

# Books for Free in Ashford on the Move

YOU can help keep our planet healthy by picking up a FREE book in Park Mall in Ashford.

There is no catch; these books really are free!

## What is Books for Free all about?

Set up by the conservational charity Healthy Planet, the Books for Free project aims to promote the recycling of unwanted books that would normally end up in a landfill.

‘The "Books for Free" initiative rescues unwanted books otherwise destined for landfill or pulping. Healthy Planet redistributes these books - for free - throughout communities via our Books for Free centres nationwide. By visiting the centres and taking a book, you are reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill each year and helping to recycle valuable resources. There is no catch and the only restriction is that a maximum of 3 books are taken at any one time.’ Taken from the Healthy Planet website [www.healthyplanet.org](http://www.healthyplanet.org).

## Where can you find Books for Free?

Books for free uses the Empty Spaces initiative, creating a link between commercial landlords and the charity sector. This allows Healthy Planet to occupy an empty retail unit rent free for a short period and then move on to another empty unit. This means Books for Free has recently moved. Don't worry; they have not gone far! Ashford's Books for Free centre can still be found very centrally, at unit 4 opposite Poundstretcher. The good news is, each relocation will usually remain within the main part of Park Mall.

Books for Free also have a storage and promotion space in the empty unit which was Adams. Look out for book displays and signs in the window, directing people to the shop at unit 4.

## Ashford Volunteer Bureau

Run by Pamela Possee, Youth Project Co-ordinator, Books for Free is a positive project for out of work 16-24 year olds in Ashford.

Pamela says, "Volunteering provides young people with an excellent opportunity to access and develop valuable retail experience including customer service, stock control, marketing, and merchandising. Volunteer mentors support young people in developing skills and improving confidence, which can be a distinct advantage to

those seeking employment -and I am pleased to report that a significant number of the volunteers have now gained paid employment!”

### Children’s Story Time

Books for Free is excited to start up a regular children’s story time for under 5s. The EYFS highlights the many benefits of reading with children from an early age, from helping early communication to developing the foundations for literacy skills. Qualified childcarer and part time volunteer Michelle Woollacott is keen to help run these sessions and says; “Why not bring your child along and help them get as excited about books as we are.”

Beginning on **Friday 4. May**, these half hour sessions will be held on Fridays from 10.30 – 11.00am and are free. No need to book, just turn up.

### Book Club

There’s something for adults too. Books for Free Ashford would like to begin a book club; a place to come and talk about your favourite book, to share the best bits of something you’ve recently read or are reading, and to recommend great reads. It is a fantastic way to meet people and to share good stories with volunteers and other members of the public who are also passionate about books.

Also starting on **Friday 4. May**, these sessions will run for 45 minutes and will be held on Fridays between 11.45am and 12.30pm. Again, this is free and will run on a casual basis –just turn up!

For more information about the Healthy Planet charity nationwide, visit [www.healthyplanet.org](http://www.healthyplanet.org).

To find out more about what’s happening in Ashford, contact Pamela Possee at All Things Volunteering, County Square Shopping Centre, Ashford. Email [Pamela@volunteering-ashford.org](mailto:Pamela@volunteering-ashford.org) or visit [www.volunteering-ashford.org](http://www.volunteering-ashford.org).