# Waterstones announces major expansion amid revival of physical bookshops



Waterstones, a once struggling UK high street bookshop chain, is set to significantly expand its presence in 2025, capitalising on the resurgence of interest in physical books amid increasing competition from online retailers. The company, which previously faced the threat of closure, is now poised to open dozens of new stores following a successful festive period that showcased growing consumer demand.

James Daunt, the chief executive of Waterstones, described the upcoming expansion as "really significant." Earlier in 2024, Waterstones opened 12 new stores across the UK, a move that has been pivotal in its ongoing growth trajectory. Speaking to the Financial Times, Daunt expressed confidence that the retailer would either match or exceed this number of store openings in the coming year. Although specific locations for these new outlets have not yet been disclosed, the chain's expansion marks a strong rebound from its near-collapse a little over a decade ago.

Daunt, who took the helm in 2011 when the company was described as "dead in a ditch," has overseen a remarkable turnaround. He previously revealed that Waterstones "came within a millisecond of losing everything," underscoring how precarious the firm’s position once was. Today, with over 290 stores across the UK and Ireland, Waterstones is experiencing renewed popularity driven in part by the influence of social media trends.

One significant factor contributing to the bookshop's revival has been the rise of “BookTok” – a book-loving community on the social media platform TikTok – which has propelled certain titles to bestseller status and encouraged a vibrant culture of book buying among younger audiences. Waterstones has actively embraced this trend, hosting a BookTok festival at its flagship Piccadilly store last year, which further boosted its profile and appeal.

Despite challenges faced by many physical retailers in the digital era, Waterstones’ business model, combining physical retail with strong community engagement and social media momentum, has enabled it to defy broader industry trends of shop closures and falling footfall.

The Daily Express has reached out to Waterstones for further comment on the details of their forthcoming expansion plans.

The Express is reporting that Waterstones’ growth comes at a time when many other high street retailers are struggling or shutting down stores, highlighting the varied dynamics within the retail sector.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.retail-systems.com/rs/Waterstones_Plans_Expansion.php> - This article reports that Waterstones plans to open at least 12 new bookshops across the UK in 2025, following a successful festive trading period.
2. <https://www.gbnews.com/money/store-openings-waterstones-uk> - This source highlights Waterstones' commitment to Britain's high streets by planning to open dozens of new bookshops in 2025, despite the trend of store closures.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/b719ade0-6b33-47c1-b35e-8b5c5422c6a2> - This article discusses James Daunt's plans for significant expansion, including opening about 60 new Barnes & Noble stores in 2025, adding to the 1,000 existing stores under Waterstones.
4. <https://www.punchline-gloucester.com/articles/aanews/waterstones-to-open-new-stores-in-2025-has-bookshops-in-cheltenham-gloucester-cirencester> - This source mentions that Waterstones plans to open at least 12 new bookshops in 2025, with existing stores in Cheltenham, Gloucester, and Cirencester.
5. <https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2025/01/waterstones-new-stores/> - This article reports that Waterstones plans to open dozens of new bookshops in 2025, following a 'solid Christmas' trading period.
6. <https://www.retail-systems.com/rs/Waterstones_Plans_Expansion.php> - This source reports that Waterstones plans to open at least 12 new bookshops across the UK in 2025, following a successful festive trading period.
7. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2048365/UK-high-street-shop-dead-opening-new-stores> - Please view link - unable to able to access data