

9

LIVES FURNITURE



Annual Review 2009/10

Watford and Three Rivers Furniture Re-cycling
Scheme known as 9 Lives Furniture

Registered Charity No. 1096086
Company Limited by Guarantee in
England and Wales No. 4375649

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Our Aims and Objectives

'Giving people and furniture a second chance'

Our aims and objectives are to help residents of Watford, Three Rivers and surrounding areas who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress by the provision of furniture and accessories and to provide vocational training, support and work experience for those who volunteer at the scheme.

We aim to achieve this by:

- Collecting good quality, donated furniture and other household effects which are no longer required by the owners and would otherwise be destined for landfill.
- Displaying furniture and household effects so that people in need can choose from these and have them delivered to their homes if desired.
- Recruiting and supporting unemployed volunteers, specifically but not exclusively, people recovering from mental health problems or who have a learning disability. The volunteers are offered training to enable them to gain confidence and learn skills that will prepare them for work.

The trustees and staff reviewed 9 Lives Furniture's mission statement at our annual strategy session in March and made minor amendments to reflect better the focus of our activities over the next three years. The revised mission statement is given below.

Our Mission

9 Lives Furniture opens new doors for all people with disadvantages in our community. Our services and training opportunities help people build self-esteem and confidence, provide stability and facilitate social inclusion.

We maximise the reuse of good quality furniture and prevent it from reaching landfill by supplying it to people who are disadvantaged in our society.

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Front Cover: Staff and volunteers on the 9 Lives Furniture van

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Chair's Report

After all the changes last year, 2009/10 has been a more settled year, with continuing progress and success.

The number of visitors to our showroom looking for well-priced second-hand furniture increased by 10% over last year. Nearly 70% (over 600) of these were new visitors to 9 Lives Furniture. The number of donors increased more modestly, by 2.5%, but we are delighted that donation levels have been sustained in the difficult economic conditions.

Our manager, Marie Frost, who joined us in 2009, and her team continue to make improvements to the showroom environment and the running of the scheme that have been well received by our visitors and students.

Our volunteers work unstintingly for the benefit of the charity helping with furniture removal, administration, helping people choose furniture, fund raising, administration and cleaning. The trustees too are volunteers and our thanks go to them, who so ably lead the organisation, and to all those who donate household goods.

Watford and Three Rivers are our key catchment areas. However, in October we received money from the Awards for All Lottery fund for a pilot expansion into Hertsmere and started raising awareness and building relationships with local organisations, as well as extending our van collection and delivery area.

Hertfordshire County Council (Innovations Fund) and others provided the funding to allow us to continue our popular training courses for students with learning disabilities or recovering from mental ill health. 48 students attended courses this year, in furniture restoration, personal development and warehouse and retail skills. We are now able to issue certificates ourselves for our EDI accredited training courses.

We have an extensive fundraising plan in operation to supplement the money raised from donations of furniture and the delivery charges made to cover the running costs of the van and the cost of fuel.

Continuing increases in the money raised from donated furniture and ongoing grants, together with reductions in many of our costs, enabled us to reach a breakeven financial position this year, providing a stable basis for our continuing success.

We are grateful for the support from the community for our service and hope they will continue to use us for all their recycled goods.

Deborah Durkin
Chair

August 2010

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Staff & Volunteers

Staff

Day to day running of the organisation is delegated to the following staff:

Manager	Marie Frost
Team Leaders	Donna Moriarty and Vanessa Troll
Drivers	Lyndon Griffiths and Daniel Leonard
Tutor (Refurbishment)	Robin Mursell

We are also grateful to those who help us in specific areas - Michaela Wells (Accounts) and Frances Simpkins (Personal Development course).

Volunteers

Our volunteers as always have been superb. Our thanks go to:

Drivers	Tony Brown and Neville Ward
Drivers' Mates	Jason Ashcroft, Steven Bolton, David Ford, Richard Kirk, Garry Lee, Gary Marshall, Bob Singh, Daniel Stubbington and Adam Theobald
Showroom	Melanie Griffiths, Kathy Harrison, Sue Hawes, Matthew Skinner, Annette Timms and Dolly Torkilsden
Refurbishment	Michael Holmes, Curtis Mitchell, Gary Smith and Ian Wishart
Housekeeping	Pam McConnon and Angela Pickford

Premises

We had a water leak under the car park last summer which was undetected for some time. Our grateful thanks go to Lynn Burnell (landlord) for getting the pipes repaired. Unfortunately the extreme weather this winter, as well as affecting our deliveries and collections, froze the water in the new pipes resulting in a lack of water to the premises. We are grateful for the tolerance of our staff and volunteers during this period.

The premises have been adapted to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act and the building has access on the ground and first floor for wheelchair users. We also have portable hearing loops and visual aids.

Donations of goods and provision to those in need

In the course of the year we have:

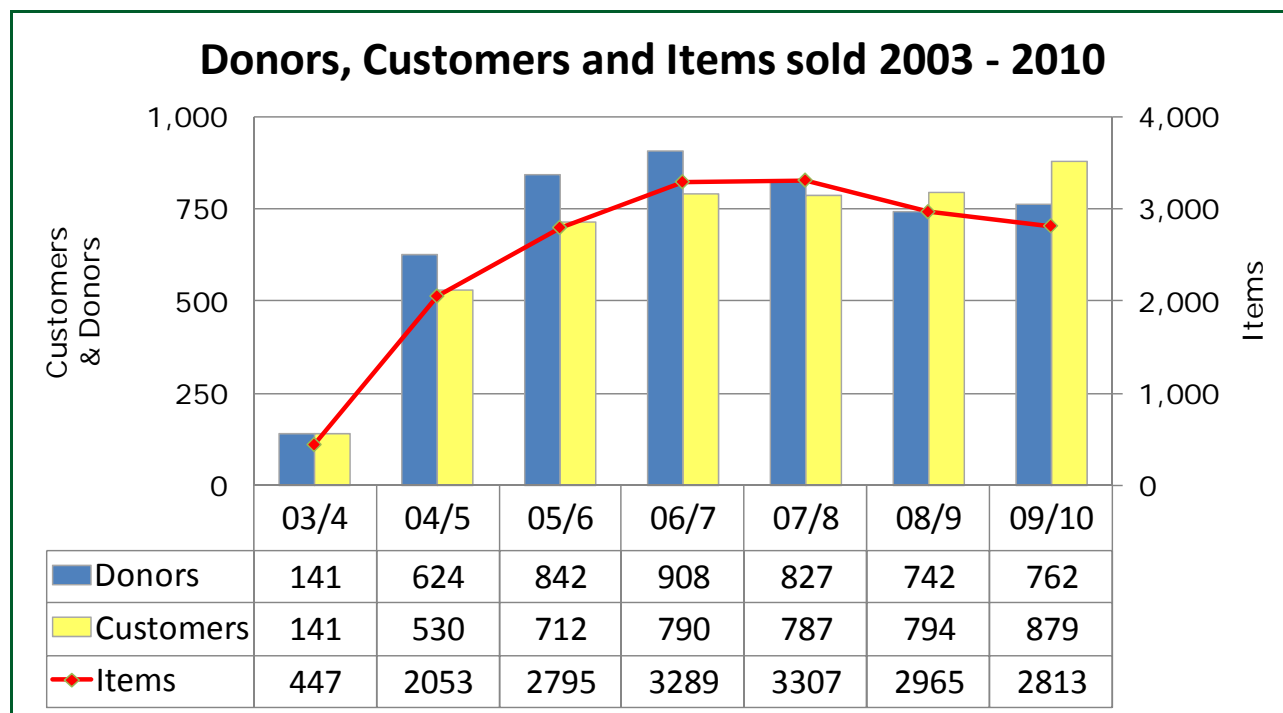
- Collected and delivered **2,800 items**/sets of furniture to over **875 families or individuals** in need
- Helped over **600 new visitors** to 9 Lives Furniture to select good quality second-hand furniture

Since opening in 2004, 9 Lives Furniture has provided over 17,600 items of furniture to over 4,600 customers. The number of customers has grown steadily over the years. The number of donors has grown since last year with, again, a large number of new donors in 2010-11. The number of items collected / delivered was lower in the last couple of years due to the

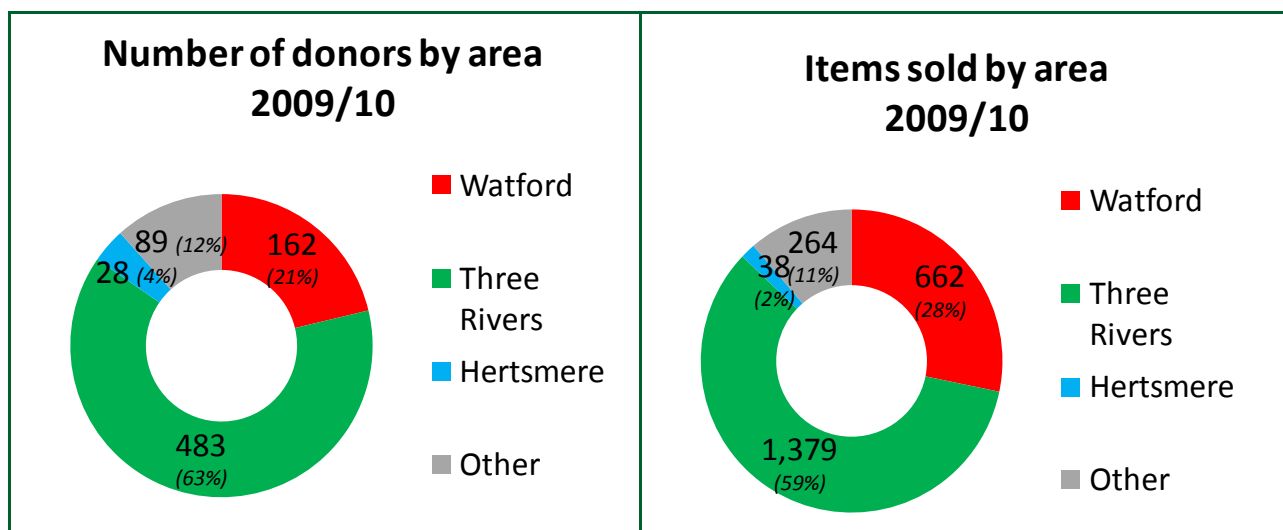
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reduction in the showroom hours and number of collections and deliveries (9 Lives Furniture shut on Mondays in November 2008 due to staff shortages).

The charts below give further details of our operations this year and since formation.

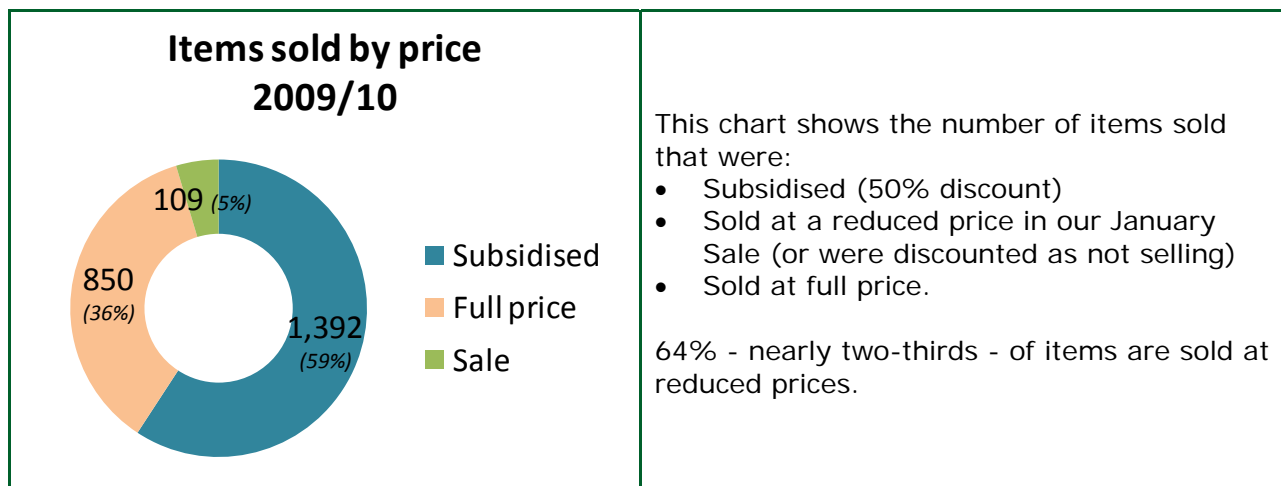


These charts give the current donation and customer base by area and the split between subsidised sales of furniture to those in need and 'full price' sales.



We expect to see the number of donors and customers in Hertsmere increase during 2010/11 as we become better known in the area and we increase our deliveries and collections.

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We are grateful to all the residents and businesses of Watford, Three Rivers, Hertsmere and the surrounding areas who donate their unwanted goods.

Training Courses

Training is provided from our Rickmansworth premises (and occasionally at a partner's location where more appropriate) and is focused on helping people with learning disabilities or experiencing mental distress to develop new skills and build their confidence.

Our first EDI accredited courses finished in 2009/10 with workbooks completed and certificates issued. We are now able to self certificate, with EDI providing external verification.



Students with their certificates and our furniture refurbishment tutor, Robin Mursell

Student numbers in 2009/10 were:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|----|
| • Furniture refurbishment | 20 |
| • Warehouse / retail skills | 12 |
| • Personal development and confidence building | 22 |

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Numbers were lower than expected on the Personal Development course – mainly because there are a number of other similar courses in the area. We have therefore decided to discontinue this course in 2010/11 and concentrate on courses where we have a unique proposition and / or there is a local gap in services.

Furniture Refurbishment – EDI Accredited

This course is run by our own tutor, Robin Mursell, in the workshop above the showroom.

Students refurbish items of donated furniture which are then returned to the showroom and very quickly snapped up by those seeking high quality second-hand furniture. The students take ownership of a piece of work and get a great sense of achievement from a job well done that also helps to contribute to the success of 9 Lives Furniture.



A donated cupboard **before** restoration



Students in our furniture refurbishment workshop with the cupboard **after** restoration

Personal Development and Confidence Building

This course is run by an external tutor – Frances Simpkins. The course aims to support students in building their confidence on both a personal and a work basis.

Warehouse/Retail – EDI Accreditation Skills for Working Life

This course is run in by our Team Leaders, Donna Moriarty and Vanessa Troll, in the showroom. Students learn about and support all aspects of running a shop including collecting and delivering furniture, customer service, warehouse display and general housekeeping duties.

*Since we started to provide training courses at 9 Lives Furniture over **350 students** have attended the courses we offer.*

Training Room Hire

We also gain valuable income through renting out our training rooms when they are not in use. This year they have been used by Steve Moody (upholstery classes), Lesley Keddy (I.T. training sessions) and Rickmansworth & District U3A (computer course).

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Waste reduction

The collection and provision of furniture continues to keep large bulky items of furniture out of landfill.

	This Year	Since Formation
Items of furniture	2,800	17,600
Tonnes diverted from landfill	60	380

*This year **2,800 items** of furniture – equating to nearly **60 tonnes** - were diverted from landfill to provide much needed support to households in need.*

Thank You

Funders

We are very grateful to the following organisations for the grants / donations received this year:

Awards for All
BusinessLink
Hertfordshire Locality Budget Scheme (Barbara Lamb)
Innovations Fund, Hertfordshire County Council
Jill Franklin Charitable Trust
Mr Fredrick Saker
Sir Julian Hodge Charitable Trust
St Albans Masonic Luncheon Club (through David Gauke)
The Alchemy Foundation
The Beatrice Laing Trust
The Couatts Charitable Trust
The Good Neighbours Trust
The Inman Charity
The Mary Kinross Charitable Trust
The Souter Charitable Trust



Other Partners

We are grateful to:

- Watford and Three Rivers Councils who refer donors to us
- All the voluntary agencies in Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere who act as referral agencies for those suffering hardship, especially Watford, Rickmansworth and Hertsmere Citizens Advice Bureaux, Watford CVS and the CVS in Three Rivers who continue to provide advice and assistance with training courses and with helping to find volunteers
- Northwick Day Centre, Stop Gap, Ascend, Turning Point, Work Solutions, Guideposts Trust and Dimensions who refer students to us
- Ascend who provide free / low cost training for our staff and also meet and offer advice to our students on completion of courses

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- Paradise Furniture Project who provide Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) training for our staff and volunteers
- Cinnamon Square who regularly donate bread for our volunteers' lunches.
- David Lee who designed our Hertsmere leaflet
- The Youth Offending Team who deliver our leaflets

Trustee/Directors

We would like to thank our Trustees who have given their energy, commitment and tireless support.

Irvin Cohen	(Treasurer/Secretary)
Lorna Cunningham	
Deborah Durkin	(Chair from 23 July 2009)
Rosemary Hadfield	
Pam Handley	(Chair until 4 July 2009 when she sadly passed away)
Iris Lusack	(Resigned 9 October 2009)
Albert Perahia	(Charity Secretary)
Joel Rose	(Resigned 19 January 2010)
Dolly Torkilsden	(Appointed 8 September 2009)
Pat Walton	



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