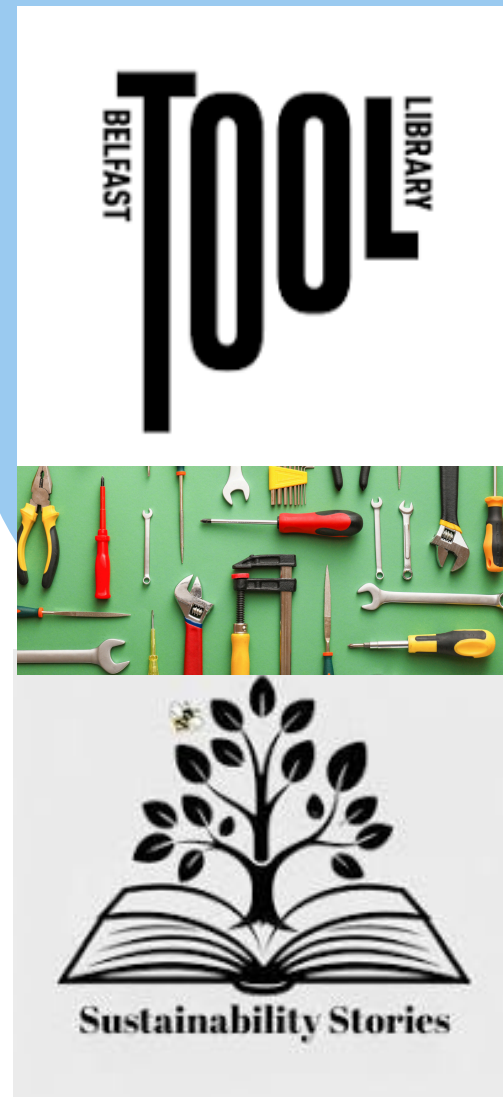


## Belfast Tool Library and Sustainability Stories

January 2026



### Circular Resources Shared Learning

# Case Study

## Introduction

This case study explores how Sustainability Stories participated in a member visit to the Belfast Tool Library, an initiative organised by Northern Ireland Resources Network as part of their Circular Resources Library Shared Learning programme. This visit provided an invaluable opportunity to gain first-hand insight into setting up and managing a community tool library, as well as to exchange ideas and network with fellow members dedicated to sustainable practices. Through collaboration and knowledge sharing, the experience aimed to inspire the development of similar ventures in their own community.

## Empowering Community Repair through Knowledge Sharing and Partnership

### Background

#### About Belfast Tool Library

They are registered charity and not-for-profit organisation, created by a group of keen volunteers with a shared passion to build community, swap skills, and share resources (and tools!). They offer woodwork classes for the general public and community groups, and open workshop sessions for members, alongside their ever-expanding library of tools.

#### About Sustainability Stories

They are rooted in sustainability, powered by community, driven by education, sparked by imagination.

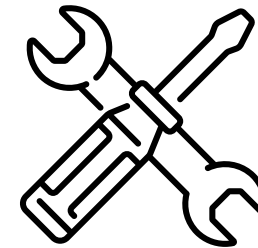
#### Nature of the Collaboration

Belfast Tool Library will host Sustainability Stories, including a BTL tour, workshop, staff meeting, and board briefing covering our history, growth, finances, and opportunities for questions. Through collaboration, the content will address their needs and support starting a similar tool library in their community.



### Presentation of Findings

The approach taken was with particular focus on addressing the main challenges and opportunities identified at the outset. The findings reveal significant insights relevant to the project's aims. The team was able to highlight areas of success, pinpoint factors contributing to progress, and recommend strategies for future improvement. These results provide a clear foundation for ongoing development and inform decision making moving forward. BTL offered a tour of their library and workshop facilities, orientation by two staff to their roles and operations and a presentation. Q&A session with one of their founders/directors and their treasurer/director about how the organisation was set up, run, funded, challenges and goals for the future.



### Benefits and Impacts

During our visit to the Belfast Tool Library, we were genuinely surprised by the level of organisation and thoughtful planning that had gone into the system. The space itself is exceptionally well maintained and provides an environment for teaching woodwork and tool handling that would surpass most technical colleges. This ensures that members are well prepared before borrowing any equipment.

Jane, along with Chris, Emily, and their respective teams, demonstrated remarkable dedication. Their warm welcome and the wealth of information they shared will be invaluable to us as we begin organising our own space. They assured us of their ongoing support throughout the process, for which we are extremely grateful.

The community is clearly well served by the Belfast Tool Library. The meticulous attention to detail, evident in the computerised system and smooth operation, left a lasting impression on us. It was clear that every aspect has been carefully considered to ensure the experience is seamless.



### Conclusion

Sustainability Stories visit to the tool library provided valuable insight into its operations, structure, and community impact. By observing firsthand how the library was established and managed, the organisation now possesses a clearer understanding of the steps involved in launching a similar initiative within their own community. Inspired by the success and practical benefits, they are well positioned to begin planning and implementing a tool library tailored to local needs.