



## The story of The Mill

### Who we are & what we do

The Mill is an independent community 'hub' at the heart of Walthamstow, dedicated to helping local people make the most of their talents and skills.

We provide space so that local residents have the opportunity to run and attend classes and training, and we rent office space to local businesses and charities. Our large living room, at the heart of The Mill, provides newspapers, tea and coffee and games, and our well-stocked honesty library is available for anybody who calls in. Our children's room offers toys and books for any families that visit.

The Mill hosts dozens of regular groups, including our vibrant over-60s group (the Coppermill Recycled Teens), an Asian women's support group, English conversation classes, a book club, a knit night, and many more. We also help local people run a range of workshops and host art, music and dance events. The space is constantly evolving to meet the needs of local people, and anyone interested in setting up a meeting at The Mill – either as a regular event or as a one-off – can visit the building and speak to one of our volunteers, or contact us by telephone or email.

### History – how The Mill was born

When St James St Library was suddenly closed in 2007 residents began a campaign to reopen the library, but in late 2010 the Council announced that they intended to sell the building at auction. It was clear that local residents had to act quickly to keep the building in the community.

So residents applied for and were awarded a grant by the Neighbourhood Challenge scheme, run by NESTA (the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts). The Mill was one of just seventeen winning projects across the UK. Local people now had full responsibility for renting the entire building, to ensure that it was not lost to the community forever.

From the very beginning, Walthamstow residents were fully involved in bringing the building back into public use. Architecture students recruited through the local Redundant Architects Recreation Association (RARA) planned and created a space tailored to the needs of community. They were assisted by thousands of hours of volunteer labour from people across Walthamstow, who turned up on evenings and weekends to paint, clean, build – and get The Mill ready for everyone in the community.

### The future

The Mill is a registered charity, run by and for the local people, and over the past year it has taken its place at the heart of life in the community. Its future relies on the dedication and ideas of everyone who wants to use the space, and on the continued support of people across the borough. We are especially grateful for donations and support that local businesses and organisations can provide.

### Notes

The Mill is a new community space at 7-11 Coppermill Lane, on the site of the former St James Street Library. It opened in August 2011, and is run almost entirely by volunteers. The Mill is open six days a week (closed on Monday).

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