

Repair Cafes

A repair café is a communal event whereby people needing items fixing are matched with those with the knowhow to fix it. The idea behind it was to change the way we view our belongings, and trying to keep as much in use for as long as possible, breaking the over consumption, consumerist mentality.

If there is not a repair café in your area and you want to start one, we would recommend you checking out [Repair Café International](#), which helps organise repair cafes across the globe. They offer advice and guidance on setting up, including a comprehensive manual, which is available upon signing up. From finding the ideal location, the volunteers needed, and any finance that might be needed. They give suggestions on tools you might need, advertising ideas and even a timed checklist.



Yaxley Parish Council started the first Repair Café in Huntingdonshire at the end of 2019. They managed a few sessions prior to the pandemic and national lockdown and plan on starting sessions again as soon as it is safe to do so.

Due to the size of their chosen location, they opted for a booking system, but worked flexibly if time allowed for walk ins. They gathered a mix of repairers, who brought their own tools, and attendees were required to bring any parts they might need with them.

Their key learnings:

- ♥ Get you volunteers first so you can promote what they can repair, and people do not arrive with things that they can't get help with (eg if you have no sewers then cannot have clothes repairs)
- ♥ Try and find out what is broken so parts can be sourced before the day if required
- ♥ Get the repairers to bring their own project so if they have a quiet part of the day have something to keep busy with
- ♥ The café part is as important as the repairs, having someone to make tea and coffee and who is free to chat is great
- ♥ Have someone ready to greet people, deal with handing out 'House Rules' and feedback forms. Also, can introduce the repairer and the repairer
- ♥ If you join Repair Café International, they plot your café's location on their website and send you a toolkit along with all the logos and templates. (The 49 Euro fee is optional)
- ♥ Facebook has a Repair Café UK page, and this is really useful in seeing what UK repair cafes are doing <https://www.facebook.com/RepairCafeUK>
- ♥ Send a message to another organiser, they are often able to help with any questions and tips

- ♥ The Cambridge Carbon Footprint team are a great source of help and information, they have done zoom sessions for cafes starting out and can provide a lot of information and support in organising a new repair cafe.
- ♥ Insurance is something that needs to be thought about, BHIB insurance brokers arranged the one for Yaxley, it is approximately £250pa and is suitable for charities and community groups.

If you do decide to start a café, let us know. We would be very happy to promote your events and we can add you to the list on our [page](#).