



Make do and mend at Corsham Repair Café

Kathryn Houldcroft of Corsham Repair Café explains how it works.

PEOPLE IN Wiltshire are learning to make do and mend as a new repairing movement comes to the county. Originating in the Netherlands, Repair Cafés encourage customers to fix their broken household items for free, while enjoying a cup of coffee.

Corsham has been hosting regular Repair Cafés at the Pound Arts Centre since September 2013. Here volunteers and experts have fixed nearly 150 household items, from toasters, wobbly chairs and sleeping bags to bikes, computers and even an antique puppet.

The initiative is a joint venture between the Pound's café bar and Corsham's sustainability group, Transcoco. The aim of these quarterly events is to encourage people to learn to mend broken objects for free, rather than throw



them away. Once they have signed in at the Repair Café customers are sent to the relevant work station. Here, they work alongside both professionals, who give their time for free, and

Top: Volunteer Andy Ward fixes Tricia Mcleod's toaster at the Corsham Repair Café
Above: Computer expert John Douglas Davies offers advice to a customer

PHOTO OF TRICIA MCLEOD AND ADAM WARD (TOP) BY VOLUNTEER ANNA MACKIE; ALL OTHER PHOTOS BY PENNY ILLIS

knowledgeable volunteers who offer advice and help to fix the public's items.

Tricia Mcleod from Corsham has been a regular customer at the cafés. She says: "I think the Repair Café is a brilliant idea and a real asset to Corsham. It has really got me thinking more about fixing broken things instead of assuming they need to be replaced."

The Repair Café is really well run and there is always someone willing and able to help, or give advice as to where else to go if they can't fix things there. I am a delighted customer and the proud owner of a mended wobbly chair, piano stool and toaster."

Pip Parker, from Transcoco, has been involved with the Repair Café from the start and reinforces Tricia's belief that, with a little knowledge, many broken items can be fixed.

‘Many of us have forgotten that items can be repaired’

"Every year in Wiltshire we send thousands of tonnes of waste to landfill. We have got into the habit of throwing things away because they no longer work. Many of us have forgotten that things can be repaired."

"In Corsham we are helping people to save money, resources and waste by introducing them to experts who can help them to fix things at our drop in Repair Cafés. Our customers feel a great sense of achievement when they take home their newly mended item."

Anne Miller, from Colerne, was able to fix her broken toaster at the Repair Café with the help of electrician Andy Ward. Anne says: "Andy showed me what was wrong with the toaster and advised me where to order a replacement part and how to install it. When I got home I ordered the part and have now been able to mend the toaster myself."

Corsham Repair Café will be celebrating its second birthday on Saturday, September 19, from 2pm-4pm at The Pound in Corsham. Experts will be available to help mend small electrical items, bicycles, computers, wooden items, clothing and more. Admission is free but donations towards materials are welcome. **WL**

• For details visit www.facebook.com/transcoco or contact The Pound on 01249 701628.

Clockwise from top left: Electrician Andy Ward, from 1st Line Electrics, ready for action; Repair Café volunteer Dave Wilson takes a break to pose for photographer Penney Ellis and, below, helps a customer to mend a broken power saw; Andy Ward helps fix a customer's broken radio; Alison Miles, from Alison Miles Couture, specialises in wedding dresses and occasion wear in her day job, but enjoys the challenge of the Repair Café. She says: "You never know what is going to come through the door next."

