



ENNISCORTHY REPAIR CAFÉ

Interim Impact Report



SUSTAINABLE ENNISCORTHY

This report details the initiation and impact of Enniscorthy's Repair Café project, delivered by Sustainable Enniscorthy with support and funding provided by ChangeX and Accenture.

ChangeX supported by Accenture

1st November 2023

change X

accenture

Overview

Sustainable Enniscorthy hosted the town's inaugural Repair Café in the Presentation Arts Centre on Saturday 17th June between 10.30am and 1.30pm. The event was attended by over 50 people, with 34 repairs carried out by the dozen repairers that volunteered their expertise on the day.

Promotion has started and registration opened for a second Repair Café on Saturday 2nd December 2023, and planning is underway for a third repair café (evening event) in March 2024.

There have been many positive impacts from the project, including an increase in the members of the Repair Café project group, increased engagement on Sustainable Enniscorthy social media platforms, and new connections made with repairers and other community groups involved in running repair cafés around the country. We supported a series of 'Sew Saturdays' events for teenagers on clothing repairs/sewing skills which we are hoping to extend due to the positive feedback, and looking at the potential for running adult sewing skills classes in the New Year.

Preparations

Much of the preparation prior to the first event involved developing our own knowledge of Repair Cafés through engagement with more experienced repairer organisations and then building familiarity with the concept within our local community. The promotion of the event included notices in a local publication, Slaney News, as well as through our Change X project page, Sustainable Enniscorthy's social media channels, posters in the local library and selected local businesses, as well as directly engaging with other voluntary groups active in our community (including Mens' Sheds, Delightful Dollies, the Upcycle Movement, Wexford Local Development, Enniscorthy Tidy Towns). We also promoted the event during other community activities such as the Climate Café that Sustainable Enniscorthy facilitated during the Enniscorthy Street Rhythms Festival over the June Bank Holiday weekend.

We registered with Repair Café NL via ChangeX and this provided guidance and numerous templates which assisted with tasks like developing promotional material, signage, registration forms and drafting the house rules for the event.

To manage the bookings for the first event, we set up an Eventbrite page to allow both repairers and people with items to be repaired to register in advance. This assisted with preparations and allowed us to match some repairers with items prior to the event and also provided us with an opportunity to manage expectations as to the kind of repairs that could be undertaken. As many in the community were not familiar with the concept of a repair café, we also emphasised in the promotional material that everyone was welcome on the day to come and see what it was all about. We selected a Saturday morning for the event in a venue in the centre of the town as this suited the majority of the volunteer repairers and we also felt that we would have better attendance from those just curious to learn more about repair cafés.

We engaged with many of the local repair businesses in advance of the event to tell them about it, to get their support and find out how we could best support them through our repair café. One significant downside to having the event on a Saturday was that established repair businesses could not be involved on the day as they would lose a day's business to volunteer with us. A key objective of the Enniscorthy Repair Café is to support local repair businesses and so we are planning evening events in the future to accommodate the involvement of local repair businesses. Sustainable Enniscorthy produced a Repair Map of local repair businesses to display at the repair café and promoted the existing network of repairers operating in the town.

One significant challenge we encountered when preparing for the event was securing insurance. Despite approaching multiple insurance providers and other organisations operating in the repair space, we were unable to secure specific repair café insurance. In the end we had to rely on the venue insurance and curtail the range of repairs we could offer. The lack of insurance options for repair cafés is a considerable challenge for community groups seeking to initiate this type of event and we feel more attention is required at a national level to improve insurance providers' understanding of these events and the hazards and risks entailed. Thankfully we have been able to secure suitable insurance for the second event.

Funding

One of the first hurdles encountered when attempting to organise a repair café is pushback from potential collaborators who ask "who's going to pay this?"

The Change X funding has been essential for initiating dialogue with potential collaborators, be they repairers, venue holders or potential attendees. To date the funding has been spent on venue, insurance and materials, and on Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) training and equipment costs. In this way the funding has allowed us to upskill and also helped us to establish the idea that Enniscorthy Repair Café is a viable proposition in the longer term. An outline of the costs incurred to date is shown in the table below.

Description	Cost
Insurance	€150
Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) equipment	€350
Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) training	€542.85
Venue Hire - Presentation Centre (24/06/2023)	€60
Venue Hire – Templeshannon Community Centre (2/12/2023)	€100
Repair Café NL Registration Fee	€49
Tea, Coffee and Biscuits for repair café June 2023	€29.78
Water for repair café June 2023	€2.78
Materials – cable ties	€7.90
Materials - Sew Saturdays	€40.72
Eventbrite registration cost December 2023	€9.57
Total	€1,342.60

An outline of known upcoming costs are set out in the table below.

Description	Estimated cost
Venue Hire - Riverside Park Hotel (March 2024)	€175
PAT training travel & subsistence	€90
Promotional materials (posters, signage)	€20 - €50

Community Impact

Even before the first Repair Café was held, the prospect of the event generated curiosity in the community and initiated conversations about items to be repaired and helped us to identify people with hidden talents for various crafts and skills. The results so far have been very positive with plenty of engagement from local people and groups, as well as a few new members to our Change X group. The approximately 50 people who came to have a look, enjoy a cuppa and chat and even get something looked at or fixed all had nice things to say about what was being done. For many, this was their first experience of a Repair Café.

In addition to the 34 items registered at our first event, we also had some notable outputs in the form of network building and a Repair Map which was shared with attendees. Some of the established local repairers, like the Enniscorthy Men's Shed and local clothes alteration businesses, were able to make connections with others interested in these skills. The Repair Map showcased a selection of local businesses each providing valuable repair services in Enniscorthy, and promoted the national [RepairMyStuff.ie](https://www.repairmystuff.ie) repair directory. All this has contributed to our goal of developing a more circular local economy in our community.

Clothes repairs were popular at the first event with 12 textile repairs undertaken. Through conversations with the repairers, many attendees also indicated they would enjoy developing their sewing skills. This led to the group deciding to support the establishment of Sew Saturdays sewing group whereby young people could meet with experienced seamstresses to share their skills. We hope to extend this due to the positive feedback. There have been requests for adult sewing skills classes, which we hope to run in the New Year.

In addition, Sustainable Enniscorthy and some of our repair café repairers supported a local authority-led Halloween Costume Swap on 12th October 2023. This community event was held in the Riverside Park Hotel Enniscorthy and brought families together to swap their pre-loved costumes with 64 swaps in total.

Network Building

At a local level, the initial Repair Café has allowed the group to build connections with local repairers and local repair businesses, as well as expand the reach of the Sustainable Enniscorthy community group.

The regular Sew Saturdays events and the periodic repair cafés provide excellent opportunities for like minded people to come together and develop their repair skills and build relationships.

The project has also established Sustainable Enniscorthy on the growing network of community repairers and we have met with Jeffrey Roe of Tog Hackerspace and Dr. Steve M. Potter to share information and discuss potential collaborations in the future.

Sustainable Enniscorthy is contributing to a project led by the Rediscovery Centre in Ballymun, Dublin and supported by the Environmental Protection Agency into the potential for group insurance for repair cafés.

Plans for the Future

The next steps for Sustainable Enniscorthy are to continue the promotional work for the next repair café on the 2nd December 2023 in the Templeshannon Community Centre. Following the next event, we will schedule the plans for Repair Cafés in 2024 and continue to build our network of repairers, enthusiasts and attendees. In addition, we will continue to pursue training opportunities for team members where possible and keep upskilling those involved with our Repair Cafés.