Kinross-shire Climate Cafe is proposing to set up a Repair Cafe in Kinross. This initiative would be the first of its kind in Kinross-shire, building on the experience of the Repair Café movement initiated in the Netherlands and the other local Repair Cafes in Crieff (Remake), Pitlochry and Aberfeldy.

Kinross-shire Climate Cafe group would follow the advice and experience of existing Repair Cafes using their guidelines for planning, safety measures, increasing participation and monitoring outcomes.

The aims of our project:

* encourage inhabitants of Kinross-shire to reduce waste through repair of their broken items with a positive outcome of waste reduction in the local area and mitigation of climate change,
* reduce living costs of the local population as it is usually more cost effective to repair a good quality old item than to purchase a new one,
* increasing resilience by learning how to do small repairs,
* encouraging to give items a new lease of life by upcycling them,
* develop community links and exchange of expertise in a practical setting of Repair Café events with encouraged participation from different age groups, but in particular young volunteers to provide educational opportunities,
* strengthen our community in climate change adaptation with a supportive pop-up climate café offered to the participants of Repair Café,
* provide swap shop facility to further reduce living costs and promote sustainable fashion.

Background Rationale

Waste is one of the main contributors to climate change responsible for 89 % all methane emissions (potent greenhouse gas) produced on landfills. In Perth and Kinross in 2020 over 77 Kt of waste was produced by households, which was an increase of over 3Kt from the previous year. This on average was about 0.5t waste per person. From this total 48 % of household waste was recycled, far short of 2025 recycling target of 70 % . This target can only be achieved through a reduction of waste, including in large proportion broken items thrown away the minute they stop working.

Recent increase in online shopping through Amazon and other platforms lead to an increase in the volume of cheap items purchase from distant countries with often poor standards of parts. Online shopping contributes to a great carbon footprint through transport emissions, in particular items that are produced (or partially produced) overseas. Those items quite often have poor components and a very short lifetime ending up on landfill within a couple of years. At the same time old items that are out of fashion are thrown away as waste and contribute directly to waste and climate change crisis. The increase in professional repair only exasperated the problem and leads to the development of throw away culture.

The Repair Café movement initiated in the Netherlands in 2009 aims to solve the problem of unnecessary waste through making opportunities for people to repair their items inexpensively and learn to shop consciously supporting a local economy by increasing awareness of small business expertise versus poor customer care of online stores. The Repair Cafes are community-run projects repairing good quality but broken items, hence reducing the amount of waste and leading to lower methane emissions and toxic substances from landfills. This directly mitigates climate change and improves air, water and soil quality.

The Repair Cafe would be run by organised by Kinross-shire Climate Café volunteers who are a local community group focusing on climate change. The events would take place on four different weekend days in each year 2024-2025 from 11 – 3pm in the local town halls. The format of the Café would be informal: a walk-in café where people come and bring their broken items or items to be upcycled. Clients would not pay for the repairs but would pay for materials used, such as zips or small items of hardware.

There are two possible locations that we envisage for the location to widen the area of provision: Kinross and Milnathort. But the Repair Café would also be providing repairs and working with a wider Kinross-shire community including Crook of Devon, Kinnesswood, Scotlandwell and Glenfarg, which we would reach through advertising of the events. The total population of Kinross-shire that would benefit from our project would be in excess of 11K.

Repair Cafe events would be advertised through the local press (Kinross Newsletter), leaflets distribution at Kinross Markets (collaborating with Kinross-shire Local Events Organization), social media (Facebook Kinross-shire Group, Milnathort Neighbours and Kinross-shire Climate Café Facebook Page), Climate Café mailing list and Loch Leven Community Library. All Community Councils in the area would be briefed as well.

The project will support the local economy by involving small local businesses of Kinross-shire with repair expertise who will promote their services and provide advice on the best items to purchase. Repair Café will create opportunities for people with skills currently out of employment or retired who are experts and craftsmen. Often those individuals are sidelined, and their skills are dying out, but our project will make opportunities for them to pass on valuable skills and feel recognized in the community. So, the project will also have a social benefits for participating individuals.

As an organization we will be collaborating with local businesses including Fiona Watt (textile repairs), Mark Sinclair (bike repairs) with whom the links have already been established. The simple repairs of bikes will additionally increase bike usage as often people have broken bikes in their sheds and cannot use them without the knowledge of doing simple fixes. There are also many independent fixers with craftsmen skills and experience who would provide their skills to widen the spectrum of repair services e.g. Nigel Ewen (IT repairs), Shirley Morgan (jewellery), Michael McGinnes (upholstery) and Bouwien Bennett (wicker chair repairs).

One of the aims of the project is to reduce the living costs as through repair you lower your spendings in the long term, especially if items that are broken are of better quality. This helps to reduce the inflation effect on your household budget. For example, a repair of a large suitcase with a broken handle carried out recently cost the owner £20 (after buying a new part and donating £10 to a Men’s Shed). The new equivalent suitcase would cost £55 and contribute to 3.8kg of textile and plastic waste, which would be expected to cause approx. 4kg of carbon emission.

Finally, as part of Repair Café we would also hold a pop-up climate café with a friendly chat about issues of climate change that people experience and advice of climate café volunteers on different aspects of climate change adaptation and coping with climate change crisis. Kinross-shire Climate Café has now been in operation for nearly three years and has a strong base of members with a good knowledge of climate change problems and ways of adapting to and mitigating it.

We would also like to organize a swap shop that would promote sustainable fashion to reduce textile waste. This would link with the fabric repairs of Repair Café and would also involve younger volunteers interested in sustainable fashion.

The aim of Repair Café project is to establish permanent links with the local repair expertise, develop more interest and knowledge of the repairs among the local population and create the social and economic base to continue the Repair Café in the future.