

Wimbledon Repair Café – a treMENDous success!

Beth Dubois, Churchwarden writes...

The first Wimbledon Repair Café, based at St Mark's Church Hall launched on 30 May and enjoyed great success. The endeavour is a collaboration between Merton Friends of the Earth and St Mark's Church, with support from Sustainable Merton and the Mayor of Merton Cllr Shuile Syeda, who paid the group a visit on opening day.

With the aim of helping local residents cut waste, save money, and extend the life of everyday items, volunteer repairers fix a range of household goods. These include electrical and mechanical items, clothing, toys and bicycles – and visitors can enjoy tea and coffee in the garden whilst they wait. All repairs are offered free of charge, but donations are encouraged.

The Revd Jane Andrews, Vicar of St Mark's, said, "We are an inclusive and welcoming church, eager to support projects that benefit the local community and help us care for the natural world."

The Wimbledon Repair Café joins a growing network of around 800 similar green initiatives across the UK and around 3,200 globally, as part of a movement that began in the Netherlands in 2009.

The idea grew from concerns about the increasing volume of household items ending up in landfill or incinerated due to minor faults – a problem only worsened by manufacturers' reluctance to provide affordable spare parts. By offering a practical alternative, organisers hope not only to reduce waste but also to re-skill the community and promote a more sustainable, circular economy.

Many Repair Cafés report a success rate of around 60 to 65 per cent. Certain items are excluded to avoid competing with commercial businesses, such as mobile phone repairs and standard clothing alterations. For items that can't be repaired, volunteers will offer advice on safe disposal.

In line with its community focus, the Repair Café also aims to be a social space where people can connect, share knowledge and build a culture of sustainability.

The Repair Café is a three-minute walk from Wimbledon Station. The free event is held on the last Saturday of every month from 10.30am to 12.30pm. For more information visit: stmarkswimbledon.org.uk

Left and right: The successful and well-attended launch of the Wimbledon Repair Café.

