

Leith's Pay What You Want Bookshop

If you loathe waste but love books and believe that they should be readily accessible to everyone, regardless of means or circumstance, you will be thrilled about Leith's new addition.

Located at 120 Ferry Road, this is a "community bookshop" in the truest sense. The boxes outside marked "free books" aren't full of tat, as you might expect. Rather, they contain quality reads destined for those who might not feel comfortable inside a bookshop, perhaps due to homelessness, poor mental health, poverty or addiction.

A MIIKER CIC PRODUCTION

PAY WHAT YOU WANT BOOKSHOP

*Pay what you want,
and feel is fair.*



On my Friday morning visit the place was buzzing. But the front and back doors were left wide open, so it felt safe.

Stepping inside, I spotted a list of suggested prices: "Paperbacks 50p-£1, Hardbacks £1-2, Kids Books 50p – £1..." No wonder there are so many beady-eyed children here!

I find a young primary school teacher absorbed in the children's section. Clearly impressed, she explained: "As a new teacher, you can easily end up spending your own money on classroom resources. So a place like this is a godsend."



You might think that a "Pay What You Want" shop is a recipe for disaster. After all, everyone loves a freebie. But that's not the case. Just a few minutes spent chatting behind the till shows me how generous people can be when given the choice. Especially when they value the cause. (I leave £5 poorer, but genuinely elated!)

This certainly bodes well for the future. The not-for-profit Community Interest Company, Miixer CIC, receives no external funding at present. This means that all costs must be covered by trading income, and any annual profits will be used to create jobs in reuse.

This experimental bookshop is just one of several initiatives run by Miixer CIC, which was the brainchild of directors, Simon Glover and Susan Guy. Over the past year alone, over 15,000 "as new" books were donated to East Lothian schools, allowing savings of around £90,000. The company also operates ZERO DUNBAR and ZERO LEITH. Both premises collect quality, used items (clothes, furniture, bric-a-brac etc.) to be donated or sold cheaply back into the community.

Since its inception in 2017, Miixer CIC has supported scores of organisations, either by donating materials, or by providing a free clearance service. Among them are (at least) 18 primary schools, 10 secondaries, 22 nurseries, universities, hospitals and numerous charities in Edinburgh and East Lothian.



Wee mascot?

So what can you do to help?

Volunteer at Pay What You Want Bookshop, Leith

NB Volunteers must be aged 16+. Typical jobs include sorting, restocking shelves, alphabetising books and working front of house.

Donate

If you're a private individual, Zero Waste Sheds (for unwanted, quality items) can be found at recycling centres in Dunbar, North Berwick and Strawberry Corner. Alternatively, you can donate at the Zero Waste Shop in Dunbar.

Visit a Zero Waste shop

Zero Waste Dunbar is open Mon-Sunday.

Leith's Pay What You Want Bookshop is open on Fridays and Saturdays 10am -3pm

Pop-up sales are held on selected Fridays and Saturdays at the Zero Leith Warehouse (145 Pitt Street, Edinburgh, EH6 4DE). You can attend by booking a slot online.

For more information: www.miixer.org

Or email: simon@miixer.org



Co-founder Simon Glover with a lovely volunteer