

# Go on, lend me that old lawnmower in the shed

► Community share website aims to help build neighbourhood  
 ► Finished with that DVD? Would the guy next door like it?

## TIM HARRISON

A LENDING, sharing website which aims to recycle goods and build community spirit is starting to take off.

Streetbank was set up by job headhunter Sam Stephens and IT consultant Ryan Davies to encourage sustainability and save money by lending or giving away underused items.

"It's like freecycle, but more local," said Sam, 32, who lives off Fulham Palace Road. "You pop in your post-code, it draws a circle round your home, and within that neighbours have listed skills, equipment to lend and things they want to give away."

In any typical mile circle in Hammersmith & Fulham borough, there are up to 150 items to borrow or have free... and the number is growing as word spreads.

Sam and Ryan have set up



**SHARING:** Sam Stephens of Streetbank

## WHAT'S CURRENTLY ON OFFER ON STREETBANK

**DINNER JACKET** Don't hire: borrow one for a formal evening function  
**ROCKING CHAIR** Free to a good home in H&F  
**BAG OF MATERNITY CLOTHES** Free to borrow  
**TRAY OF TOMATO PLANTS** All ready for planting in the garden  
**50in FLAT-SCREEN TV** Absolutely free; new owner simply collects  
**SONY PLAYSTATION** Now surplus to need, free to anyone in area

the [www.streetbank.com](http://www.streetbank.com) website as a purely philanthropic service.

"It's an expensive hobby," joked Sam, who aims to replicate the sharing culture he grew up with in a Hertfordshire village.

He believes it can help break down barriers, encouraging neighbours to talk to each other, and share resources.

Streetbank users have lent each other garden equipment, books and DVDs, and given away pianos, microwaves,

hedge trimmers, freshly baked bread and rabbit hutches.

Sam's reasoning is that everyone has something they no longer need, and something they might like instead.

"If we act independently, we only have what we own and what our bank balance allows," he said. "When we cooperate the sky's the limit!"

Fancy dress is a good example of something to borrow. After all, you might only need to dress up as a chicken once in your lifetime.

Is there risk involved? Sam doesn't think so; no more than buying things on eBay.

"Most people are trustworthy; most people who go on the site are the trustworthy sort," said Sam.

And after all, no money is changing hands. Services on offer could include teaching another language, or a helping hand to neighbours moving home.

"We seem to feel more awkward about asking for help from people we don't know," said Sam. "Hopefully this will allow us all to be there for each other! It gives me pleasure to see people connecting."

● Visit [www.streetbank.com](http://www.streetbank.com)