

## **Library of Things**

Summary of discussion held on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 at the EcoHub

**Present:** Sheila, Steph, Charlie, Annie, Karl, Ben Machin, Ann Mullen, John Mullen, Andie, Margaret, Dave Seabrook, Chris, Anne.

On Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March we had useful conversations on what might be involved if Transition Chesterfield decided to launch a Library of Things. This could be a natural extension from our already highly successful Repair Café.

The session started with a brief outline of what Library of Things can be and can also be called. Some just lend household tools but most offer more than that, including party packs, camping stuff, sewing machines, jet washers etc. Included examples of ones that Margaret had visited, mostly on her travels associated with FixFest venues. Some have been opened on a large scale on an industrial estate/ large garage/ empty shop premises but also possible to use Portakabin. The nearest one to us and only one in Derbyshire has recently opened in Buxton – in an actual book library. Most groups started up by doing some market research on what items people would be most likely to be interested in borrowing (and also what they might be able to donate).

Brief discussion of general benefits to the group of setting one up and how it could be a sort of extension to the Repair Café that is now a regular feature on our monthly calendar.

Discussion in three smaller groups of possible **issues and opportunities**.

### **Issues:**

- Premises/ storage space
- Volunteers: need for regular coverage of rota, could a paid person be a possibility?, would need some expertise/training (e.g. use of booking software)
- Software costs – LendEngine or MyTurn are ones used by others. Venue/ storage space would need WiFi and electricity. Laptop?
- Membership/ deposits/ levels need to be decided (might depend on how expensive items held in the Library are)
- What to lend? Exclude certain things e.g. chainsaws, children's safety equipment such as high-chairs, car seats.
- Some items would use consumables for instance drill bits, cutting discs, cleaning agents
- Checking of items as arrive and leave, electrical items to be PAT tested before and after use
- Location – parking probably necessary, even if just loading bay. Cargo bikes possible (Bath Share & Repair have done this).
- Toilets?
- What about relationship with local hire firms?
- Preventing theft.
- Insurance.
- ID checks?
- Terms & Conditions, disclaimers, safe use of equipment, PPE
- Marketing.
- Legal entity such as CIC?
- Planning permission?

### **Opportunities**

- Possibilities of linking in with other established activities/ projects eg Time Banks, local libraries, Food Banks, Holme Hall Hub, Hasland Hub, etc
- Run other activities alongside, eg Techspace, Skillshares, Maker Space, etc

- Central storage with items dropped off at various venues, eg Food Banks, when they're open.
- Opportunity to build relationships with Borough Council
- Funding – Levelling up funding currently available. One of stated aims for the Community Grants fund is: 'projects intended to reduce material consumption through lending schemes, or support for redistributing old items'.

Are you interested in getting involved with a Library of Things? This could simply be sharing your own view on what would be useful to borrow, being part of a working group to set up a Library of Things or volunteering to help when one is set up. Anyone interested in getting further involved with this can contact Margaret in the first instance via: [chezrepaircafe@gmail.com](mailto:chezrepaircafe@gmail.com)