

LIBRARY OF THINGS

22

23

**Impact
report**

Introduction

It's happening...the world is waking up to borrowing rather than buying benefitting both people and planet. In 2022/23 we saw a record 10,000 items borrowed.

The urgency and challenge of the climate crisis laid bare at COP27 with the UN Secretary General declaring “Our planet is still in the emergency room. We need to drastically reduce emissions now”. Reducing unnecessary consumption and increasing the use and longevity of products is critical in emission reduction. In 2022/23 rentals from Library of Things amounted to more than 124 tonnes of CO2e avoided through manufacture reduction and waste prevention.

The cost of living crisis has brought soaring costs, 1 in 4 adults are borrowing more money and around 6 in 10 are spending less on non-essentials. Affordable options like rental are needed by society more than ever, with Library of Things borrowers saving more than £300,000 in the last year alone.

More than 1 in 10 shop units are empty on our high streets as costs increase and online shopping squeezes out traditional retail, including sadly, our host location in Finsbury Park. Despite these challenges we've worked with forward thinking councils to bring a Library of Things to 5 new communities and across all our locations brought 25,000 additional visitors to valuable community spaces from libraries to shopping centres.

Despite numerous challenges, the tide is turning and circular solutions are becoming not only commonplace but a critical part of how our economy and society are evolving with the largest segment of consumers now being those that are purpose driven.

At Library of Things we continue to see burgeoning demand for access to borrowing, exciting new partnerships and a surge in enquiries from other organisations wanting to harness our technology to power rental.

**So watch this space...
Rental is going mainstream!**



Proudly presented by Bex Trevalyan, Sophia Wyatt & Alexis Liming
Library of Things Co-Directors

Getting people borrowing

Access to borrowing is more than a transaction. It is about empowering people in a community to mend, fix and build where they might not have otherwise, put on a family film night, a street party or bring gardens and green spaces to life. Making it as easy to borrow, equipping people with skills and sharing the inspiring stories of what our borrowers achieve is central to borrowing becoming a societal norm.

10,000 items
rented in 12 months
(more than half of our
total to date!)

In 2022/23

10,065 +6,623
on last year

Things borrowed

6,982 +4,352
on last year

People borrowing

S P E E D Y

We introduced a new 6 digit code for collection & return making the process quicker and more accessible.

Skillshare events returned

With funding from London Legacy Development Corp, we delivered 5 fun, practical workshops on DIY and sewing machine basics to around 40 participants in Hackney Wick.

Our participants told us the workshops improved their knowledge and they enjoyed meeting new people and learning a new skill in a comfortable, welcoming environment.

“I have been learning to sew and borrowing Calvin the sewing machine has allowed me to do this with out a large upfront investment in my own machine!”

Una, Hackney Wick



Borrowed the
Sewing Machine

“It was brilliant and really easy to borrow. Really enjoyed using the hand sander and it was so easy to use once I had got into it!”

Naa, Morden



Borrowed the
Hand Sander



Helping the planet

Rental, especially for infrequently used items such as a carpet cleaner or a heavy duty pressure washer, dramatically reduces the amount of products needed by society since they are shared, ensures that product lives are extended through rigorous servicing and at the end of their life, they are properly recycled. This means emissions are avoided through less being manufactured and shipped, and fewer items being thrown away. In addition to this, through education and inspiration people become more aware of their individual impact and take action to repair broken items they own rather than replace them.

In 2022/23

+40 tonnes
on last year

64 tonnes

Waste prevented from landfill

+80 tonnes
on last year

124 tonnes

CO2 saved

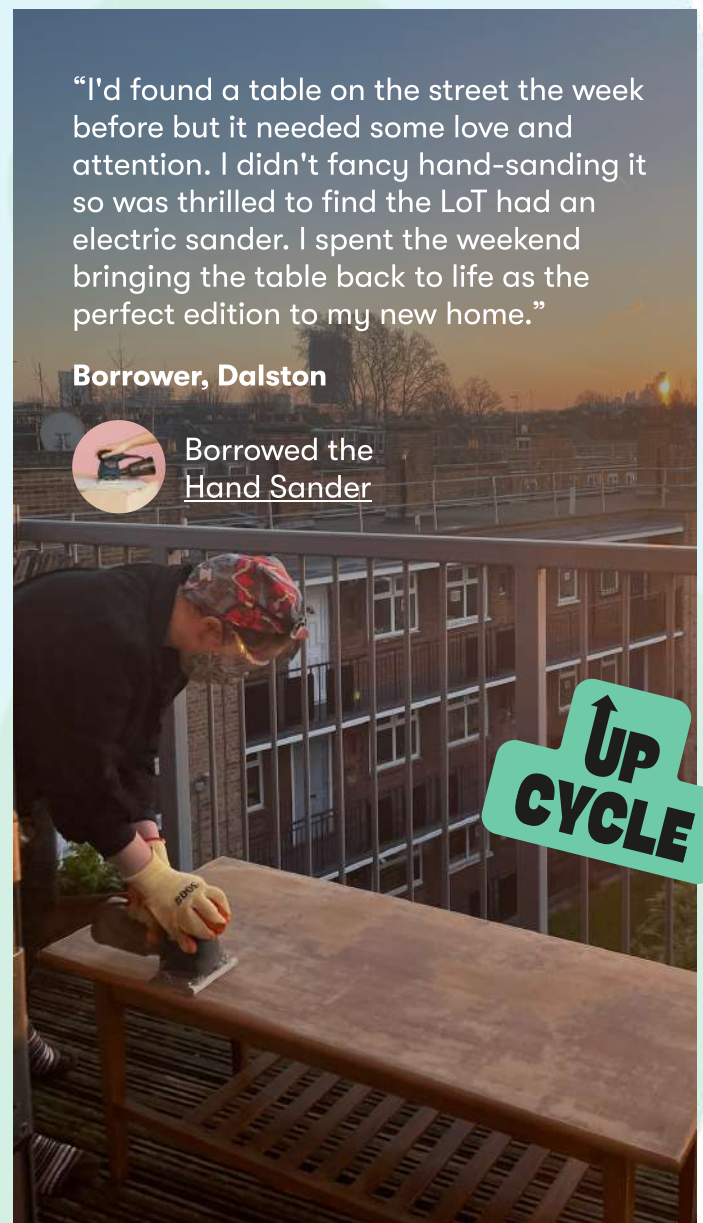


“My partner and I have a 7 year couch that has seen everything: we’ve dropped one million drinks on it, we’ve moved with it, we’ve dropped food on it, our cat has called it home for all this time, it had stains that I thought were gonna be with it forever. I heard about LoT and decided to borrow a carpet cleaner instead of buying a heavy, bulky, expensive item I was likely going to use a couple of times in my lifetime. It was such a smooth, affordable experience. The instructions on the website were also incredibly clear.”

Noura, in Dalston



Borrowed the
Carpet Cleaner



“I’d found a table on the street the week before but it needed some love and attention. I didn’t fancy hand-sanding it so was thrilled to find the LoT had an electric sander. I spent the weekend bringing the table back to life as the perfect edition to my new home.”

Borrower, Dalston



Borrowed the
Hand Sander

↑
**UP
CYCLE**

Saving money

Who wants to buy something that spends most of its time in a cupboard or garage when you can borrow one for a fraction of the cost to buy; just a few pounds a day. We also work with trusted suppliers to source high quality Things, our Thing Technicians lovingly look after them so they are safe and ready to use, and we supply them with everything you need from protective gear like goggles to accessories like drill bits and consumables like carpet cleaner tablets.

In 2022/23

£326,000

+£214,000
on last year

Saved by residents by borrowing and not buying

“Cut my hedge! My neighbours wanted to hire someone to do it at £180-250, so I was very pleased to be able to do it myself and save us all some money!”

Borrower, Crystal Palace



Borrowed the
Hedge Trimmer

“We had a problem with the doors sticking and I wouldn’t have the money for a planer only to use it once. Library of Things came through for an absolutely amazing price. Job done and the whole process went smoothly. Thanks a lot!”

Borrower, Woolwich



Borrowed the
Planer

Helping communities

Whilst it is our name on the kiosk, every Library of Things is launched in response to community demand run in partnership with local partners and allies. As we expand to new communities we see more opportunity to share what works and help communities accelerate their transition to net zero whilst also bringing people valuable community spaces, and providing access to useful Things that people would otherwise not have access to.

In 2022/23

+16,000
on last year

25,200

Extra visitors to community spaces

5 new location launches



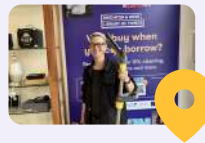
Hammersmith

Rubbing shoulders with traditional retail



Barking

One of the most deprived boroughs in London



Brighton

Our first partner-run Library of Things



Sutton

Our 10th London location



Kilburn

Our second location in Camden

Council Innovation

Hackney Council offered a **discount scheme** to residents so that they can experience renting from Library of Things for the first time

Barking Council offered **total discounts of £4,500** to enable residents to experience Library of Things for the first time

“Thank you so much for organising this, I really thought this was such a heartwarming initiative and because it was so welcoming, I think it can truly change the way we go about the sharing economy! I left inspired and happy. If I can help in any way with the next rounds of alike events or else please let me know. Thanks!”

Attendee

**Share, Repair & Learn
Kilburn Launch Event**



Working on ourselves

It's not all been plain sailing and like many, and as an organisation with limited resources, we are constantly challenging ourselves to be more efficient and more impactful. We don't always get it right but we are always learning and evolving to ensure that our Things are as affordable as they can be, safe to use, and we're making it as easy as possible for people to borrow.

Challenges



Finsbury Park closure due to economic climate causing host to close.



Balancing appropriate anti-theft measures with preserving accessible friction-free borrowing (while thefts are very rare, they have a disproportionate operational and financial impact).



Thing breakages & costs of parts, we're working closely with manufacturers to find circular & cost-effective solutions.



Diversity of locations = variations in uptake of borrowing. We're adjusting our pipeline as we learn.



Inflation hitting our costs, in particular the cost to fabricate our kiosks and the Things to stock it with.



Keeping up with ever-increasing demand and ensuring we have server capacity to handle more and more Borrowers.



Ensuring that we maintain the balance of delivering new functionality to grow our digital product, while also maintaining what we have.

What we're proud of



Over £1.5m funding secured including £700k crowdfunded from 249 investors.



New and renewed partnerships with mission-aligned organisations from grass-roots sustainability movements to forward thinking multinational organisations, including manufacturers.



We helped thousands of people discover borrowing with media coverage on [BBC London News](#), [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#), [This Morning](#), [The Times](#), [Daily Mail](#) & [Evening Standard](#).



'The Fair Exchange' our openly team-designed employment contracts, pay framework, perks and culture in line with our values.



We've implemented a 9 day working fortnight.



Protected weekly 'team topic' time for sociocratic decision making, knowledge sharing, learning and more.

Impact to date

19,800

Things borrowed

11,400

People borrowing

£640,000

Saved by residents borrowing
instead of buying

12

Locations served

49,000

Extra visits to
community spaces

110 tonnes

Waste prevented
from landfill

228 tonnes

CO2 saved

Focusses for the future

GROW FOR IT

Respond to the demand for access to borrowing and continue to launch in new locations, at least 6 in 2023/24

HOWDY PARTNERS

Use our scale to deepen and grow our partnerships with suppliers and like-minded organisations

KEEP IT CIRCULAR

Forge closer ties with the wider circular movement including other lending libraries, fixers and re-users

KEEP EVOLVING

Make the platform that we have build available to others so that together we can make rental mainstream

