

I've heard about a Repair Café – but what is it ?

It's essentially a place where people can bring their items that are broken and get them repaired. They can also have a drink (or before Christmas and mince pie and mulled wine) and stay and learn about how to repair things themselves in the future if they wish. All for a donation to the running costs.

In Kington we started one with some help from the Malvern Repair Cafe group in June 2016 and it's been going well since then. (We first checked with a couple of local businesses to make sure we did not conflict too much) We have synchronised with the Arts and Craft market that runs for 9 months of the year from April to December on the 3rd Saturday of the month in the Market Square.

We started off with a core team of specialist volunteers and support from Kleen and have grown this to a team of 7 to allow some flexibility as to who helps each month. We are always interested in finding more people !

We will have a go at fixing a wide range of items that can be hand carried to us, including electrical appliances, mechanical tools, textiles, clothing repairs, computers, crockery, jewelry, toys, musical instruments, furniture. Almost anything in fact that could ideally be repaired in about 30 mins.

We have a reception area where you can take the chance to see some relevant books on repair ideas and complete the form giving details of your item so that we can keep track and there is a clear understanding of what will be doing. – these are the 'house rules' to avoid any confusion.

We bring all the tools and materials needed for a safe and successful repair in as many cases as possible.

Since starting in Kington we have been successful with returning over 200 items to use.

And we are repairing an unusually high number of toasters, so I'm not sure what that says about the region....?

Overall the advantages of the Repair Café include :

Repair of people's treasured items that might be either unable to be locally repaired or is presently uneconomic to.

Avoidance of resources going into the landfill, or recycling before their useful life is over.

Transfer of knowledge about how to repair and the general approach to fault finding

Provides an opportunity for people who have specific skills to share them with others in a useful way, with the positive social consequences that follow.

There are over 1275 Repair Cafes across Europe and at least 175 in the UK and the number is growing steadily as people realise what a good idea it is .

Locally as well as the one in Malvern I mentioned above, there is another just starting up in Ludlow, and another excellently organised one that has been running for more than 4 years in Llandrindod Wells.

If you need help to start one in Herefordshire then let us know in HGN, and here is the very helpful website from the Netherlands (where much of this originated) that can provide more information www.repaircafe.org

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