GO ALL IN.

BOOKSHARE

Sharing a love of reading



Bee's Bookshare

Hello!

Welcome to your Bookshare toolkit.

In this guide, you'll find practical information and tips on how to create your own book swap club, inspired by Bee's Bookshare.



How Bee's Bookshare began

Bee's Bookshare

GO ALL IN.

In 2012, I couldn't find a book club to join in my hometown of Margate in Kent.

So I created one... with a difference.

I struggle to read set texts, which led to the Bookshare concept - coming together to talk about any book we've read, then swapping them (if we want to).



What is Bookshare?

Bee's Bookshare

GO ALL IN.

It's a book club with a difference.

It's bringing people together to talk about any book – whether they've loved or loathed it, couldn't get into it, or couldn't put it down. We then swap our books and go home with a new read.



- No set text.
- Any type of book, any type of reader.
- Friendly book banter.
- No judgement – any read goes.



Why Bookshare?

Bee's Bookshare

GO ALL IN.

Because not everybody wants to read the same book.

- It opens up varied conversations.
- It creates a vibrant dynamic.
- It breaks down barriers to finding specific books.
- It's less formal and less literary (in a good way).
- New and irregular readers find it easier to join and take part.



Meet Danny...

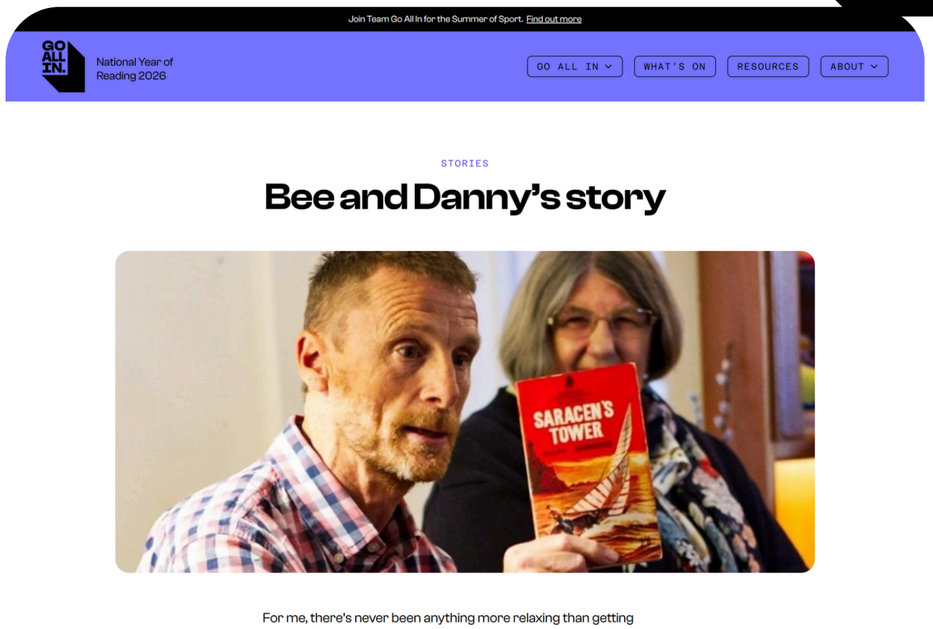
In 2012, Danny had just read Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code.

It was one of the only books he'd read as an adult.

He felt daunted in bookshops and libraries. So he came to Bee's Bookshare...

14 years later, Danny has read countless books of all genres and is an avid reader.

Read Danny's story at www.goallin.org.uk/stories/bee-and-dannys-story



"Taking that step to go to Bookshare, the array of books that I've read now: I love going into a bookshop and going 'I've read that, read that...' and that's all down to Bookshare."

Danny, book club member

Bee's Bookshare's impact

- Creating a joyful community of book lovers, welcoming all readers and making lasting friendships.
- Close to 2,000 books shared.
- Over 100 meet-ups.
- Over £4000 raised for local charities through book and reading initiatives.
- Radio and newspaper interviews.
- Book festival and author events.





> For those two hours, I am surrounded by like-minded people. The last 10 minutes feel like Christmas morning - Sylvia
>
> I've made so many countless friends I wouldn't have otherwise - Lorraine
>
> Bookshare has introduced me to so many people and books I'd never normally encounter - Erica

Creating your own Bookshare

Bee's Bookshare

GO ALL IN.

Bookshare is growing. Join the movement...

1. Find your why - fuel your passion (e.g. a crime fiction bookshare).
2. Find a place to host (where you feel comfortable).
3. Create a safe space where you feel at home talking about books.
4. Spread the word - social media, free event listings, news stories.
5. Choose your channel to communicate on - WhatsApp, email, social media (follow GDPR).
6. Make it fun, make it yours, make it memorable.



Creating a different space

Bee's Bookshare

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Bookshare is as much about the environment as it is about the conversation.

- Informal, relaxed setting.
- Fewer rules, more room for everyone to take part.
- Opportunity to try something new.
- Celebrating difference and variety.







Things to consider

Venue

Consider seating layout, accessibility, parking, facilities, and any costs e.g. hire/catering, reliable partners.

Format

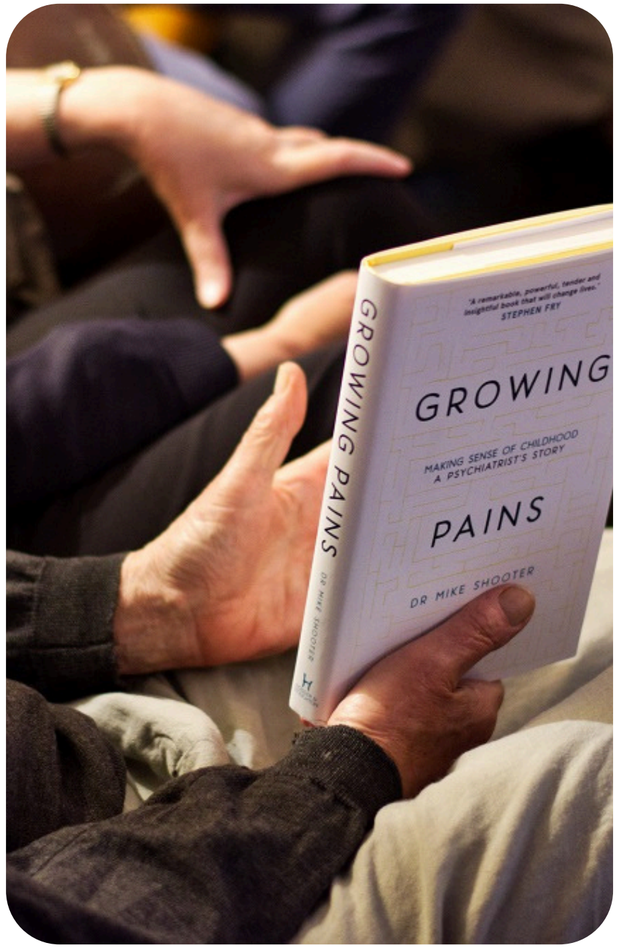
Decide on a format e.g. 1 or 2 hours, max 1-2 books per person, half-time break etc.

Manifesto

Create rules of engagement and share tell attendees e.g. non-judgemental space, everyone has the chance to speak.

Faciliation

Prepare for difficult subjects and differing opinions. Follow the tips on the next page.



Facilitation tips

Set a welcoming tone:

Greet everyone warmly. Briefly outline how your Bookshare works, ready for people to share 1-2 books.

Give equal speaking time:

Use a 2-3-minute time limit per person so that everyone gets an equal turn to share. Gently bring someone to a close if they speak for too long e.g. “Thanks for your valuable input, I’m going to move us on just to keep to time”.

Actively listen:

Briefly summarise each speaker’s key takeaway before moving on to show they’ve been heard and to connect shared themes in the Bookshare.

Critique the read not the reader:

Frame differences of opinion around the author's choices rather than personal taste to keep debate friendly and constructive.

Connect difficult topics with the text:

When heavy real-world issues come up, steer the conversation back to how the author handled the issue in the book.

Make book swap low pressure

Let people know they don’t have to finish a book. Make it the reader’s responsibility to return a book (not yours).

Book club inspiration

National Year of Reading

www.goallin.org.uk



The Reading Agency Book Club Hub

www.readingagency.org.uk/get-reading/our-programmes-and-campaigns/book-club-hub



Happy booksharing!