



Success in cutting carbon and building community

In the first six months of borrowing the tool library has accumulated over **500 pre-loved tools**, **100 members** and **200 tool loans**. It has saved nearly **half a tonne** of carbon and over **£5,500** in tool purchase costs for members. Here's how we did it.....

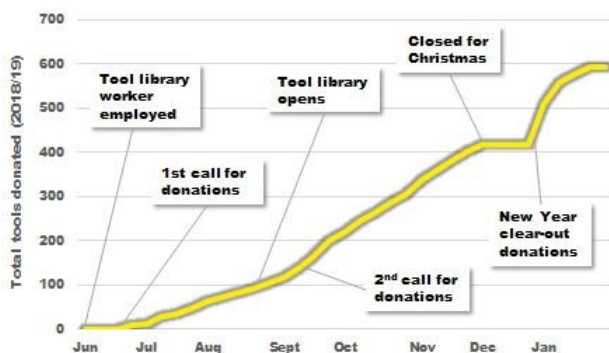
The Southside Tool Library was born out of a desire to tackle the carbon produced when we buy new products as well as repeated requests to South Seeds from residents to borrow infrequently used tools and equipment. Thanks to funding from the Climate Challenge Fund, we were able to employ a tool library worker to find out how we could establish the tool library as a valued, carbon-busting service for people living on the Southside of Glasgow.

Donations come flooding in

The journey started with a call for donations of good quality, working tools in June 2018. This call went out to over 2,500 followers on our Facebook and Twitter channels as well as through a targeted leaflet drop to houses (with attics and sheds for storage of unwanted tools) and cafes in the area and holding a stall at a local festival. After a couple of weeks donated tools started to trickle in to our office. A second call for donations in September resulted in a big increase in tool donations – our plan had worked and word was spreading like wildfire! Christmas clear outs yielded a particularly bumper crop of tools for us too. By January 2019 we had received nearly half a tonne of donated tools.

stored but wasn't suitable for being a tool collection and return point for various reasons. So initially, the tool library was run through monthly pop-up events in partnership with other local organisations. The pop-ups were based at the

The journey to tool donation success..



As of January 2019, almost 600 tools had been donated to the tool library, most of which have been added to the inventory and are ready for members to borrow.



partner organisation's site and consisted of a stall with a selection of commonly used tools that members could borrow there and then or reserve beforehand and pick them up at the pop-up event. Working with other organisations helped to raise awareness of the tool library in the community and was a no-cost way of getting the tool library out there to borrowers.

Finding a home for the tool library

Donations were coming thick and fast but the next problem to solve was where to run the tool library from, given that we had no storage capacity for tools at our office? We already had use of a nearby lock-up where tools could be

However, we recognised early on that limiting the opportunity to borrow tools to monthly pop-ups was also limiting the potential of the tool library to grow—people want to borrow tools when they need them not wait for next month's event. So we decided to figure out a way of using



our office, which is in a prominent location on one of the main streets through the Southside, as a base for people to collect and return tools.

Using the inventory system 'myturn' (<http://myturn.com>) allows tool library members to reserve tools at least 24 hours in advance. This gives the tool library worker time to pick out tools from the lock-up and bring them to the office ready for collection.

Building up memberships

Having operated on the Southside since 2011, South Seeds knows how to reach local people to let them know about new initiatives. So when the tool library had sufficient inventory to start lending out tools we began a marketing campaign targeted at potential borrowers.

A local graphic designer was commissioned to design a logo for the tool library so that we could give it a distinct identity that people would come to recognise. Posters and flyers were also designed and distributed to all the local cafes and coffee shops and our office A-board featured an advert for the tool library.



Our Facebook and Twitter channels were invaluable in letting people know that the tool library was open for business and we ran a regular 'tool of the week' post to highlight the wide range of tools available for loan.

After running the tool library for six months, we realised that not everyone had the confidence to use power tools. So, in January 2018 we ran a series of four DIY workshops through which participants were supported by the handy South Seeds staff and volunteers to practice using the tools in the tool library inventory. The workshops enabled 80 local residents to upskill themselves and increase their confidence in using tools through making furniture from salvaged pallets.



One participant said "Before the DIY workshops I had never used any power tools, I didn't really know what to do with them. After some one-to-one time with the tool library trainers I ended up producing a stool from reclaimed pallet wood! I was really proud of myself."

Saving carbon and bringing people together

In just six months of lending tools, the Southside Tool Library has gained **100 members** and loaned out **200 unique tools** (and counting!), saving **half a tonne** of carbon and over **£5,500** in tool purchases. We put this fast track to success down to a combination of a smart marketing campaign and making the tool library easy and affordable to access.

The tool library has also proved particularly popular with women – **70% of loans** have been by women. It appears that the Southside Tool library has broken down some of the barriers to women acquiring and using tools that can exist in traditional tool hire situations.

As well as saving carbon, the tool library is giving Southsiders the ability to borrow the tools they need to improve their homes affordably and easily as well as helping them to build connections with their neighbours and upskill themselves.

For more information about the Southside Tool Library call us on 0141 636 3959, drop into our office at 514 Victoria Road, Glasgow G42 8BG, visit www.southseeds.org/tools or email tools@southseeds.org



South Seeds is a Scottish charity (No. SCO42244)