# Moon Lane Books crowdfunding campaign highlights UK's independent bookshop challenges



Moon Lane Books, an independent bookshop in Catford, south-east London, which was honoured as Children’s Bookseller of the Year for two consecutive years, has launched a crowdfunding campaign amid financial difficulties. The shop, beloved by its community, is experiencing growing pressures due to the rising cost of living and diminished school budgets, which impact its collaborative projects with educational institutions. To date, the fundraiser has raised over £11,000 towards a target of £40,000, with the proceeds intended to cover operational costs and support the organisation of free community events.

The financial strain highlighted by Moon Lane Books reflects broader challenges faced by independent bookshops in the UK. While the sector saw a slight dip in the number of stores from 1,063 to 1,052 in 2024 according to the Booksellers Association, this remains close to a decade-high figure, illustrating the resilience of the industry despite economic headwinds. London, in particular, experienced a net increase in independent bookshops last year, with ten new stores opening even as seven closed, signalling ongoing confidence and demand for local, independent retailers.

The UK independent bookshop sector has undergone significant fluctuations in recent years. From a low of 867 shops in 2016, the market rebounded steadily to reach over 1,000 stores, with 2023 marking a record high of 1,072 stores. This revival is often attributed to a public desire for the physical bookshop experience alongside the passionate commitment of booksellers. Nonetheless, challenges remain acute, including competition from online giants such as Amazon, the ongoing rise of e-books, and escalating retail rents—issues detailed in reports from publications like The Telegraph, which noted the closure of longstanding establishments such as Richmond's Lion & Unicorn Bookshop.

Financial instability is a particularly pressing concern for many independent bookshops. A recent parliamentary submission revealed that over 60% of bookshop owners seeking external finance faced rejection, often due to credit histories or the complex impact of Covid-19 recovery grants on financial records. Consequently, many have had to depend on personal savings or informal loans, adding to the pressures felt by small businesses like Moon Lane Books striving to remain viable while maintaining their community roles.

Despite these challenges, independent bookshops continue to play an essential part in enriching local communities. They provide not only jobs but also cultural and social hubs, often organising events and collaborations that foster literacy and community engagement. Moon Lane Books exemplifies this role, using its crowdfunding efforts not only as a financial lifeline but as a means to sustain its contribution to Catford’s local culture.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c1kzejewe37o), [[2]](https://www.thebookseller.com/news/moon-lane-books-crowdfunds-8k-as-it-struggles-to-cover-outgoings)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c1kzejewe37o), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2v2r9rg1eo), [[4]](https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Independent%2Bbookshop%2Bnumbers%2Bremain%2Bnear%2B10-year%2Bhigh%2Bdespite%2Bhigh...-a0823540750)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Independent%2Bbookshop%2Bnumbers%2Bremain%2Bnear%2B10-year%2Bhigh%2Bdespite%2Bhigh...-a0823540750), [[6]](https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/international/london-book-fair/article/92066-london-book-fair-2023-u-k-bookstore-numbers-hit-ten-year-high.html), [[3]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/booknews/10654506/Decline-of-the-independent-bookshop-as-UK-figures-fall-below-1000-for-first-time.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[7]](https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/124117/html/), [[1]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c1kzejewe37o)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c1kzejewe37o), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2v2r9rg1eo)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c1kzejewe37o> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.thebookseller.com/news/moon-lane-books-crowdfunds-8k-as-it-struggles-to-cover-outgoings> - Moon Lane Books, an independent bookshop in south-east London, has initiated a crowdfunding campaign to raise £8,000 to cover its monthly expenses. The shop has a solid customer base but is facing financial challenges. The Bookseller reports that the shop has raised almost £8,000 in less than a week, highlighting the community's support for local businesses. The campaign aims to alleviate financial pressures and ensure the shop's continued operation. The Bookseller provides further details on the crowdfunding efforts and the shop's financial situation.
3. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/booknews/10654506/Decline-of-the-independent-bookshop-as-UK-figures-fall-below-1000-for-first-time.html> - An article from The Telegraph discusses the decline of independent bookshops in the UK, noting that the number fell below 1,000 for the first time. The piece attributes this decline to factors such as competition from online retailers like Amazon, the rise of e-books, and increasing high street rents. It also highlights the closure of notable bookshops, including the Lion & Unicorn Bookshop in Richmond, which had been a fixture for 36 years. The article underscores the challenges faced by independent bookshops in the current retail environment.
4. <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Independent%2Bbookshop%2Bnumbers%2Bremain%2Bnear%2B10-year%2Bhigh%2Bdespite%2Bhigh...-a0823540750> - A report from The Free Library highlights that, despite a slight decline, the number of independent bookshops in the UK and Ireland remains near a 10-year high. The Booksellers Association reported 1,052 independent bookshops at the end of 2024, down from 1,063 the previous year. The article notes that this decline is minimal compared to the low of 867 in 2016. It also discusses the resilience of independent bookshops and their role in local communities, despite the challenges posed by the broader retail sector.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2v2r9rg1eo> - A BBC News article reports on the resilience of independent bookshops in the UK, noting that despite a slight decline in numbers, they continue to 'buck the trend' of high street decline. The Booksellers Association reported 1,052 independent bookshops at the end of 2024, down from 1,063 the previous year. The article highlights the role of bookshops in providing local jobs, enriching communities, and supporting local economies. It also mentions the opening of new bookshops in London, indicating ongoing confidence in the sector.
6. <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/international/london-book-fair/article/92066-london-book-fair-2023-u-k-bookstore-numbers-hit-ten-year-high.html> - An article from Publishers Weekly reports that, according to the Booksellers Association, the number of independent bookshops in the UK reached a ten-year high in 2023, with 1,072 shops, up from 867 at their lowest point in 2016. The article attributes this growth to the public's desire for physical bookshops and the hard work of booksellers. It also notes that the number of independent bookshops has been increasing for the seventh consecutive year, indicating a positive trend for the sector.
7. <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/124117/html/> - A written evidence submission to the UK Parliament's Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee discusses the challenges faced by independent bookshops in accessing finance. The submission notes that over 60% of bookshops that applied for finance were unsuccessful, citing reasons such as applicants' credit history and the inclusion of Covid recovery grants in year-end accounts. It also highlights that many booksellers had to rely on personal savings or loans from friends and family to fund their businesses, indicating financial pressures in the sector.