



Spotlight



The Green Shed Sharing Library

March 2025



The Green Shed Sharing Library, encourages campers at the Broadford Campsite to borrow rather than purchase camping gear, and also provides a bike repair station.

Introduction

The Green Shed Sharing Library, located at Broadford Campsite, is a community-driven initiative aimed at promoting sustainable practices and resource-sharing, helping to reduce the environmental impact associated with manufacturing and transporting new products.

The library provides access to tools and resources that enhance outdoor experiences while fostering a culture of sustainability.



In addition, the initiative has evolved to include a bike repair station, ensuring it caters to both sharing and repair needs, particularly for the active tourists who frequent the site.

What's available

The Green Shed offers a curated selection of camping tools and resources to enhance the camping experience and promote eco-friendly practices:

- **Reusable Containers:** Offering reusable pizza boxes and stainless-steel containers for use in the local refill shop or with takeaways to minimize single-use packaging.
- **Tent Repair Kits:** Helping campers extend the life of their tents and reduce waste.
- **Binoculars:** Encouraging wildlife observation and fostering a deeper connection with nature.
- **Nature Guidebooks:** Providing educational resources that encourage mindful and informed outdoor experiences.
- **Bike Repair Station:** A new service aimed at supporting cyclists, a common type of visitor, enabling them to repair their bikes and continue their adventures sustainably.

Promoting Sustainability Through Sharing

The Green Shed Sharing Library helps reduce waste, decrease carbon emissions, and encourage mindful consumption by allowing shared access to camping equipment. By minimizing the need for rarely used items, the library reduces the demand for newly manufactured goods and fosters a collaborative community spirit.

However, the library's success highlighted a gap in the network: as many tourists travel between campsites, the lack of a Scotland-wide sharing network posed challenges for some campers. To address this, the Green Shed pivoted to not only focus on lending out equipment, but also repair tools, particularly for bicycles, which many campers bring along.



How it works

Access

Campers can borrow items from The Green Shed during their stay at Broadford Campsite. A simple deposit system ensures that borrowed items are returned in good condition. Campers receive guidance on responsible usage, and feedback is encouraged to improve the service.

Curated Collection

The selection of items is based on community input and seasonal camping needs. The Green Shed focuses on high-quality, durable tools that can be reused by multiple campers, ensuring long-term environmental benefits.

Community-Driven Approach

The Green Shed thrives on community involvement. Campers are encouraged to suggest new items for the library, and the local community can donate gently used equipment, strengthening the sense of community ownership and participation.

Adding the Bike Repair Station

Given the high number of tourists arriving with bikes, the introduction of a Bike Repair Station enables the Green Shed to address a key need for active travellers. This not only supports bike sharing but also promotes sustainable transport by allowing campers to repair their bikes rather than replace them. This addition has been a significant development, ensuring that tourists have the tools they need for maintenance and repairs.

Benefits of the sharing library

Environmental Impact

- **Waste Reduction:** Borrowing items reduces the need for short-term purchases, minimizing waste from disposable camping gear.
- **Carbon Emission Reduction:** Fewer newly manufactured goods mean a decrease in carbon emissions related to production and transportation.
- **Extended Equipment Lifespan:** Borrowing rather than buying extends the lifecycle of camping gear, decreasing landfill contributions.
- **Cost Savings for Campers**
 - Campers save money by borrowing gear they may only need occasionally.
 - This model also makes camping more accessible to first-time campers who may hesitate to invest in expensive equipment.

Enhanced Camping Experience

The library's resources enhance the camping experience by providing campers with quality tools, educational materials, and the opportunity to try new outdoor activities without the financial commitment of purchasing specialized gear.

Community Empowerment and Collaboration

The Green Shed fosters collaboration by enabling community members to donate, volunteer, and take an active role in the initiative. This empowers the community to support sustainable living and inspires other local projects.

Impact

- Cardboard waste saved per season **540** kg (0.54 tonnes); 0.594 metric tons of CO₂.
- Potential carbon emissions savings from **bike repairs: 4** metric tonnes of CO₂.

Key Learnings

- **Challenges of Fast-Paced Tourism:** The average tourist stays just 1.3 nights, which limits the time available for campers to fully utilize the borrowing system. Many visitors moved on before returning borrowed items, affecting the system's overall efficiency.
- **Need for a Broader Network:** A larger-scale or even nation-wide sharing network would allow campers, who often travel across different campsites, more locations for borrowing and returning items, better matching the service to their needs.
- **Addition of Bike Repair for Greater Impact:** To better serve active travellers, the introduction of a Bike Repair Station helps ensure that cyclists, who are a significant portion of the campsite's visitors, have the tools they need to repair their bikes. This addition aligns with sustainability goals and caters to tourists who rely on cycling as their primary mode of transport.

Looking to the future

As demand for the Green Shed's services grows, several exciting plans are in place:

- **Expanded Inventory:** Increasing the collection with more diverse tools and educational resources.
- **Local Partnerships:** Collaborating with environmental groups to provide workshops and events on sustainability for shed users.
- **Replication at Other Campsites:** Extending the sharing library model to other campsites in Skye and Lochalsh, building a network of resource-sharing hubs.
- **Support for Local Economy:** Partnering with local businesses to offer handmade or locally sourced camping accessories.

Sustainability Focus

The Green Shed aims to create a self-sustaining model by:

- Implementing a small rental fee or donation system to help maintain and grow the collection.
- Encouraging community donations and support from local businesses.
- Committing to a zero-waste approach by repairing and recycling damaged items.

Community Education and Scaling

Future plans include educating campers on the environmental benefits of sharing and mindful consumption, with potential collaborations with schools and environmental educators to inspire the next generation.

Conclusion

The Green Shed Sharing Library is an innovative, community-driven initiative that blends sustainability with resource-sharing.

By offering quality camping gear on a borrow-and-return basis, it significantly reduces environmental impacts, saves money for campers, and strengthens community ties.

The addition of a Bike Repair Station further addresses the needs of active travellers, ensuring the initiative continues to serve both campers and cyclists.

With plans to expand and replicate this model across Skye and Lochalsh, the Green Shed serves as an inspiring example of how sharing resources can create a more sustainable, collaborative, and empowered community.

Learn more: www.broadfordandstrath.org/project/green-shed/

The Highland Community Waste Partnership (2022-2025)

Funded by The National Lottery Climate Action Fund and coordinated by Keep Scotland Beautiful, the Highland Community Waste Partnership (HCWP) brought together eight community groups in the Highlands to reduce waste and promote more sustainable consumption.

Learn more here: www.keeptscotlandbeautiful.org/highlandcommunitywaste