a number of cities where they have Digital Audio Broadcasting. And we will find that there'll be a

number of communities or a number of charities get together and they create this digital radio network. So they will fund it, they will then effectively sublet it to charities, you have to go through the Ofcom process, you have to show them that you are of a community focus. But it's quite inexpensive. Where I live, for instance, you could access, create a radio station on the DAB network for maybe 150 pounds a month or something like that. Now it sounds a lot of money. But in the Leicester area, there maybe five or six Lions Clubs, you could all get together and create a Lions radio for maybe 20 or 30 pounds a month. It's a very cost effective way to do.

It is and of course the more clubs that were involved, the more people you've got to create the content and keep it all on air, because that's the intensive thing, isn't it?

Absolutely right. And once you have that infrastructure in place, and you share the manpower, which we're very good at doing in Lions, yeah, it gives you access to a very large number of people at a very cost effective way. And also you get to get your message out there. You can advertise your own community events. And you can also work with others and create content as well. So it's a very interesting way to do it. And I'm yet to find out whether any Lions Clubs have considered that, I think it's probably quite advanced because DAB has only fairly recently been introduced. But it is something that may be Lions Clubs could get together and probably look at, even if to go through the figures and find out whether it's achievable. But it's interesting what an interesting idea. Gosh, fascinating.

It is. And it's an incredible medium for telling stories. Yeah, and getting the message across in ways that television can't. You only have to listen to radio for the plays in the afternoon.

And you're there. but by listening to it, you're immersed. Yes, absolutely. And you become involved. And it's a great medium to actually get people involved in lions.

So Brian, what are the benefits of a community radio station? And what should we be looking for? Are there any downsides, for instance, are there any things that we should be looking out for that might not work?

I would suggest if you are considering moving into the community radio station arena, either by advertising, working with them or providing content, the first thing you do is to go on their website and have a look at the kind of organisation that they are. Very often you will find something called a media pack, which you can download. And it will give you a history about the radio station, it will tell you what their market segmentation is. And also if they have advertising what their rates are, and also how to contact their editor, if you want to provide some content. Once you have that, from the numerous community radio stations around you, you can start to work and identify which stations you can actually work with. And then from there, do you want to create content? Or do you want to advertise with them, but at least you will then have a better understanding of which station will serve you best?

Yes, absolutely. And where would you find, is there a list of community radio stations?

Where would you go to find that?

There is a list on the Ofcom website and there are around 350 community radio stations throughout the UK. Wow. These are the ones that are licensed. So these have an FM radio or a DAB radio frequency. On top of that, you might find ones which are online only. It may be five, 600. Good grief, technology at the moment is so inexpensive. And the ability to create a radio station online can be done by anybody. It may even be on a podcast basis. But you can still have your own badged radio outlets, which will attract listeners ultimately.

Wow. It's absolutely fascinating, audio is such a great way to communicate with people.

Yeah, absolutely. And from a lions clubs perspective, I know from my marketing part of our club, is that if you want to get information out it does cost you either by leaflets, or you can put some information online and in the hope that it reaches there. But it is labour intensive, and or costly. But if you can associate yourself with a radio station, either by advertising or providing content for them, you will reach a much wider audience much more effectively. And very quickly. And so the benefits of working with a community radio station far outweigh those that you can do on your own.

Wow. That's amazing. So, on that note, thank you so much. Brian, thank you so much for talking to us on the podcast about the community radio station.

You're very welcome.

Coming up we have some hints and tips from Brian Langton on preparing for a radio interview but It's time now for a short break, we'll be back after this ...

Never miss an episode of Step Forward and Volunteer listen, via www.lionsclubs.co or subscribe via Spotify, Podbean, Apple podcasts or Google podcasts.

If you're thinking of working with your local community based radio station, then here's some hints and tips that you might find useful. You could for instance, advertise your events, talk about your organisation's work, ask for volunteers, or get coverage of an event you're putting on. If you're going to their studio to be interviewed, get there in good time. Don't feel rushed, or flustered, which will put you off when you're actually being interviewed. If you're being interviewed at home over the phone, find a quiet room, let the family know you'll be busy. Most of all, be prepared. Note down the main points two or three as you won't be able to fit in at everything that you want to say, and don't have too many notes or you may become confused. Talk about things that you know best and try to stay on topic. Also, don't forget, turn off your mobile phone before you start. Try to relax, everyone gets nervous, but it's usually gets easier once the interview gets started. And if you're likely to be speaking for a long time, here's a tip, have some water with you and drink it quietly. Don't forget, breathe. Very important when you're on the radio, and he stops you from your name. If he's a happy story, it's great to be positive and enthusiastic. If you're addressing a problem. It's also fine to sound serious, talk naturally and simply try to imagine you're talking to someone you know. Try not to fidget or tap a pen attics lightly to be interviewed live mentioned your website and social media pages. If you can't remember what they are, just use a one liner, Google the name of our club. And lastly, the more you're interviewed, the better you will become. So why not practice you can talk into your mobile phone to get that voice right. There's no need to use receive pronunciation just be exactly who you are. Get used to it and it will be enjoyable. You will love it.

That is all we have time for on this month's podcast. Don't forget you can also listen to past editions of the Step Forward and Volunteer podcast any time via www.lionsclubs.co or on Spotify, Podbean, Apple podcasts or Google podcasts.

Thanks once again to our special guest Brian Langton. The link to the Community Radio stations that Brian mentioned is

<http://static.ofcom.org.uk/static/radiolicensing/html/radio-stations/community/communitymain.htm>

and a big thank you to you our listeners as well. Take care and goodbye.