



The BIG FIX 2024

Background

In 2019, a call to action was put out for residents of Devon to counter throwaway culture. Over 40 volunteers from Repair Cafés across Devon joined forces for the world's first 'BIG FIX', helping Devon's residents in fixing their broken household belongings with a record 268 items fixed in just one day, preventing all these items from going to waste. The following year the project grew its mission through going nation-wide. The BIG FIX 2020 saw 66 Repair Cafés across the UK have a total of two thousand people visit them, and a record 2,253 broken items fixed at the largest event of its kind.

From 2023, instead of running on one set day, The BIG FIX could take place 'Any Day in May' enabling more Repair Cafés to be able to take part, and with that 83 Repair Cafés joined in. This year has seen another increase in Repair Café joining in with an amazing 103 registering to take part.

Repair Cafés from across the British Isles have been invited to join through a variety of media, with the email invitation being the most successful. Other means included social media, press release, word-of-mouth, through Community Repair Network and the encouragement of county councils, such as West Sussex ([The Big Fix - West Sussex County Council](#)).

Repair Cafés are important for many reasons. They help:

- Reduce waste, as well as reduce pollution, save carbon, and save resources
- Reduce social isolation and improve social connectivity
- Save people money
- Individuals increase and/or their share skills, as well as offer opportunities for individuals to volunteer in a variety of roles.

With these factors in mind, Repair Cafés were asked to report on the volunteers and visitors alongside their repairs.

Results

1. Repairs

This year, representing England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, a total of 163 Repair Cafés took part, one of which RC Wales (which itself encompasses 61 Repair Cafés), and 66 Repair Cafés returned their data. Therefore, results returned were shared from 126 Repair Cafés (Appendix 1):

Item	Number of successful repairs
Bicycles	127
Tablets/Computers/Phones	67
Electrical items	937
Mechanical items, such as wind-up toy, battery-operated items, umbrella	241
Clothing/Textiles	424
Furniture	75



Jewellery	73
Additional repairs not already mentioned e.g., sharpening	512
	TOTAL = 2,456
Pro rata results for 163 Repair Cafés taking part	TOTAL = 3,177

These repairs (2,456 items) resulted in an emission saving (kg CO₂e) = -76311 equivalent to:

Driving 87,490 miles, flying = 282,884 miles, and showering 5,532 times

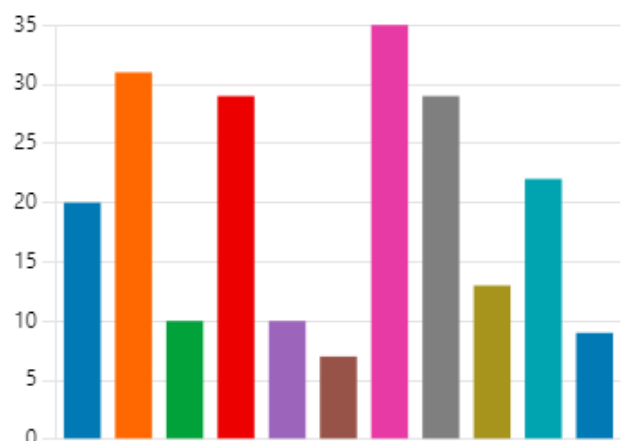


Several Repair Cafés reported that their events were quieter than normal due to factors such as the Bank Holiday weekend and that a local festival was taking part on the same day.

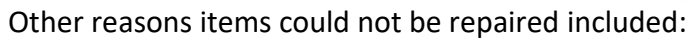
A total of 643 items were unable to be repaired and Repair Cafés were asked to identify why this was the case. The chart below gives the number of times a reason was identified across the 126 Repair Cafés.

Chart 1: to show the number of Repair Cafés identifying the reasons why an item could not be fixed

● Spare part/s not available - no longer produced	20
● Spare part/s not available - able to be sourced	31
● Spare parts too expensive	10
● Unable to open product	29
● Repair documentation unavailable	10
● Lack of fixing equipment	7
● Product too worn out	35
● More time needed	29
● More research needed	13
● Referred to specialist repairer	22
● Other	9



The results show that the main reason an item could not be repaired was because the spare part/s were not available – no longer produced, WITH THE second most voted for reason was spare part/s not available – able to be sourced.





2. Volunteers

Repair Cafés wouldn't be able to run without the army of volunteers who give up their time to undertake a one of the many varied roles, such as, meeting and greeting visitors, repairing, baking cakes and biscuits, making cups of tea and coffee in the café, promoting through social media and websites, and repair café coordinating and organising.

For 2024's The BIG FIX, **1348 volunteers** gave a whopping **3,909 volunteer hours**.

Repair Cafés were asked why their volunteers help and the main reason given by 57 Repair Cafés was to share their knowledge and skills, closely followed by helping people reduce waste, connecting with the community and giving something back to the community (by 56 Repair Cafés each).

**Table 1: to show the number of times a reason was given as to why
Volunteers volunteer at their Repair Café**

●	Help people reduce waste	56
●	Help people save money	50
●	Share their knowledge / skills	57
●	Connect with the community	56
●	Make friends	43
●	Give something back to the community	56
●	Sense of achievement	49
●	Sense of worth	35
●	Have fun	47
●	Other	8

Other feedback included:

- Chatting with other volunteers
- Enjoy the challenge of fixing things and the cake!
- Two daughters of repairers doing their Duke of Edinburgh
- Tea & cakes
- It's a Family Affair – we have volunteers from 6 families within our team!
- Serve the community and show the love of God

During The BIG FIX 2024, 23 Repair Cafés signed up 32 new volunteers 37 volunteers

3. Visitors

Repair Cafés reported a total of 3,060 visitors, and most were able to report on the age ranges of these: with the majority being aged 65 and over. This split was a common theme over all the Repair Cafés.

Visitors aged 19-34	Visitors aged 35-49	Visitors aged 50-64	Visitors aged 65+
203	291	454	522



The fewer aged 19-34 visitors could be due to several factors, namely they may be due to still living at home or recently moved out and items are relatively new and so in good working order or they are used to replacing items rather than having them fixed. This is opposite to older visitors who may have grown up in the 'make do and mend' era.

There was lots of positive Repair Café and visitor feedback reported through the data gathering form and the Facebook event pages.

- Birchwood Repair Café: "Happy that I don't need to throw it away and buy new"; "Excellent service, kept going until it was fixed"; "Wouldn't give up until it was repaired, it feels great going home with a mended item"; "So helpful & explained everything"; "Now we can cut the grass and not tear it!"
- Tideswell & District Repair Café: "We had a few visitors who just came for the coffee and cake and to soak up the friendly, welcoming atmosphere. We also hold a few resources that people drop in for as the Repair Café is part of our Environment Group including: a library of books about the environment and Ethical Consumer magazines that people can borrow or refer to; a nappy library; a seed swap."
- Bideford Repair Café: "I dug out my son's toy soldiers and was so pleased to see them reassembled and fixed."
- Proper Job: "A wonderful afternoon! Fantastic to see so many items repaired and a real mix of ages! Lots of skills being shared too!"
- High Bickington & Atherington Repair Café: "A lady who was widowed a while ago came in with an Anniversary clock in a glass dome which had stopped working. It was very precious as her husband had given it to her. We do not have a clock-mender on our volunteer team so I advised her that the volunteers would be very willing to have a look at it but may not be able to mend it. I did not want to give her false hope. Fortunately, the volunteers were able to get it working again. It meant a lot to her. Her gratitude was touching and made our day worthwhile. Alongside the RC we had a clothes swap, bric-a-brac, plants and seeds and seconds (from a local potter) stalls."
- Ashburton Repair Café: "We are inspiring the school aged children who are sometimes coming along with their dads."
- Blackdown Hills Repair Café: "110 cups of tea and coffee were drunk, 83 slices of cake were eaten, 65 bacon rolls were consumed, and we got over 70 smiles!"
- Uffculme Repair Café: "This year it coincided with our 10-year celebration of Uffculme Green Team, so it was a valuable part of a really successful day for us."
- Kingsbridge Repair Café: "A lovely day in the sun, great to see volunteers working alongside each other sharing their skills and stories."
- Bovey & Heathfield Repair Café: "We had a helmet set brought in by a gentleman who had been a spitfire pilot in WW2 – he was about to go on a celebration spitfire ride to celebrate his birthday and wanted to wear the original helmet and radio equipment he had worn when he used to fly the planes. We also had a child's Disney TV in the shape of a racing car which needed the DVD player repaired. An example of how we span practically a century with our repairs."
- North Hampshire Repair Café: "All volunteers can't get over the smiles on the faces of our lovely community customers."
- Petts Wood Repair Café: "A special toy repair always delights."
- Tonbridge Repair Café: "A canoe buoyancy bag had been chewed by a mouse. We managed a repair by poking a rounded patch through the hole, placing another on the outside and then protecting with tape."



- Chorley Repair Café: "I cleaned the contact plates, plugged in battery - the hedge trimmers worked instantly!"
- Stokesley and Villages Repair Café: "One happy owner declares the immortal words "another piece of tat that hasn't gone to the tip!"
- Repair Café Kenilworth: "The Kenilworth Town Mayor brought a coffee maker that the Town Council Secretary needed mending, we were relieved that it could be repaired as the Secretary is very influential for our publicity! The Chairman of Warwick District Council has decided to investigate setting up a repair cafe where he lives. A house plant watering can that had sat on the shelf for 2 years has finally had its leak fixed."
- St John's Harborne Repair Café: "My favourite item and the most satisfying repair was a fairly large ride-on child's electric vehicle, in the shape of a 'Vespa' scooter which I think had been rescued from the side of the road. It was completely dead despite having a new battery. After a bit of digging around it turned out the fault was a very simple one with the main switch not working. I was able to bypass it and put a new one in and it sprang to life. It could very easily have ended up in the bin otherwise."
- Transition Worthing Repair Café: "We have a fantastic, highly competent, very versatile, kind and talented team of volunteers who do a really wonderful job and that's always reflected in comments from visitors."
- Mytholmroyd Repair Café: "A young girl came with her dad and ended up volunteering serving the refreshments. She is already repairing and upcycling her clothes and buying from charity shops. This was so heartening to hear."



Repair Café Belfast:

"The place was buzzing, great to be able to help so many in the community get their broken stuff fixed - it's what we do!"



Dover Repair Café:

"We made a special 'The Big Fix 2024' cake, featuring the logo, which was very popular. Tea and cake always go down well alongside our fixing!"

Baughurst Repair Café:

"We did our bit for the Big Fix 2024 with over 100 people through the door and 73 items booked in. For the first time, we had 6 bikes in for repair by our superstar repairer Keith. 49 items sorted, 13 taken home by our amazing repairers to finish repairing and 8 needing replacement parts / going to specialist repairers. Only 3 items were beyond economic repair/ not repairable. All in all, a good day!"





Repair Cafe Leighton Buzzard / Totally Leighton Buzzard:

"We had the usual eclectic mix of items brought in which endlessly surprises me. I also took the opportunity to promote a raffle specially for "The Big Fix" event. The winner won a copy of "Wasteland" by Oliver Franklin-Wallis.

The team were delighted to welcome Cllr Tracey Wye, lead Councillor for the Environment, who reported "On Saturday, I visited the Leighton Buzzard repair cafe and was mightily impressed with what they are doing. All sorts of items were brought in for assessment, from a limbless teddy to a powerless radio, from a dashcam to a couple of vacuum cleaners, there was even a leaky jet-washer. Absolutely fascinating to see how the electrical repairs were carried out and I think everyone was relieved to see the bear reunited with his arms and legs. This is exactly what I hope the council can support more people setting up in their communities.



Chesterfield Repair Café:

"Mavis and Michael brought in an Encaustic Art Stylus for repair, something Mavis uses for her art projects that she sells at local craft fairs. This has been waiting to be fixed for 2 years so she was very pleased that we were able to do it!

As an afterthought, Mike brought in the clock he's holding. They had already taken it to 3 local places for help with the problem to do with it not chiming properly so they weren't hopeful - but we fixed it!!"

However, there was one disappointing anecdote sent in by Eastside Repair Café: "One of our attendees saying how they believed it was better to buy a £10 toaster every year because they're too hard to clean... this is what we're up against!"

Lastly, Repair Cafés were asked why they had taken part in The BIG FIX 2024. There was great feedback and the following have been used as they either highlight the consensus or are pertinent to a particular Repair Café:

- Feels good to be connected to a wider community of repair cafes – and know that the small-scale action we are taking locally is replicated all over the country.
- To be part of wider community of Repair Cafes across the country and to send strong message to politicians and decision makers to make repair and reuse a natural thing to do in the UK.
- I felt the more data available the better.
- Sounded like an interesting thing to be part of.
- We are a fairly new Repair Cafe and wanted to join in with the annual national event. We'd love to hear how other repairs cafés got on.
- To support The Big Fix and help promote repair in the UK.
- To keep ourselves on the national map, benefit from PR opportunity, it wasn't anything extra for us to do other than this data form.
- To be part of a successful national initiative, which we have taken part in before.
- As we have enjoyed taking part in all of the previous Big Fix Events which have so well organised.



- To find out how we can improve.
- Want to contribute towards national fix numbers. Yes, it was our first one and I can safely say, we will do it again next year. Makes people aware of our repair café due to the publicity.
- We thought it would be a good opportunity to highlight our work (through social media posts and publicity) - this was achieved. We also wanted to feel part of the wider Repair Café movement.
- To add our data to the National picture so we can put pressure on manufacturers and politicians and to normalise repairing rather than buying new.
- We thought it would be good to see how many repairs were made across the month of May for 2024 and how this would hopefully increase in years to come. Repairing items is a growing movement and anything drawing attention to this can only be a positive thing.
- Support repairers make a difference to waste. Checking visitors in, serving a cuppa makes people feel welcome. Enjoyable, great to meet people, trying to help them. Every successful repair is satisfying, the look on visitors faces makes me feel great. I have a laugh with the other volunteers. I have a constant smile on my face. Using my skills to help prevent items being thrown away, make people smile hopefully. I like to sew and craft in my spare time and using these skills to help others is extra satisfying. Getting a sense of accomplishment when I repair fabric items to make them usable again. Taking visitor through repair stages gives them insight and a positive experience. Feels great saving items from the tip.

Appendix 1: Repair Cafés – data returned

Repair Café Belfast	Antrim
Repair Café Leighton Buzzard / Totally Leighton Buzzard	Bedfordshire
Woodley Repair Café	Berkshire
Eastside Repair Café	Bristol
Newport Pagnell Repair Café	Buckinghamshire
Marlow Repair Café	Buckinghamshire
Repair Café Milton Keynes	Buckinghamshire
Ivinghoe and Pitstone Repair Café	Buckinghamshire
Birchwood Repair Café	Cheshire
Ulverston Repair Café	Cumbria
Tideswell & District Repair Café	Derbyshire
Chesterfield Repair Café	Derbyshire
Wirksworth Repair Café	Derbyshire
Borrowash Repair Café	Derbyshire
Bideford Repair Café	Devon
Proper Job	Devon
High Bickington & Atherington Repair Café	Devon
Ashburton Repair Café	Devon
Ivybridge Repair Café	Devon
Blackdown Hills Repair Café (Hemyock)	Devon
Uffculme Repair Café	Devon
Tiverton Repair Café	Devon
Chudfix Repair Café	Devon
Kingsbridge Repair Café	Devon
Bovey & Heathfield Repair Café	Devon



Repair Café @ Brillsville Market	Devon
Barnstaple Repair Café	Devon
Landkey Repair Café	Devon
Ilfracombe Repair Café	Devon
Wimborne Repair Café	Dorset
The Black Door Shop	East Renfrewdhiy
Repair Café Lambeth	Greater London
Boothstown Repair Café	Greater Manchester
Moss Side Repair Café	Greater Manchester
Ringwood Repair Café UK	Hampshire
North Hampshire Repair Café	Hampshire
Overton Repair Café	Hampshire
Baughurst Repair Café	Hampshire
Repair Café Portsmouth	Hampshire
Southampton Repair Café	Hampshire
Leominster Repair Café	Herefordshire
Dover Repair Café	Kent
Petts Wood Repair Café	Kent
Sevenoaks Repair Café	Kent
Tonbridge Repair Café	Kent
Chorley Repair Café	Lancashire
Sleaford Repair Café	Lincolnshire
Twickenham Repair Café	Middlesex
Stokesley and Villages Repair Café	North Yorkshire
SHARE Oxford Repair Café	Oxfordshire
Oswestry & Borders Repair Café	Shropshire
Taunton Repair Café	Somerset
Lichfield Repair & Share Repair Café	Staffordshire
Repair Café Wales	Wales
Repair Café Kenilworth	Warwickshire
Repair Café Rugby	Warwickshire
St John's Harborne Repair Café	West Midlands
Repair Café Coventry	West Midlands
Transition Worthing Repair Café	West Sussex
Partridge Green Repair Café	West Sussex
Arundel Repair Café	West Sussex
Hassocks Repair Café	West Sussex
Henfield Repair Café	West Sussex
Over-the-Moon Shoreham Repair Café	West Sussex
Mytholmroyd Repair Café	West Yorkshire
Lover Repair Café	Wiltshire

Appendix 2: Repair Café Wales (includes 8 English Repair Cafés)

Swansea, Gorseinon
St Dogmaels
Ruthin

Carmarthen
Church Village
Cowbridge



Rhondda - Tynewydd
Re: Make Valleys - Maerdy
Pwllheli - M-SParc#AryLon
Porthcawl
Pontyclun
Penarth
Oswestry and Borders
Newport RE:MAKE
Monmouth
Maindee (Wastesavers Reuse)
Machynlleth
Llangollen
Flint Repair Café
Fairwater
Cwmgors
Conwy
Chepstow
Cardiff, Grangetown
Cardiff, Canton
Bridgend - Bryntirion
Beaumaris
Aberaeron
Abergavenny
Barry
Bethel
Caerphilly
Cardiff Cathays

Ebbw Vale
Ferryside
Gorseinion
Kidwelly
Llandovery
Llantwit Major
Mold
Newcastle Emlyn
Oswestry Climate Action Hub
Pembroke and Pembroke Dock
Pontardawe
Pontypridd
Presteigne
Rhondda - Pentre
Rhyl
Scoltan Manor
Swansea City Centre
Torfaen
Wreccsam
Barford
Great Shelford
Leek (Foxlowe)
Sawbridgeworth
Waysbury & Horton
Sandbach
Quarndon
Maidenhead