

East Lothian Climate Hub



FIXING FOR A FUTURE



What, Why & How?

- Rosie Harrison, Project Officer

Fixing for a Future is a project of Sustaining Dunbar. I've been the Project Officer since it started in April 2020. The idea for a project including Repair Cafes and Repair Skills Workshops came about as the result of a survey conducted back in 2019 by Climate Action East Linton, asking local residents what they would most like to learn in relation to the environment and climate crisis. The answer: skills to repair belongings so as to reduce consumption, CO2 emissions and waste to landfill.

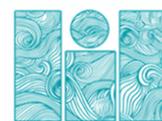
Over the last 4 years, thanks to initial funding from the Climate Challenge Fund, then the Community Led Lottery, and the energy, enthusiasm and commitment of 40-plus volunteers, Fixing for a Future has evolved to encompass East Linton Tool Library, with over 200 members, a regular Repair Cafe in East Linton (that has been on tour to Tranent and supported 3 other Repair Cafes to get up and running), and Repair Skills workshops across East Lothian, for young people, community and vulnerable groups.

The Tool Library at The Mart, East Linton, is run by a team of 8 volunteers. It's open twice a week and stocks a vast array of tools (for bike repair, gardening, home improvement, sewing, plumbing and woodworking, plus a thermal imaging camera), which can be loaned for a membership fee of just £25 per year. Our volunteers have the knowledge and practical skills to advise members on what tools to use and how to use them and ensure that, after each return, tools are all in order and ready for the next person to hire out. Since opening in May 2021 we have loaned 2306 items!

View the Tool Library inventory here:

<https://eastlintontoolibrary.myturn.com/library/inventory/browse>

Join the Tool Library here: <https://www.fixingforafuture.org/tool-library>



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Repair Cafe East Linton runs every 2 months and has become a community hub with a real buzz! People visit from all over East Lothian to get support and advice and to learn how to repair their belongings. It's a truly intergenerational project with volunteers from 8 years old to over 80, with skills and knowledge being learned, shared and valued. All our volunteers are involved in the ongoing development of the project and after each event we hear from other people interested in joining us. There's a strong camaraderie, both among the volunteers and the regulars who come along to the Repair Cafe - whether that's to get something repaired or just to soak up the atmosphere, take a breather and sit with a coffee, some of our delicious home-baked cakes and enjoy the easy-going company of our team.



Our skilled volunteer repairers fix sewing machines, small household electrics, household furniture, bikes, clothing, textiles and jewellery. Of course, some skills can't be taught quickly, but one of our main aims is to encourage people to try the repairs themselves; to gain confidence and have a go! It's not the same as a Repair Shop, where you can drop off your belongings and leave. The volunteer repairer will work with you and show you how to fix the item, so that if you have a similar issue in the future you'll hopefully know how to fix it! We offer a tool sharpening advice service, where you can bring your kitchen or garden tools, learn some of the many methods of sharpening, and have a go yourself with supervision. We also have an activity table for children, with opportunities to make jewellery, pompoms, bunting, felt animals, cushions – you name it!



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There's something for everyone and the Repair Cafe gains in popularity with each event. We're helping people save money, combatting social isolation, increasing meaningful connection in the community, and giving people confidence and valuable skills which they can share with friends and family. We're achieving our goals of reducing CO2 emissions, waste to landfill, and consumption and, perhaps most importantly, we're showing that repair is fun!

What has the last 4 years taught us?

- Make a start without funding

We'd love it if every community in East Lothian (and beyond) had a Repair Cafe! We were lucky to secure funding before starting ours but believe that, of the various activities and programmes we deliver, the Repair Cafe is one that could be started very small and with minimal funding. We have donation pots at each table and have found that visitors are generous in their financial support, both for individual repairs and also for the ethos of Fixing for a Future. We think the key to getting started is not money but having a few determined individuals with a plan!

- Recruit a large pool of volunteers

It means there's no pressure on anyone to come along to every Repair Cafe. By having a team WhatsApp group, volunteers can be part of the conversations and take part as and when



- Make sure everyone feels welcome, included and valued

There will always be a role for a volunteer, you just might not have thought of it yet!



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- Organise social events for volunteers to get to know each other

Team-building outside of events is important for the sustainability of any project; providing opportunities for everyone to get to know each other as individuals. It doesn't need to be fancy - a picnic, potluck dinner, quiz, a trip

- Keep the momentum going!

It doesn't always have to be a big event but keeps things moving forward, making sure everyone knows what's happening, why and is fully on board with it

- It's about community, community, community!

Yes, we have all our environmental aims – and yes, we are achieving (and are always aiming to be more ambitious with) those – but ultimately it's about people! So many meaningful relationships have built up within and around this project and it's the strength of those relations that keep us all going and makes us want to do more together!

- Make it fun!

Fixing for a Future wouldn't exist without all the great efforts of our team. Occasionally (very rarely!) visitors to the Repair Cafe get impatient. Make sure volunteers don't feel under pressure in any way; they're sharing their time, energy and valuable skills and we all need to slow down!



News Flash!

Fixing for a Future has recently been awarded £86,970 from the National Lottery Community Fund to develop a new campaign 'Against Fast Fashion!'

Over the next 3 years, we'll be working with schools and communities across East Lothian to develop a campaign involving pop up workshops, community sewing projects, over 200 textile repair classes and "Against Fast Fashion!" fashion shows to inspire participants and



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audiences alike to learn repair skills and make their own clothes. We'll also be further developing East Linton Tool Library and continuing to run regular Repair Cafes - plus, providing support and advice to any group wanting to set up their own Tool Library or Repair Cafe!

The project will give young people, including vulnerable individuals, the chance to learn in-depth practical repair skills while boosting mental health and well-being, saving money and helping protect the environment. We'll be collaborating with schools, environmental and social support organisations to help raise awareness of our project and our 'Against Fast Fashion!' message, showing that making new clothes from old can be sociable, relaxing, empowering and a really positive individual and collective environmental action!

To find out more about any aspect of Fixing for a Future, email Rosie:

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Visit:

<https://www.fixingforafuture.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/FixingforaFuture>

