



The Centre for Sustainable Design



Farnham Repair Café: Survey of Customers: Motivations, Experiences & Behaviour

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1. Introduction

This report ¹ presents the results of a survey of Farnham Repair Café (FRC) customers (e.g. product owners) covering issues related to awareness and behaviour. A semi-structured online survey via SurveyMonkey ² was completed amongst 426 FRC customers between 4th and 23rd July 2019 by The Centre for Sustainable Design[®] (CfSD) at the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) in Farnham in the UK. Ninety-four customers completed the questionnaire, representing a 22% response rate.

This report is a follow up to a survey completed in March 2016 that covered both FRC customers and volunteers ³.

What is a Repair Café?

“Repair Cafés are free ‘community-centred workshops’ for people to bring consumer products in need of repair, where they can work together with volunteer fixers to repair and maintain their broken or faulty products. In addition to repair, many Repair Cafés provide assistance with product modification, particularly to clothing to improve fit and appearance.” Charter & Keiller, 2016

FRC is a collaborative project between The Centre for Sustainable Design[®] (CfSD) at the University of the Creative Arts (UCA), Farnham Town Council and The Spire Church; and was established as a charity in 2017 (Registered Charity Number 1172613). FRC is part of the global network of 2091 Repair Cafés as highlighted on the Repair Café International Foundation (RCIF) website ⁴; RCIF was founded in the Netherlands in 2009. Repair Cafés offer a free meeting place to fix broken products: people bring products in need of repair and to work together with volunteer repairers from the local community. In 2014, prior to the creation of FRC, CfSD at UCA undertook a survey of volunteers at Repair Cafés and Hackerspaces globally to try and increase understanding of activities; at the time very little research that had been completed in the area ⁵. Results from the research indicated that more than 80% of Repair Café volunteers from 144 respondents from Repair Cafés in nine countries volunteered their time and expertise at their Repair Café to:

- Encourage others to live more sustainably
- Provide a valuable service to the community
- Be a part of the movement to improve product reparability and longevity
- Encourage others to fix their own stuff

¹ The report was written by Professor Martin Charter mcharter@uca.ac.uk, Business School for the Creative Industries at UCA and Paul Whitehead at Western Associates with support from Scott Keiller at UCA on statistical analysis

² <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/>

³ <https://cfsd.org.uk/site-pdfs/Farnham%20Repair%20Cafe%20Survey%202016.pdf>

⁴ <https://repaircafe.org/en/visit/> [Accessed 17-11-20]

⁵ <https://cfsd.org.uk/site-pdfs/circular-economy-and-grassroots-innovation/Survey-of-Repair-Cafes-and-Hackerspaces.pdf>

The 2014 research was followed up with two surveys designed to specifically increase the understanding of Repair Cafés worldwide. These surveys were completed in 2016⁶ and 2019⁷ and provided similar findings to the above.

Farnham Repair Café (FRC) emerged from initial discussions between Professor Martin Charter and Transition Town Farnham (TTF) in 2014. Following two trial sessions, FRC was launched in February 2015. Farnham is a relatively affluent small market town in Surrey, UK, with a significant proportion of residents commuting to work in London. After initial collaboration with TTF, FRC was then established as the UK's first Repair Café charity in April 2017. By March 2020, FRC had organised 58 sessions since launch, achieving a significant environmental, social and economic impact.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, FRC was forced to temporarily shut down its physical events from April 2020. During lockdown FRC temporarily shifted its activities online. Throughout the summer of 2020, FRC ran a series of four very successful webinars for other Repair Cafes sharing its knowledge and experience. By August 2020, FRC had also organised a pilot and four online Repair Advice sessions via the FRC Facebook. From August, FRC decided to launch an open Repair Advice service rather than restricting advice to specific sessions. In October, after considerable detailed research and planning FRC launched a COVID-19 secure physical Drop-off service. This was very well received. However, due to a new UK government lockdown, FRC was forced to cancel its November session. At the time of writing, FRC is launching a new online initiative called Repair Connections designed to help customers to re-connect with the sense of community that FRC engendered for many. The goal is to fully return to physical FRC events once COVID-19 has become manageable.

Farnham Repair Café (FRC): Community Impact (March 2020)	
FRC sessions:	58
Visitors to FRC:	2977
Repairs completed:	1287
Repair rate:	65%
CO2 reduction:	34.5 tonnes
Landfill diversion:	3.7 tonnes
Satisfaction:	98%
Citizen savings:	£102,862

Prior to the COVID-19 lockdown, FRC's physical sessions were held for two and half hours on the second Saturday of each month. Repair volunteers (or fixers) were recruited from the local community and at each session around twenty core experienced fixers provide "hands-on" repairs and repair advice. It is a key requirement of FRC that customers who bring products are present and

⁶ <https://cfsd.org.uk/site-pdfs/The%20Second%20Global%20Survey%20of%20Repair%20Cafes%20-%20A%20Summary%20of%20Findings.pdf>

⁷ https://cfsd.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/RC_Report_Final_2020-03-05.pdf

participate in any repairs undertaken – the aim being for product owners to observe the repair process and hopefully learn. As part of this strategy FRC uses the twitter hashtag #sharerepair. Regular repair stations include: Electrical and Electronic; Mechanical; Textiles and Clothing; Furniture; and Bike and Computer repair stations, which operate less frequently.

By March 2020, 2977 visitors had signed into and attended FRC sessions since launch. To help track the impact of repair activity, FRC weighs all products brought for repair by customers and details of fault, solution to problem, result of repair process and any advice given are all logged. 1967 products (compared to 191 products in March 2016) have been examined and 1287 repairs completed (compared to 112 in March 2016) which represented a repair rate of 65% (compared to 59% in March 2016). As at March 2020, 3.7 tonnes of products by weight have been repaired and potentially diverted from the waste stream, which represents a potential saving of an estimated 34.5 tonnes of carbon emissions ⁸.

2. Methods

In June 2019, an email list of 426 FRC customers (or product owners) was collated prior to the completion of the survey in July 2019. This compared to a sample of 188 in March 2016. However, the samples are not directly comparable, as the 2016 sample included a mix of customers and volunteers with the 2019 sample covered customers exclusively. FRC customer email addresses were gathered from sign-in sheets at FRC sessions, where product owners (those people that bring products to FRC for repair assistance and/or to find out more about FRC) are requested to provide contact email addresses in compliance with GDPR. As at June 2019 there had been 2371 FRC visitors, however due to a variety of reasons only 426 individual email addresses of FRC customers had been collated. The overall email list was much reduced due to the removal of duplicate addresses for those who have attended FRC multiple times, the absence of email addresses from many signed-in visitors and email addresses not being collected until after a significant time after the launch of FRC. A link to a semi-structured questionnaire completed on SurveyMonkey[®] ⁹ was emailed to the sample between 4th and 23rd July 2019 by The Centre for Sustainable Design[®] (CfSD) at the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) in Farnham in the UK (see Appendix A).

3. Results

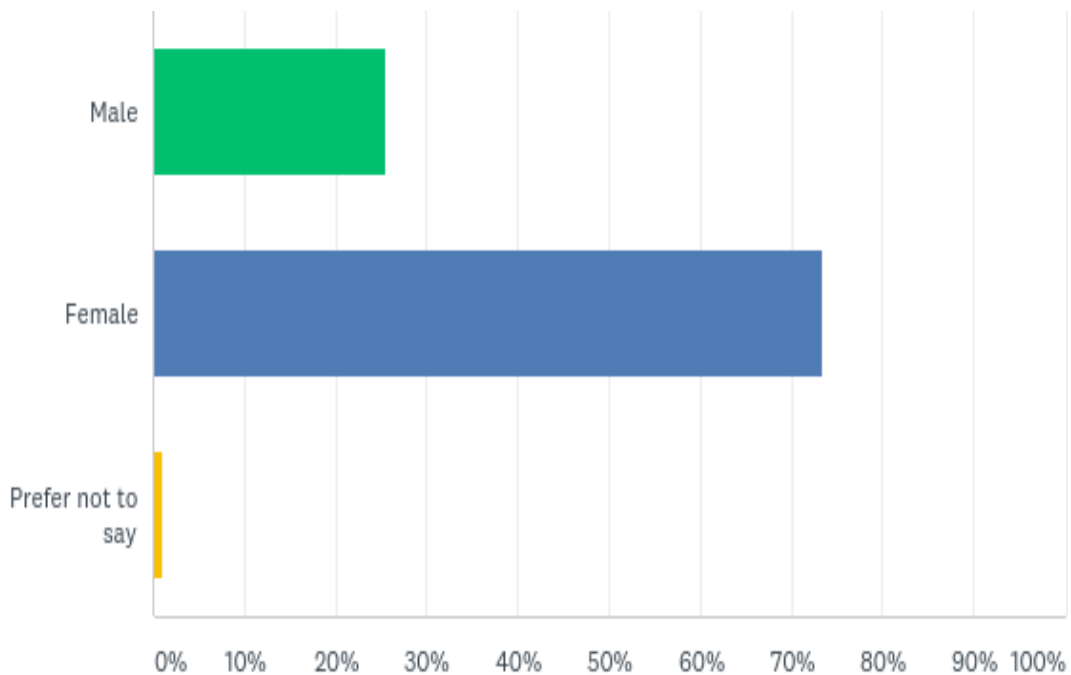
There were 94 respondents to the 2019 survey (compared to 37 in March 2016) from THE distribution to 426 email addresses (compared to 188 emails sent in March 2016); a 22% response rate (compared to 20% in March 2016). The percentage of the 426 sample that was female was 58% (248), male was 37% (156) and 5% was unknown (22). The response rate was skewed towards responses from females (73.4%) compared to males (25.5%) with 1% preferring not to say. This compares to a response rate in the March 2016 survey of 54% and 46% between males and females. Therefore, there was an above average response from females in the 2019 survey.

To improve understanding of the findings, the sequence of questions in the following section may be not be in the same order as the questionnaire (see Appendix A) e.g. findings to Question 4 is stated before Question 2. The findings section highlights each question followed by a graph displaying the findings related to the question then followed by discussion. The final section of the report covers discussion arising findings of the survey and an endnote.

⁸ Based on a calculation of weight x 9.4 Kg x CO2 emissions – see methodology via <https://frc.cfsd.org.uk/index.php/about/>

⁹ <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/>

Q3: What is your gender? [94 responses]



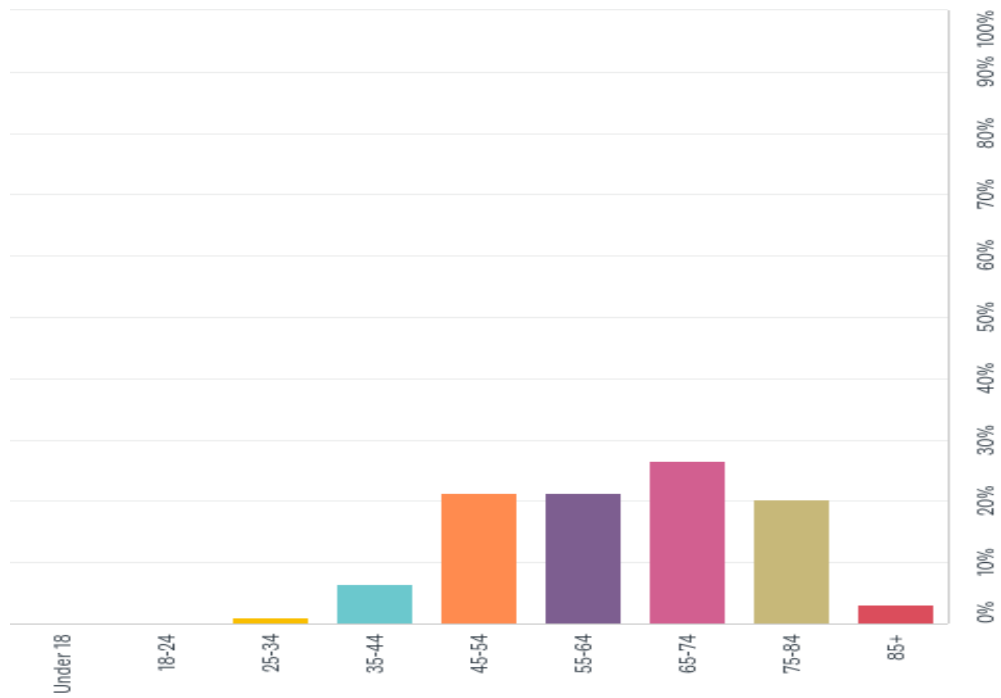
As highlighted above, there are significantly more female respondents to the survey than males. To date, no research has been undertaken that provides a definitive breakdown of the overall demographic profile of Repair Café customers e.g. questions like, are there more women than males attending Repair Cafés in the UK and other countries, remain un-answered?

There was a much wider gender gap in the respondents to the survey compared to the profile of the sample of 426 emailed customers: 73.4% females compared to 25.5% males. The gap between respondents may be due to females being generally greener than males.

Market research company Mintel found that generally women care more about the planet than men and are more interested in topics like ethics and sustainability. A study¹⁰ - published in July 2018 - of 2,000 Britons showed that 71% of women try to live more ethically, compared to 59% for men. Examples include 38% of women try to use less water, versus 30% of men, and 64% of females (versus 58% of men) are more likely to turn down or switch off the heating when they are not at home. 56% of men were willing to persuade others to take on a more ethical lifestyle, compared to 65% of women. And importantly in relation to FRC, women are more likely to recycle. To quote Mintel "...men are markedly less conscientious than their female counterparts when it comes to maintaining environmentally-friendly habits".

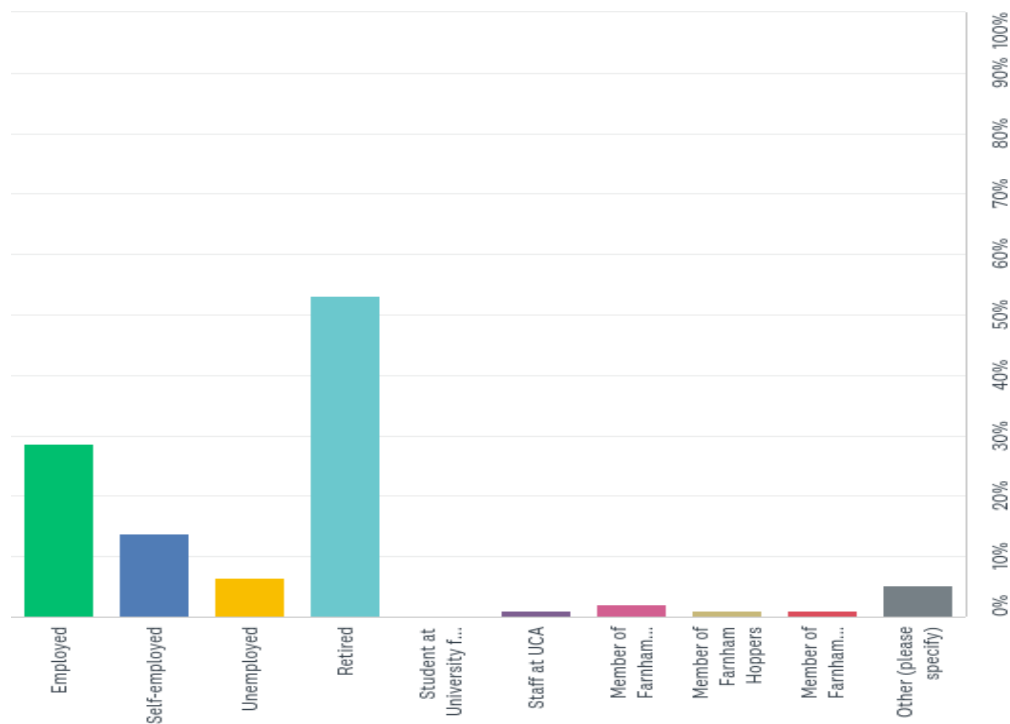
¹⁰ <https://www.mintel.com/press-centre/social-and-lifestyle/the-eco-gender-gap-71-of-women-try-to-live-more-ethically-compared-to-59-of-men>

Q4: What is your age? [94 responses]



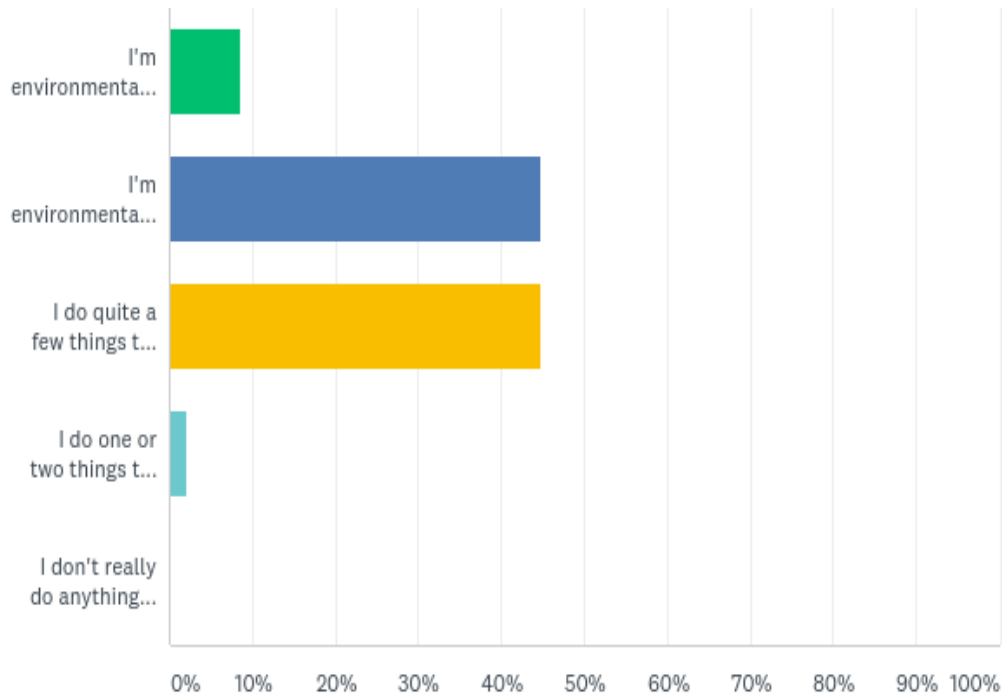
The largest age group of FRC customers that responded to the survey were those aged between 45 and 84, with the highest concentration being between 65 to 74 at 26.6%. At 20.2%, the 75-84 age group was only slightly lower than the 45-54 and 55-64 age groups, each at 20.3%. The older and female profile of FRC customers may also relate to the motivation of visitors not wanting to waste (Question 12).

Q2: Are you... (employment status) [94 responses]



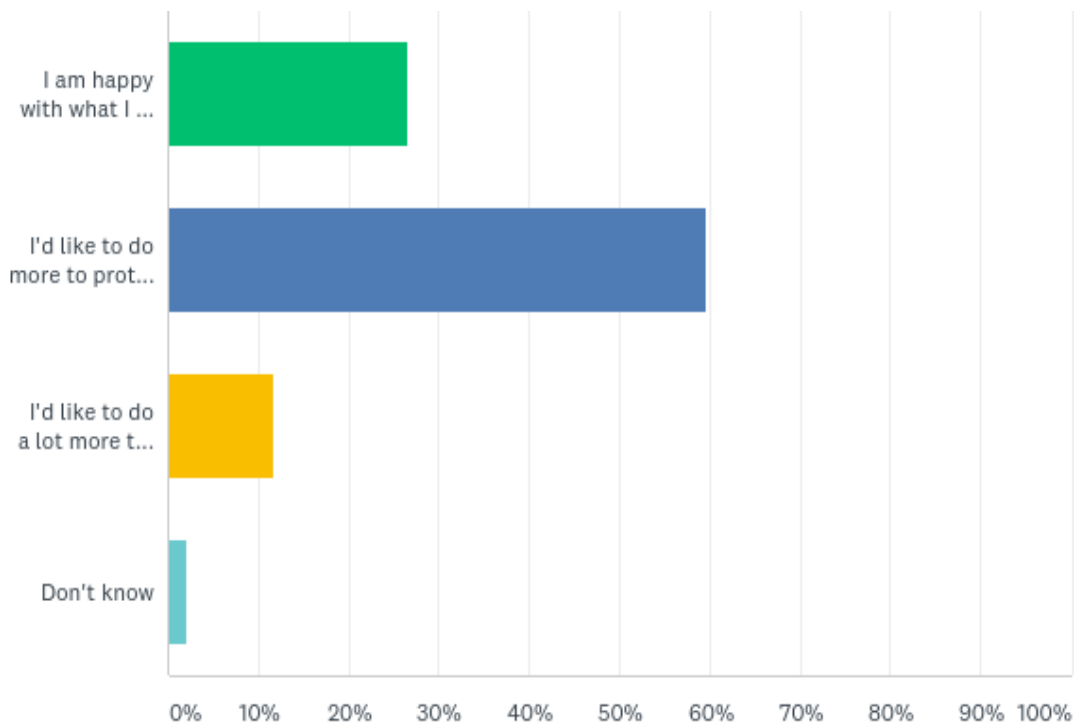
The majority of respondents (customers of FRC) are retired people (53.2%) and this corresponds with the older age profile highlighted in Question 4. This was followed by the employed (28.7%) and the self-employed (13.8%), with 6.4% being unemployed. Note that over 40% of FRC customers found the time and/or had the interest to attend sessions despite being employed or self-employed, indicating the commitment that customers had to use their Saturday mornings to get their products fixed, help the environment and engage in a local community activity.

Q5: Which of these statements best describes your lifestyle and behaviours in relation to helping to protect the environment? [94 responses]



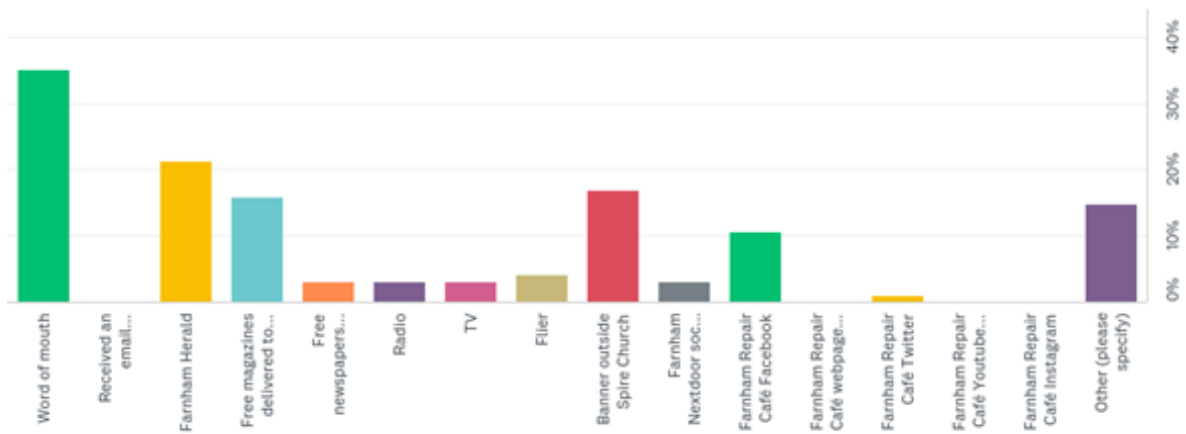
As to be expected, the profile of the attendees shows a quite high level of environmental motivation, with a large majority of the respondents split equally (44.7% each) between those who were environmentally friendly in most things they do and those who do quite a few things that are environmentally friendly. In addition, and encouragingly, almost 10% say they are environmentally friendly in everything they do.

Q6: Which of these statements best describes how you feel about your lifestyle/behaviours and helping to protect the environment? [94 responses]



The table illustrates that a large majority of respondents feel motivated to do more – or in some cases a lot more - to protect the environment, with nearly 60% answering they would like to do more to protect the environment, and 11.7% saying they would like to do a lot more. Bearing in mind the profile of respondents, it is worth noting that, according to research, females generally have a more positive perspective on environmental issues, with the green consumer typically being more female oriented.

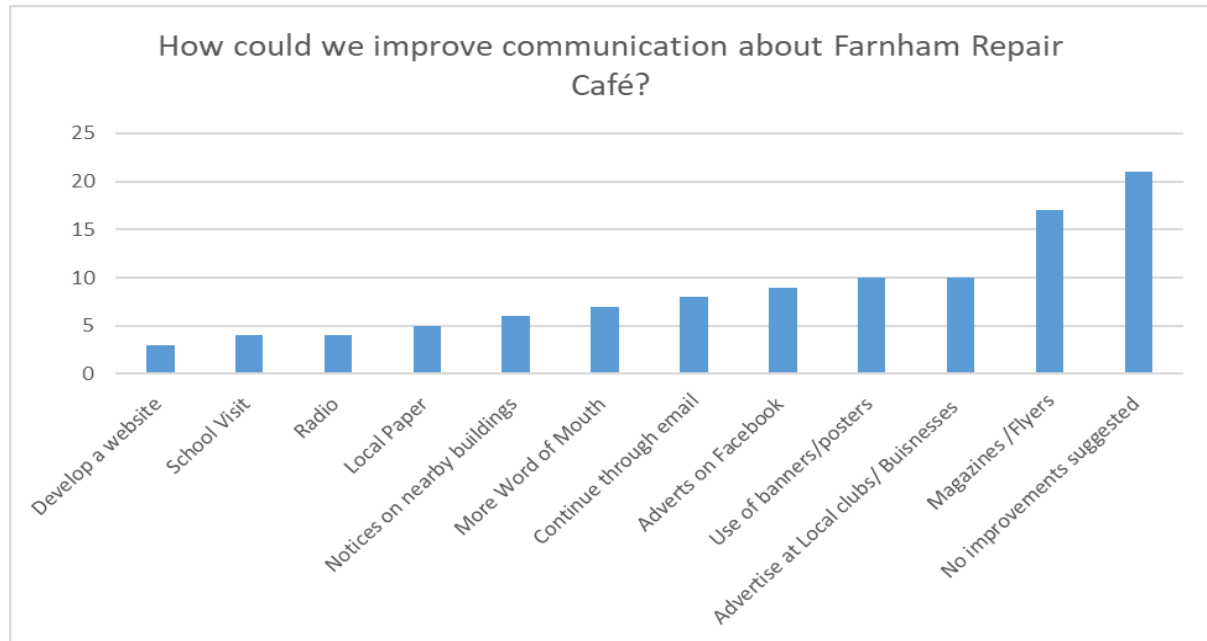
Q7: How did you hear about Farnham Repair Café? (Please tick all that apply)
[94 responses]



Traditional modes of communication have been successful in raising awareness about FRC. A significant proportion (35.1%) of respondents had heard about FRC by word-of-mouth which perhaps correlates with positive experience of attending FRC e.g. exit polls indicate 98% satisfaction¹¹. Next at 21.3% was by reading about FRC in the main local newspaper, the Farnham Herald, followed by seeing the “banner outside Spire Church”, then via reading about FRC in local free magazines. FRC’s Facebook page - at 10.6% - was the most popular online channel for FRC.

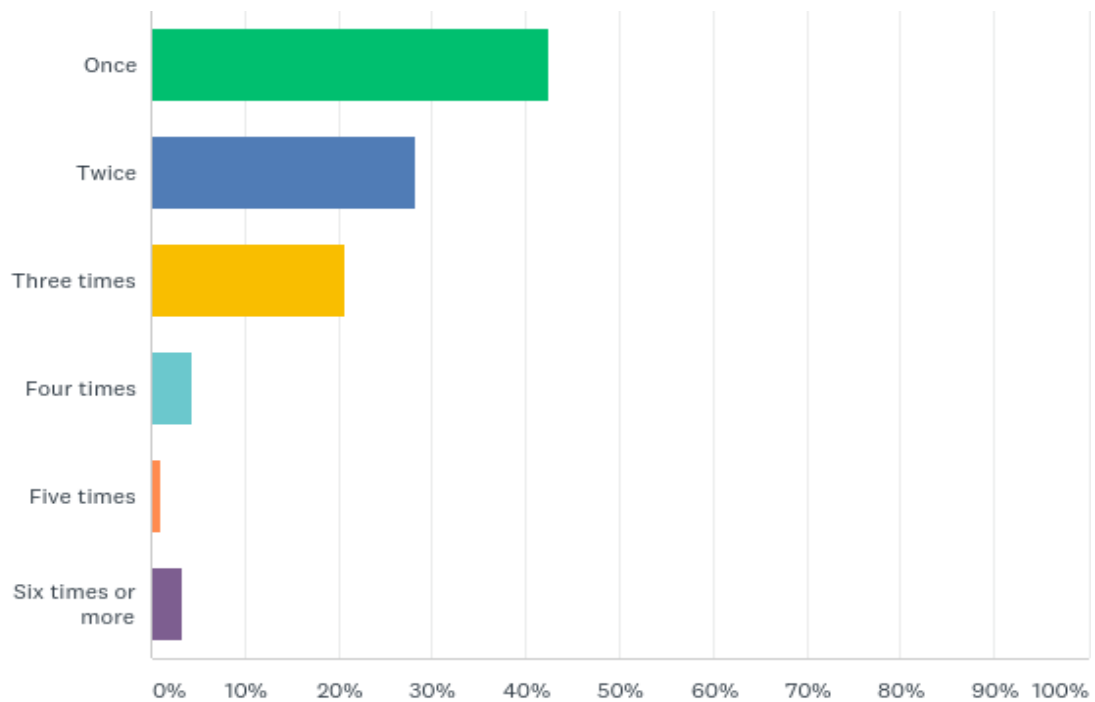
¹¹ frc.cfsd.org.uk

Q8: How could we improve communication about Farnham Repair Café? [73 responses]



Responses to this open ended question indicated that respondents, generally, think there are no improvements that can be made to FRC communications; but heading the list of suggested improvements is using local magazines and flyers. Other suggestions included advertising at local clubs and businesses, and the use of banners and posters, followed by advertising on Facebook and then word-of-mouth. As indicated previously in Question 7, a number of these channels are used that indicates that not everyone hears about FRC via the same avenue of communications. A number of specific comments reinforced FRC's positive approach to communications: "You're doing a good job. emails are helpful"; "Widen the circle outside Farnham. I mentioned it to members of my golf club near Alton and no one had heard of it"; and "For me, I think the communication is good e.g. I get emails etc. I think it would be good to communicate more widely, with those who are not aware of the alternatives to sending stuff to landfill. Perhaps use examples of things that have been repaired/re-created at the cafe so they realise the possibilities? I would happily share this sort of message on Facebook etc."

Q9: How many times have you attended Farnham Repair Café? [92 responses]

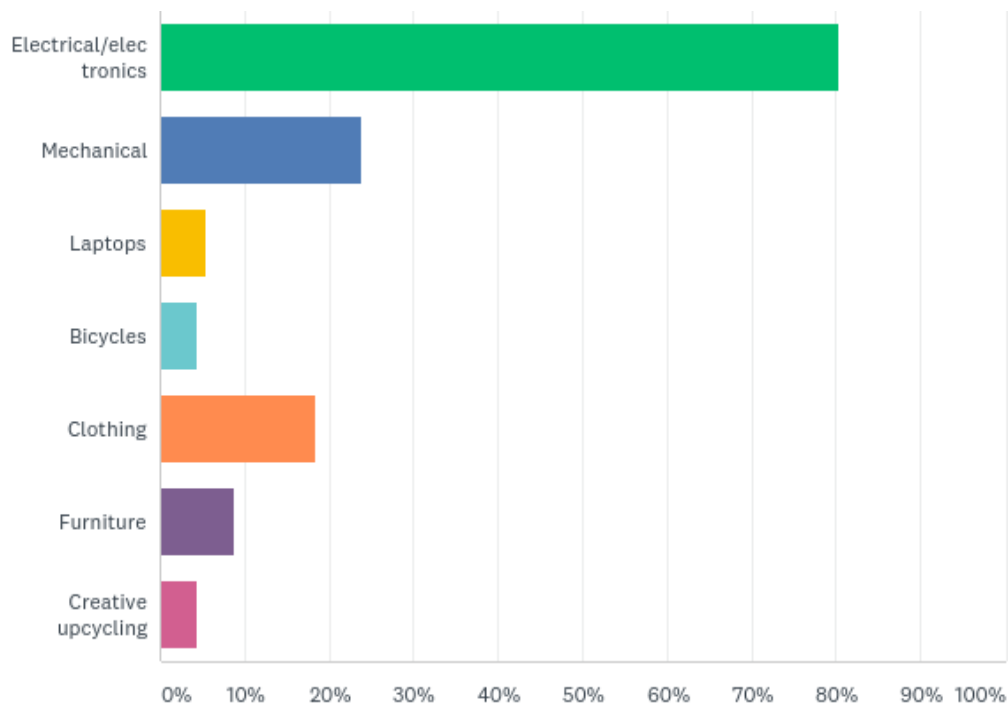


42.4% of respondents have attended FRC once, but a significant number (just under 50%) have attended two or three times. A dedicated group of almost 10% have attended four, five and six times (or more).

These findings show that efforts to attract new customers to FRC, including by word of mouth by existing customers, have worked well, and that a good percentage of customers return. Whilst attendance at FRC is positive with nearly 3000 attendees and customer satisfaction is excellent at 98% ¹², there is still an opportunity to encourage more repeat visits from those who have visited once. However, attendance is primarily linked to products in need of repair, which is likely to be ad hoc occurrence driven by product failure. The degree to which customers return to acquire knowledge or a skill – or to enjoy the sense of community that the café engenders, or to meet someone they know – needs further research.

¹² frc.cfsd.org.uk

Q10: Which repair stations have you visited? [92 responses]

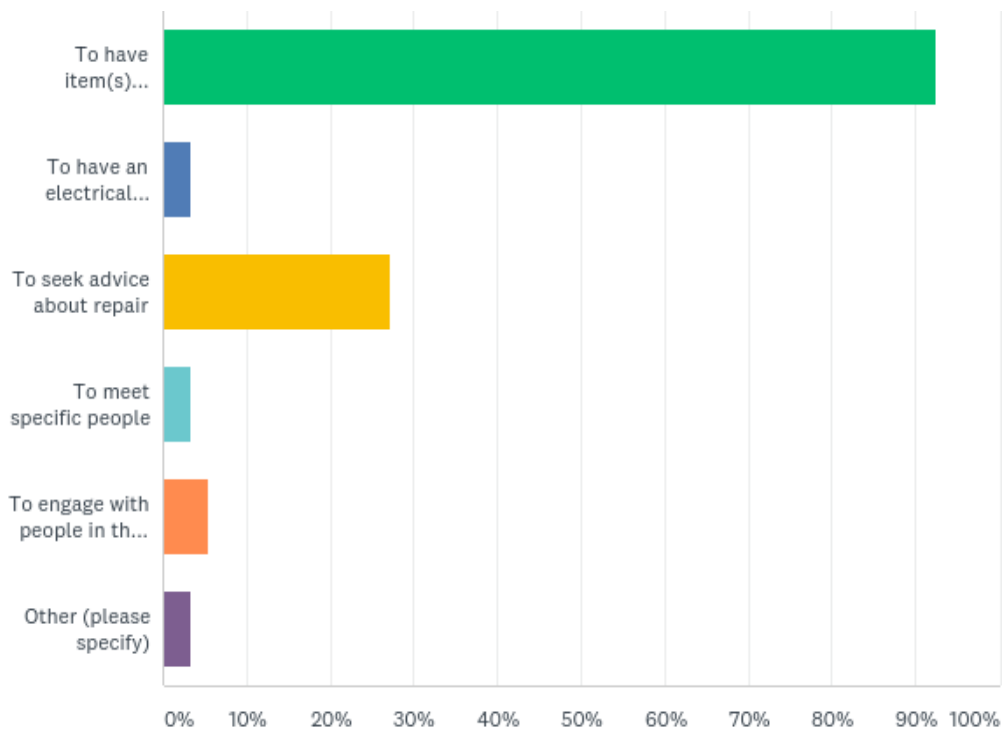


The respondents stated that the most-visited workstation by a wide margin was electrical/electronics (80.4%), followed by the mechanical station (nearly 24.0%) and then clothing at 18.5%. The furniture, laptops and bicycles stations also featured - as was creative upcycling.

Although the main focus by customers was on electrical/electronics and the mechanical repairs, “clothing”, in third place, is perhaps a reflection of growing awareness of the environmental impacts of the clothing sector e.g. fast fashion - with a desire by some to repair and re-wear, not just buy and wear. By product category, the highest percentage of successful repairs relates to clothing (see Question 20) – “What type of item have you most recently repaired as a result of visiting the Repair Café?” This was reinforced by independent analysis of repair data (see below).

Atkins (the consultancy) in conjunction with The Centre for Sustainable Design[®] at UCA completed an analysis of data on all products that been brought to FRC between 11th April 2015 and 14th September 2019. At the time of the analysis, 1577 products had been checked into FRC of which 66.9% had been repaired. This included the following categories of products (with repair rates in brackets): 652 electrical/electronics items (62.0%); 230 clothing items (87.5%); 83 mechanical products (68%); 38 items of furniture (74.5%); 35 bicycles (71.4%); and 14 computer-related items e.g. laptops (40.0%).

Q11: Why did you attend Farnham Repair Café? [92 responses]



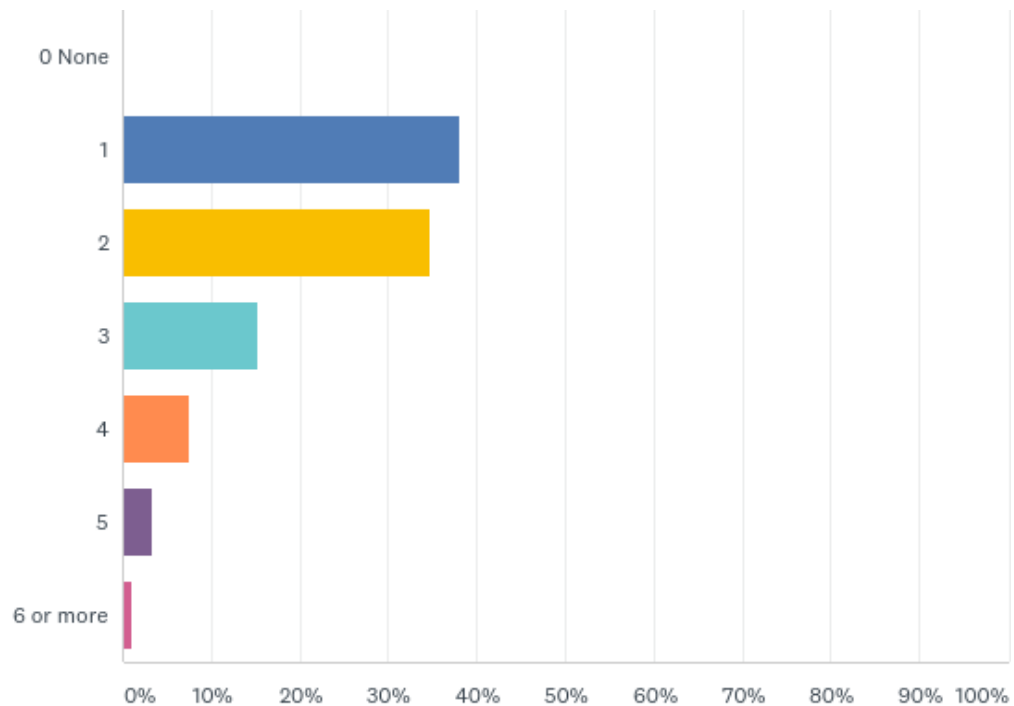
There were multiple reasons why customers attended FRC. More than 90% OF responses indicated that customers attended FRC to have products repaired. In second place, at just over 27%, respondents visited FRC to seek advice on repair. Visiting for social reasons (to engage with people/to meet specific people) was lower on the scale. This is an interesting finding when compared to Question 16, which shows that a perceived strength of FRC is its community spirit. This indicates that people who attended more than once, may have partially attended to (re)experience the positive community atmosphere that they felt from their 1st visit. Further research is required to analyse how much of the reason for attending more than once also relates to the desire to feel part of a community and/or to experience the community spirit alongside the prime goal of getting a product repaired.

Q12: What were your motivations for bringing an item for repair to Farnham Repair Café? Please use the drop downs in each row to rank the following with 1 as the most important to 6 as the least important. [91 responses]

	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	SCORE
I have an emotional attachment to the item	25.40% 16	4.76% 3	6.35% 4	14.29% 9	22.22% 14	26.98% 17	63	3.16
The cost of professional repair is prohibitive	9.84% 6	34.43% 21	22.95% 14	18.03% 11	8.20% 5	6.56% 4	61	4.00
Finding a professional repairer is too difficult	12.68% 9	29.58% 21	36.62% 26	9.86% 7	8.45% 6	2.82% 2	71	4.20
I wanted to learn skills to repair my own stuff	0.00% 0	6.25% 4	15.63% 10	35.94% 23	18.75% 12	23.44% 15	64	2.63
It seemed such a waste to dispose of the broken item	63.53% 54	15.29% 13	2.35% 2	3.53% 3	10.59% 9	4.71% 4	85	5.04
I wanted to meet with others who care about repair	1.47% 1	8.82% 6	13.24% 9	17.65% 12	20.59% 14	38.24% 26	68	2.38

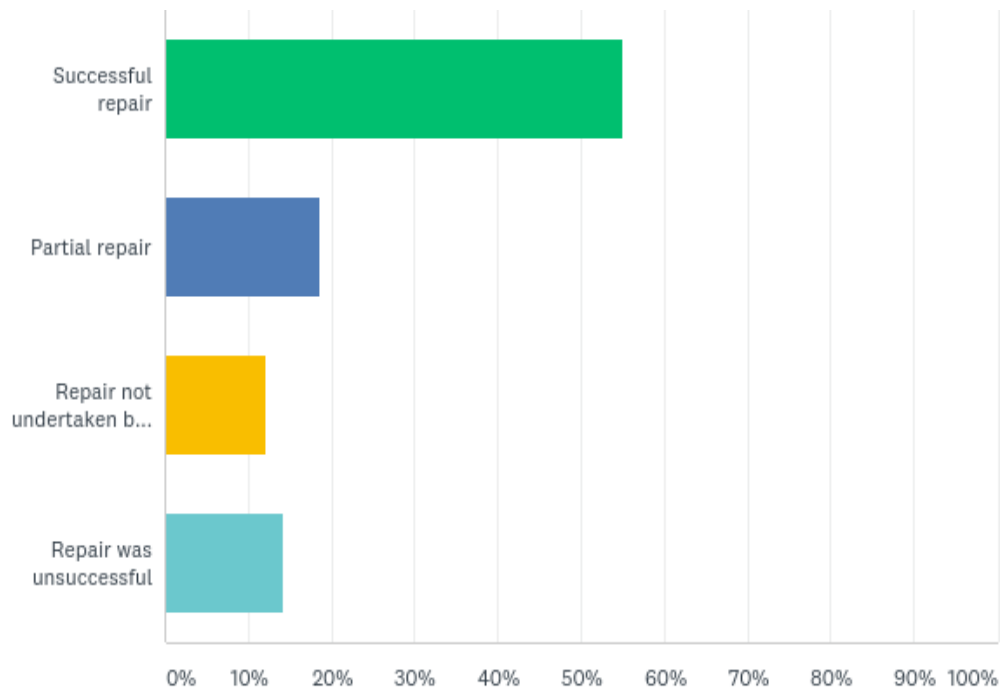
The table describes an Overall Ranking (1 – 6) by (all) respondents of their motivations for bringing an item for repair to FRC. The score shown is a weighted calculation. Items ranked first are valued higher than the following ranks and the score is the sum of all weighted rank counts. Collectively, the main motivations for attending sessions were repair-related (as seen in Question 11 above) - with personal and social dimensions secondary to those. Repair-related responses ranged from “It seemed such a waste to dispose of the broken item” to the cost of repair and difficulty in finding a professional repairer. An interesting motivation to attend FRC was the psychological relationship of consumers to products: “I have an emotional attachment to the item”, which illustrates that physical repair can “repair” a memory of a person and/or enhance a past “moment in time”. Wanting to learn new skills finds an echo in answers to Question 16, where “new skills” is the second third biggest response to the question “What did you learn as a result of attending the repair café?”. The least important motivation was “I wanted to meet with others who care about repair”.

Q13: How many items have you brought to Farnham Repair Café for repair? [92 responses]



Most people (just under 40%) brought one product to FRC with nearly 35% bringing two products. Some 15% brought three products. The majority brought one or two products for repair and this aligns with most visitors making one or two visits to the café. As stated in Question 9, people have generally attended FRC once, but a significant number (just under 50%) have attended two or three times. Almost 10% attended four, five and six times (or more). With almost 25% of items being brought to FRC being in the three and four items categories, and two items at about 35%. It can be seen that some customers do indeed make multiple visits, although it should be borne in mind that it appears that some visit for the social/community feeling (secondary motivation), after the experience of the first visit, alongside or combined with a desire to have a product repaired (primary motivation).

Q14: Thinking about the last item you brought to Farnham Repair Café - what was the repair outcome? [91 responses]

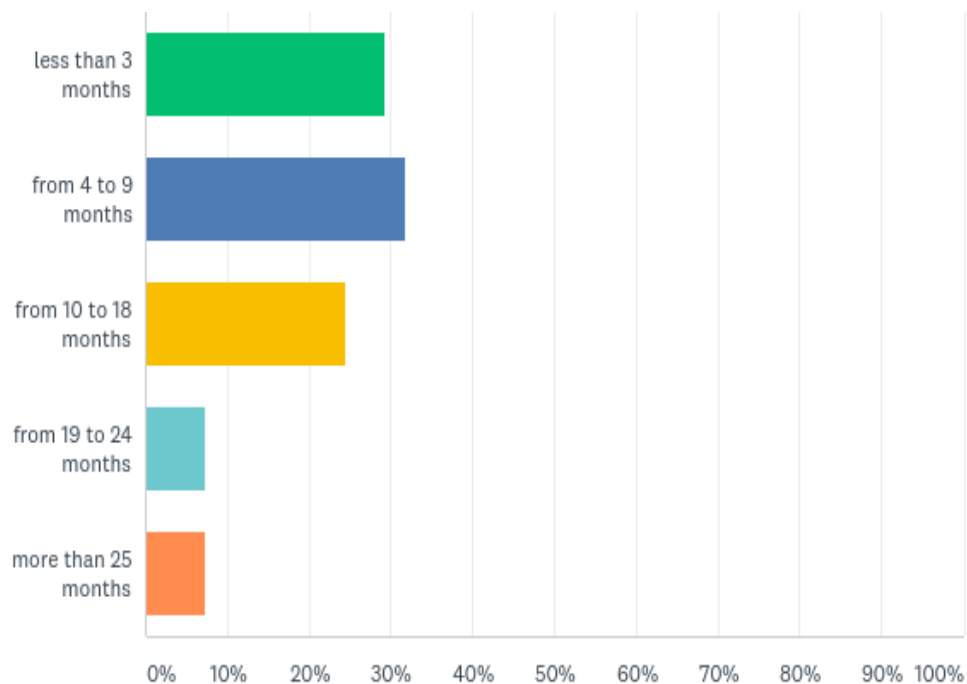


Most customers experienced a successful repair, but at around 55% this is slightly lower than the overall average of about 65% based on all data collected at FRC sessions¹³. In nearly 19% of cases a partial repair was made, whereas about 12% could not be repaired - with advice given instead. In just over 14% of cases the repair was unsuccessful due the repair not being technically feasible.

Despite more than 14% of repairs being unsuccessful, customers consistently give FRC a very high approval rating. This is likely to be a result of the highly successful repair rate (65%) but also the good community feeling that visitors experience resulting from the interaction with friendly and helpful volunteers (human and social factors). There is a very high level of satisfaction (very satisfied/satisfied) with FRC at 95.5% (Question 23) which is also reinforced by FRC's 98% satisfaction level from exit polls.

¹³ frc.cfsd.org.uk

Q15: Thinking about the last item that you had repaired by Farnham Repair Café - approximately how many months has the item continued to be usable or continued to work? [82 responses]

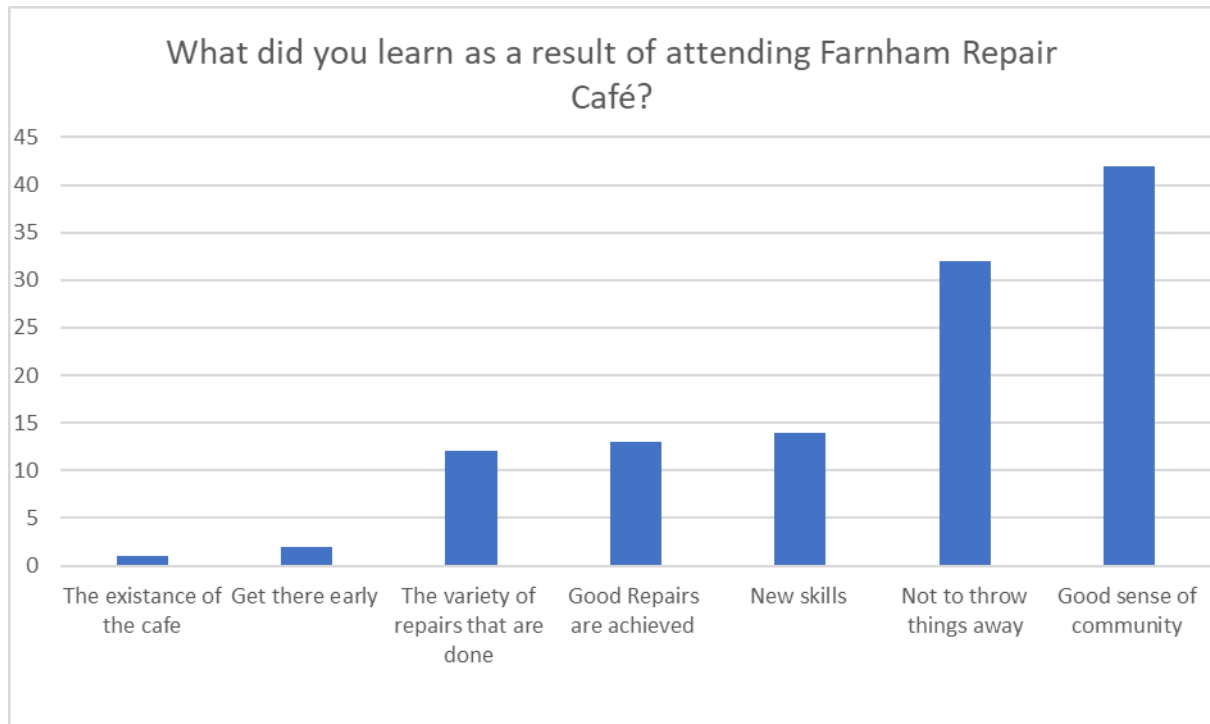


The responses showed that more than 56% of products that were repaired at FRC were still functioning and/or being used between four and 18 months after the repair. 7% were being used beyond 25 months and the same percentage was still being used after 19 and 24 months of the repair.

It's encouraging to see that repairs completed at FRC can and do extend the life of products. This reflects the quality of repairs completed by the repairers and indicates the skills that exist in the Farnham community that can help repair products that are not economic to repair through the professional repair system. This shows the benefit of Repair Cafés in helping people move away from the "throw it away and buy new" mindset. In turn, this reinforces the broader environmental impact of Repair Cafés e.g. through repair potentially reducing landfill and saving CO2 emissions, as well as providing social and economic benefits to the customers. FRC has saved Farnham citizens over £100,000 by extending product life through the opportunity cost of not having to buy a new product ¹⁴.

¹⁴ frc.cfsd.org.uk

Q16a: What did you learn as a result of attending Farnham Repair Café? [83 responses]

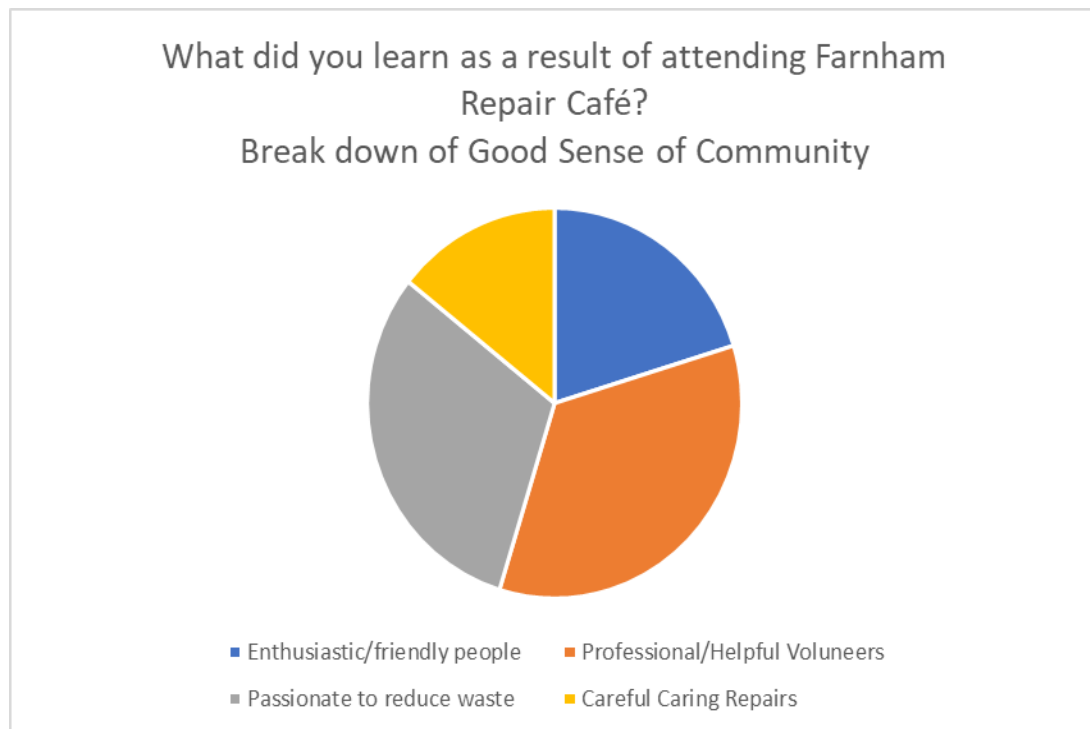


Although the prime reason for visiting FRC is to get a product repaired, this particular question focuses on what customers have learned by their visit. The main learning from attending FRC was the “good sense of community”. This may be a surprise and key learning for those who attend FRC for the first time e.g. people might perceive Repair Cafés just as a technical place to get something fixed. This community feeling will not be a surprise for those who have already attended a repair session. In second place is not to throw things away, a reflection perhaps that customers recognise that it *is* worth bringing a broken product to FRC as the majority (65%) are repairable based on past data and experience. This aligns with “Good repairs are achieved” and “The variety of repairs that are done”, to quote customers.

The standout response - “good sense of community” - shows that customers enjoy the strong social and community ethos that exists at FRC. The response also has an echo in the findings of 2016, which showed customers and volunteers “wanting to meet others who care about the local community” - and meet with others “who care about repair”. To summarise: people generally visit FRC to have a product repaired but come away with a strong feeling of “community”. A visit to FRC is therefore a “win win” for many customers.

Specific comments by customers reinforce the positive environment created by FRC: “I discovered a very caring community who were not motivated by the profit motive”; “A friendly community way to thwart the built in obsolescence industry”; “Place to go to for repairs, very positive vibe”; “It is really well organised, welcoming and friendly”; and “The repair was for purely personal reasons but I am now more aware of the community effort to protect the environment.” In addition, the attainment of new skills is highlighted and this is reinforced by some of the responses: “Learnt about sewing techniques for alterations”; “How easy things are to fix, if you think you can.”; “It's worth trying to repair something even if the outcome is not 100% successful”; and “How easy it is to fix things if you know how. “

Q16b: What did you learn as a result of attending Farnham Repair Café?
Breakdown of a “Good sense of community” [42 responses]



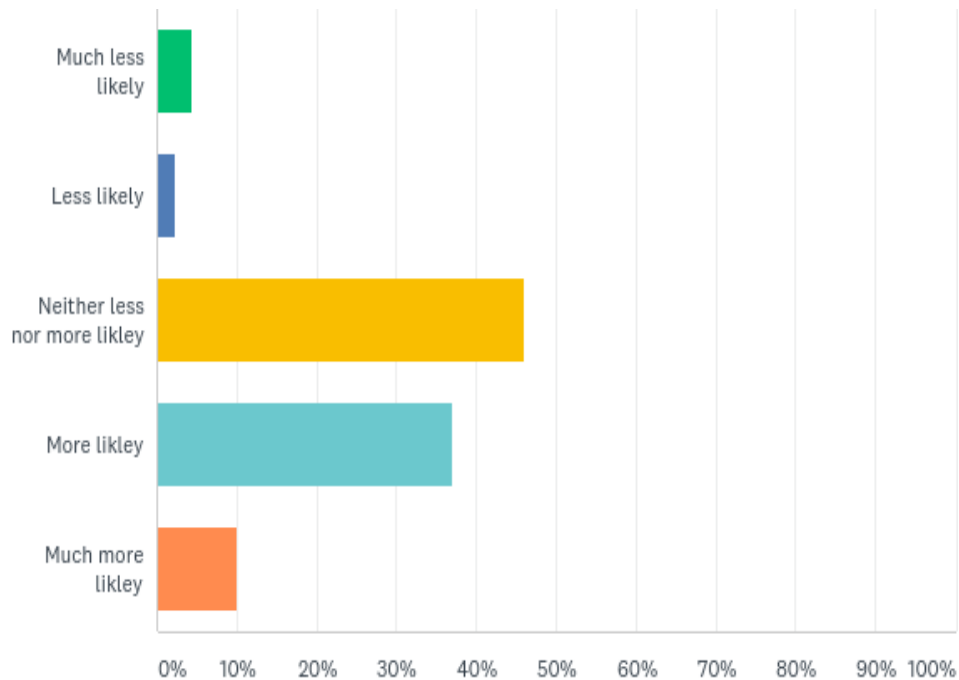
This breakdown reinforces that respondents (FRC customers) experience a good “sense of community” at FRC. This is perhaps reinforced by the 98% satisfaction level that FRC achieves in exit surveys, which itself might relate to the excellent repair rate at 65%¹⁵. The sense of community is based around such “people” factors as a passion to reduce waste and the appreciative feeling that customers have about the volunteers being professional and helpful – and, as detailed in Question 11, some attending for social reasons: to meet someone they know and/or enjoy the community spirit. Respondents also like the “enthusiastic/friendly people” – volunteers and customers – who attend. The findings from other questions in the survey also show that people don’t want to throw stuff away and come away from FRC with a good sense of community - as well as, more often than not, a repaired product! Bearing in mind that females outnumber males in responding to the survey, and that females are greener (see Question 3) – and better communicators¹⁶ – than males, we should not be surprised at these findings. Additionally, women find social interactions generally to be more rewarding than men¹⁷.

¹⁵ frc.cfsd.org.uk

¹⁶ https://www.academia.edu/8709247/Difference_between_men_and_women_communication

¹⁷ <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/01/190130175604.htm>

Q17: Has attending Farnham Repair Café made you more or less likely to attempt to repair your own possession? [89 responses]



47% of respondents were either more or much more likely to attempt a repair after attending FRC. This perhaps demonstrates that attending an FRC session and observing the repair process gives product owners the confidence to try to repair their own products. Additional research has indicated that some individuals (or self-repairers) are now using online videos to help them complete repairs in their own homes and/or workshops. This is supported by Question 22 – “What was the prime source of information that you used to help you complete the repair?” which indicates that repair related videos are being watched on YouTube. The existence of companies like ifxit.com also indicates that a new group of self-repairers are increasing. This apparent change in repair behaviour needs further research.

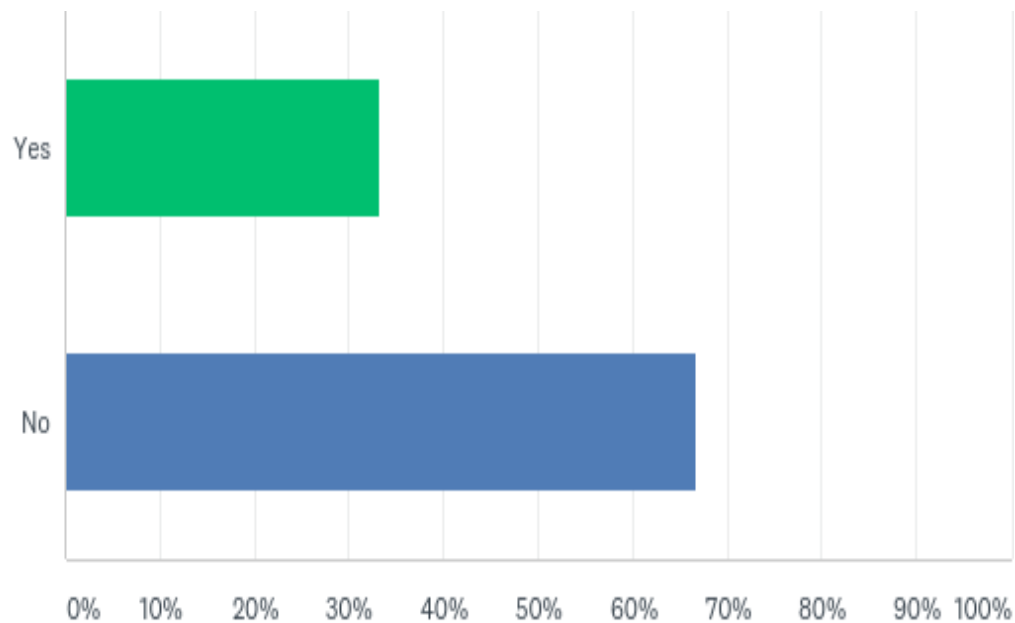
Q18: What actions, if any have you taken as a result of visiting Farnham Repair Café? [78 responses]



The main action that has resulted from attending FRC is “spreading the word” about FRC, which is a reflection of customers’ overall positive experience of attending FRC and perhaps an enthusiasm for repair. This is reinforced by the 98% satisfaction levels¹⁸ associated with attending FRC and the finding that “word-of-mouth” is the strongest communications channel (see also Question 7). On the practical side, almost as many respondents have attempted a repair (or have preserved a broken product to take to the next FRC repair session). That finding aligns with Question 17, which indicates that nearly 50% are more or much more likely to attempt a repair after attending FRC.

¹⁸ frc.cfsd.org.uk

Q19: As a result of visiting Farnham Repair Café have you personally completed a successful repair? [87 responses]

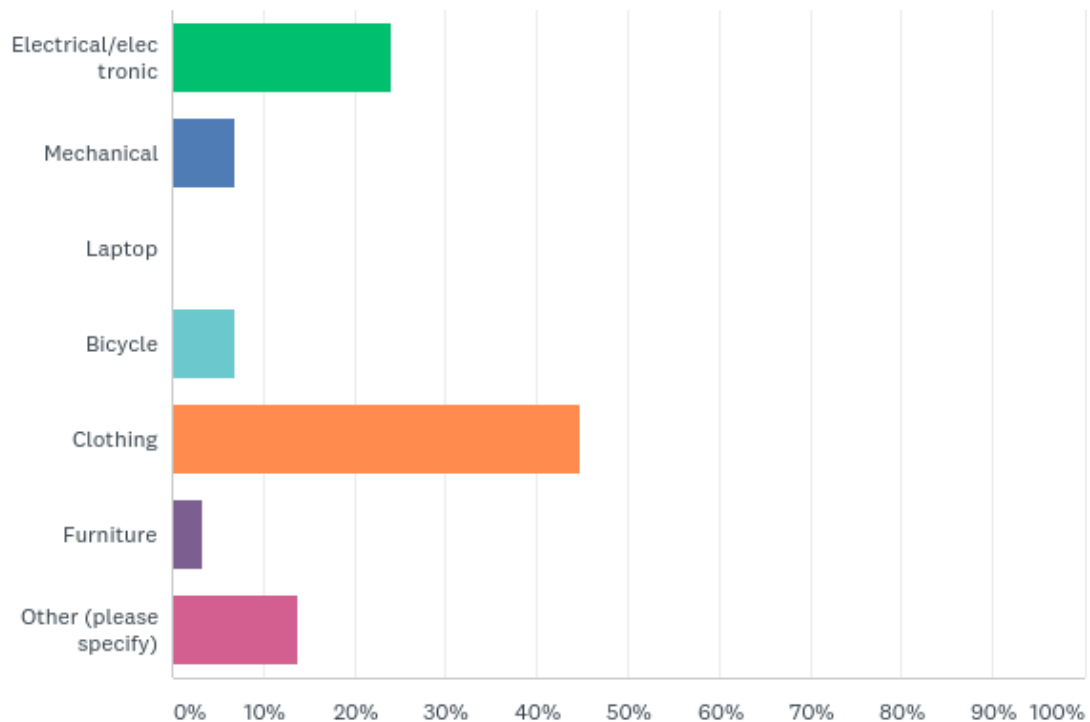


Consistent with other findings in this report, some 33% of customers said they have completed a successful repair after attending FRC, while those who have not are double that figure.

Further research might be completed over why two-thirds of respondents have not personally completed a repair. This would help illustrate the barriers to repair amongst individuals.

In Question 17 we see that there is enthusiasm for attempting to repair at home, yet the findings here highlight that the majority of self-repairs were unsuccessful. It would be good to understand the gap between the enthusiasm and the result, and/or the reason(s) for it. Further research should be carried out.

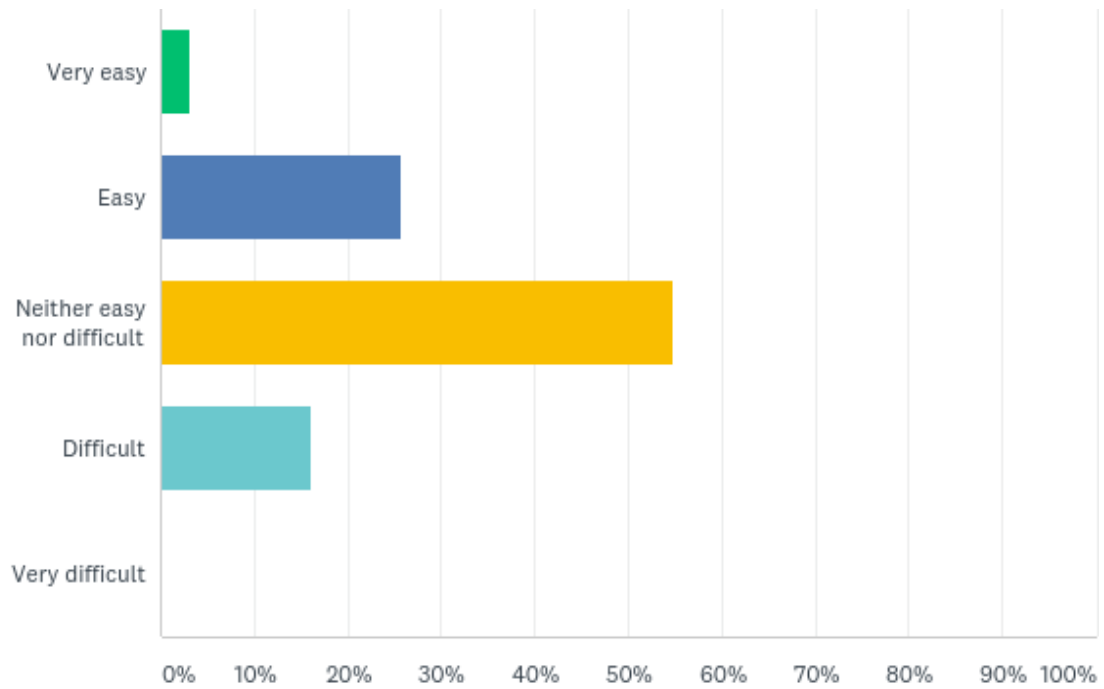
Q20: What type of item have you most recently repaired as a result of visiting FRC? [29 responses]



Of those who completed a repair after a visit to FRC, almost 45% had repaired clothing, nearly 25% an electrical/electronic item, with bicycles and mechanical items each at about 7%.

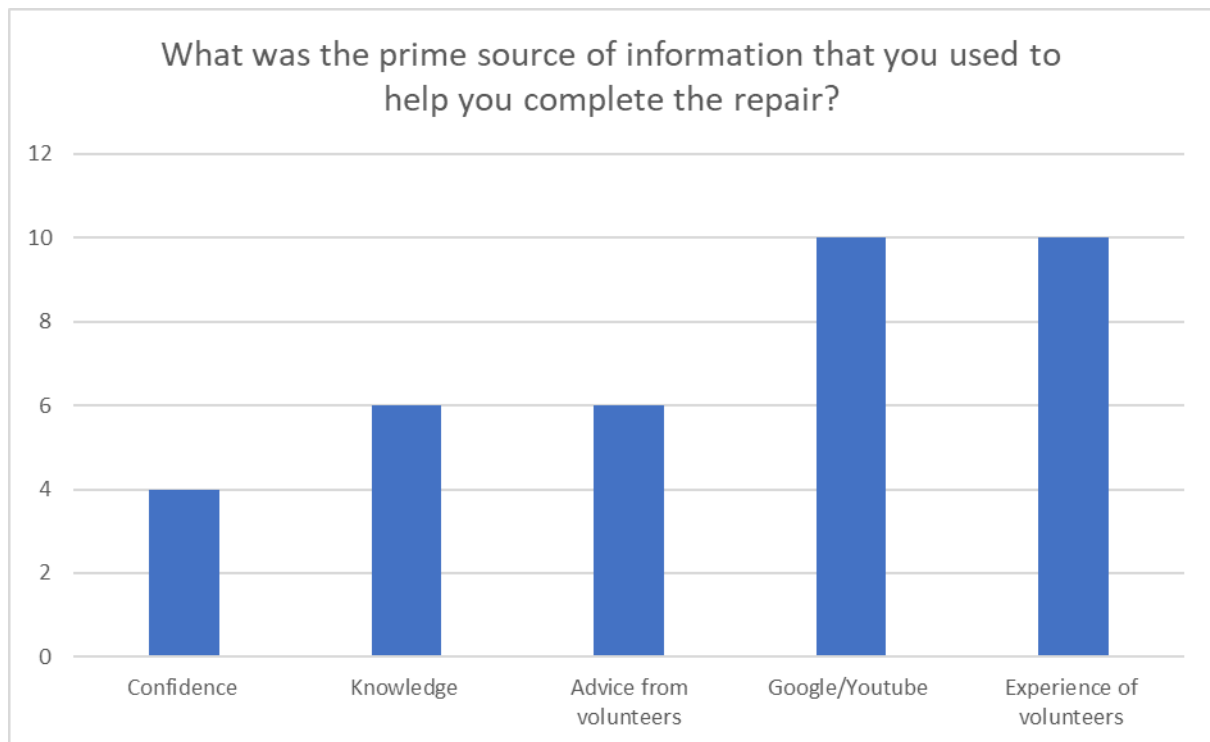
The high marks for those who repaired clothing after attending FRC is likely to relate to the less technically complex nature of clothing repairs and perhaps illustrates that citizens have the skills to complete repairs, if they are given clear advice by FRC clothing repairers. It is encouraging to note that over 20% attempted to repair electrical/electronic products despite the increased technical skills that are required to repair such items. Online videos also appear to be useful resources for individuals completing electrical/electronic and other repairs; see Question 22.

Q21: How easy was item for you to repair? [31 responses]



More respondents (almost 30%) found the process of repair at home was easy or very easy, compared to those, about 16%, who found it difficult – this despite many products (e.g. electrical/electronics) being of a complex nature. The majority, almost 55%, of customers gave a neutral response. That’s a sizeable percentage and perhaps should be probed further in future research.

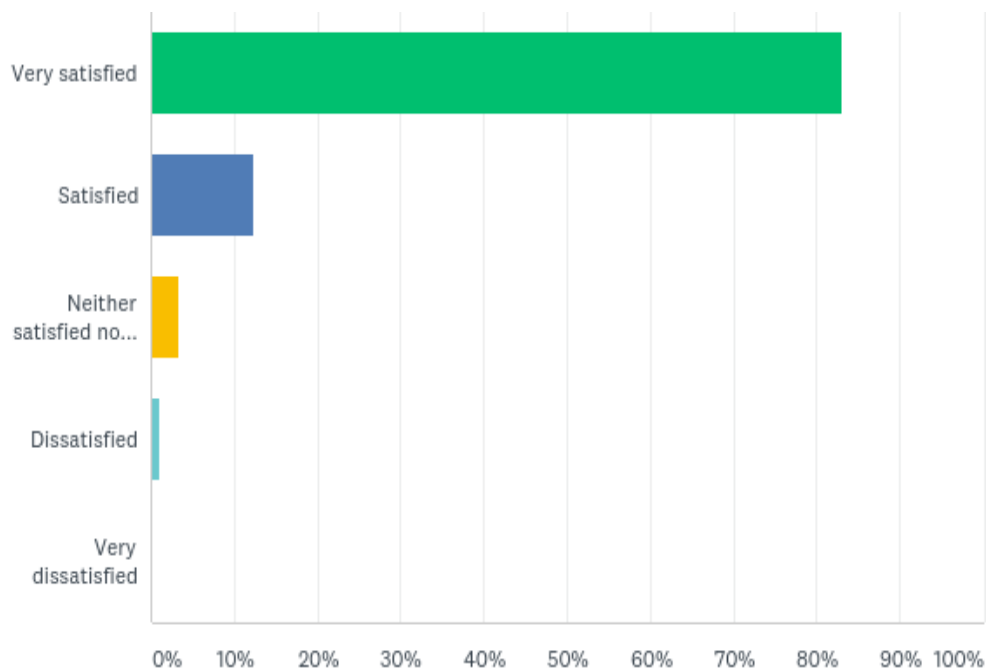
Q22: What was the prime source of information that you used to help you complete the repair? [28 responses]



The question prompted a joint first place with two opposite responses: face-to-face “Experience of volunteers”; and online: “Google/YouTube”. This demonstrates, in addition to face-to-face information/advice provided by experienced repairers, that some customers (‘self-repairers’) now recognise that they can find useful, practical information via the internet to help with repair at home. This highlights that people find videos – even not necessarily good ones – very helpful in showing how to repair something, perhaps being much easier to digest than having to read a 50 page manual or complex leaflet, for example.

There was also a joint second place with “Advice from volunteers” and “Knowledge”, ahead of “Confidence”. The comment about Knowledge was supported by individual comments: “The volunteer showed me how to alter the item”; “Manufacturers’ exploded diagrams on internet plus FRC”; “Watching and talking through the repairs at the repair cafe with the lady volunteer”, and similar comments. The comment on Confidence was supported by comments such as “Nothing really, I just took it apart”.

Q23: How satisfied are you with the service provided by Farnham Repair Café? [89 responses]



The overwhelming majority (more than 83%) of customers were very satisfied with their experience of FRC. In addition, more than 12% were satisfied. These figures align very closely with the 98% satisfaction level that FRC achieves from exit surveys ¹⁹.

The findings are perhaps a reflection of the commitment made by the volunteers to be as professional and helpful as possible, and of the strong sense of community that customers feel by attending FRC. This relates back to Question 11, which shows that customers come to FRC hoping to have a product repaired, with majority (65%) ²⁰ having a product repaired and more than 40% experiencing a positive, strong sense of community (Question 16).

¹⁹ frc.cfsd.org.uk

²⁰ Ibid

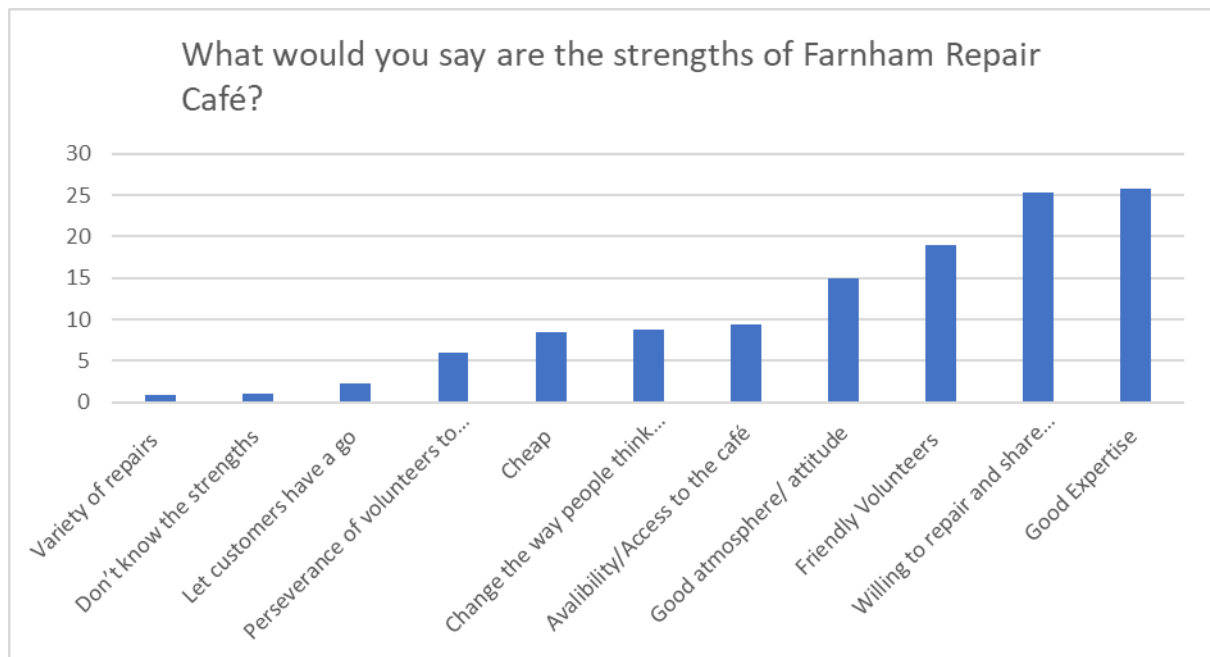
Q24: Do you agree that good local professional repair services are accessible for Farnham residents for the following products/items? [89 responses]

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL
a. Smart phones	9.52% 8	40.48% 34	45.24% 38	4.76% 4	0.00% 0	84
b. Laptops/computers/tablets	16.47% 14	43.53% 37	36.47% 31	3.53% 3	0.00% 0	85
c. Kitchen appliances, eg toasters, kettles etc	11.36% 10	11.36% 10	27.27% 24	36.36% 32	13.64% 12	88
d. Clothing/textiles	9.20% 8	32.18% 28	36.78% 32	20.69% 18	1.15% 1	87
e. Gardening equipment - electrical and mechanical	8.14% 7	22.09% 19	46.51% 40	16.28% 14	6.98% 6	86
f. Furniture	8.14% 7	12.79% 11	47.67% 41	26.74% 23	4.65% 4	86
g. Bikes	10.71% 9	40.48% 34	41.67% 35	5.95% 5	1.19% 1	84
h. Small electrical equipment including vacuum cleaners	11.36% 10	12.50% 11	32.95% 29	37.50% 33	5.68% 5	88

This table demonstrates that most respondents agreed that Farnham is well served by professional repair services for bicycles, laptops/computers/tablets, smart phones and clothing/textiles. The opposite was true for gardening equipment, small electrical equipment (e.g. vacuum cleaners) and furniture, and for small kitchen appliances such as toasters and kettles. FRC helps fill this gap, as the majority of electrical/electronic items that are bought to FRC are small domestic appliances e.g. toasters, kettles and vacuum cleaners. The cost of replacement of small domestic appliances items is relatively low but the cost of professional repair is likely to be higher than purchasing a new product (when the cost of labour is factored in). This illustrates the weak financial argument for professional repair of small domestic appliances and that professional repairers are unlikely accept repairs for these types of products. However, experience suggests, that in many instances these products can be repaired at no or very low cost by FRC repairers; and can also be repaired by product owners if they have built the requisite skills and knowledge, and/or have received advice from FRC volunteers and/or gained practical information from Google and/or YouTube.

Note: FRC does not compete with professional repairers in Farnham and in fact hopes to build a culture of repair in the town that benefit those skilled professional repairers whose businesses provide services that go beyond what can be offered at FRC. For example, FRC has made a policy decision not to repair mobile phones.

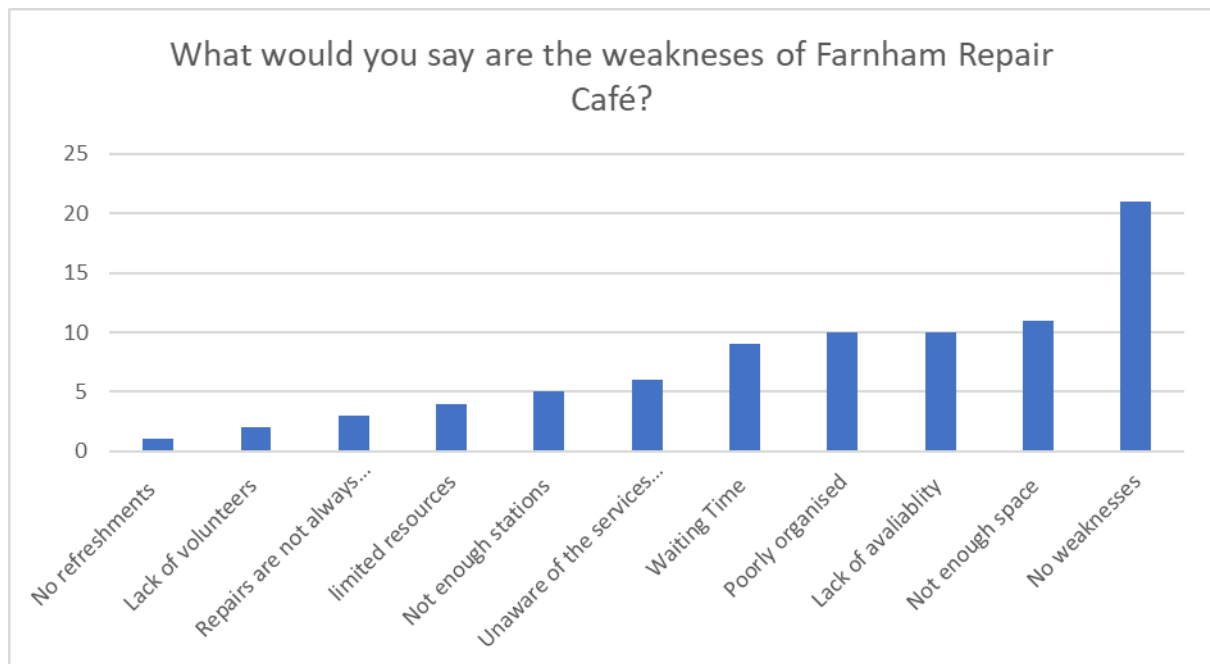
Q25: What would you say are the strengths of Farnham Repair Café? [86 responses]



The primary strengths of FRC are perceived to be good expertise, willingness to repair and share, friendly volunteers and a good atmosphere/attitude. These attributes align with the sense of community engendered at FRC sessions. The willingness to repair and share knowledge, and the level of expertise and knowledge sharing, is also encapsulated by the #sharerepair twitter hashtag used by FRC. The Repair Café “Changes the way people think” was an additional interesting, encouraging comment from one respondent. A conclusion is that good expertise results in repairs, which leads to satisfied customers and a positive atmosphere. Good expertise of volunteers – allied to knowledge and skills gained by customers at FRC - also appears, in some instances, to result in customers trying product self-repair at home. One conclusion to draw from this is that one of strengths of FRC is the creation of a virtuous cycle.

Comments on the primary strengths from open ended questions included: “The people who carry out the repairs”; “You can take pretty much anything to them and they will repair it”; “Expertise and enthusiasm”; “Friendly set up”; “The professional way they fix things”; “A cheerful and helpful attitude”; “Expertise in the area of repair and perseverance in finding a solution”; “Lovely people with good skills and intentions”; “Can do attitude”; “Friendly atmosphere and competent caring people”; and “Professional approach to problem solving”.

Q26: What would you say are the weaknesses of Farnham Repair Café? [83 responses]

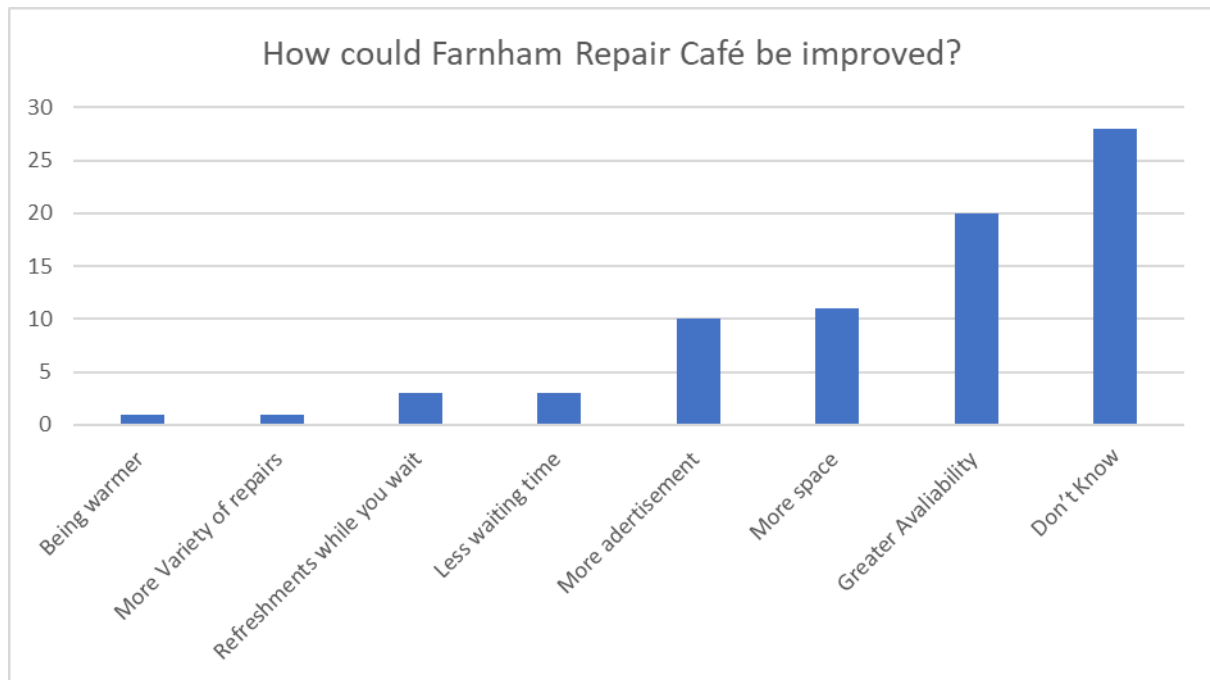


Over 20% of respondents highlighted that they thought that FRC did not have any weaknesses. The main weaknesses were perceived as: not enough space; lack of availability (of repairers); and waiting time. However, these comments were not seen as overly significant - but do require further consideration by FRC. There were a small number of negative comments including “Poorly organised” and “Unaware of the services” – which were thought-provoking. It is worth noting two points: (i) FRC sessions can get very busy e.g. on one occasion more than 100 visitors attended in 2.5 hours; and (ii) due to a high level of visitor traffic in a relatively small hall it can get very crowded. As a result of this and increased attendance, FRC was in the process of moving move to a larger space in the Spire Church (its venue) with the move planned for March 2020. However, the CV19 lockdown and subsequent restrictions have prevented this move. FRC has a learning culture and is always looking to improve how it operates and make improvements when problems or issues are recognised.

Note that despite the comments above, customers generally rate FRC very positively in exit polls ²¹ and are very satisfied/satisfied. Some individual comments illustrated the issues: “Very busy and very popular! perhaps venue a bit too small now that it is so popular, perhaps the answer is to run it every two weeks”; “Seems very popular and for good reason; needs to get bigger”; and “It gets extremely busy and could do with being in a bigger location - it can get very crowded”.

²¹ frc.cfsd.org.uk

Q27: How could Farnham Repair Café be improved? [77 responses]



The suggested improvements to FRC include greater availability and more space, as well as greater awareness via advertising. The majority of respondents did not have a clear view over how FRC could be improved. Minority opinions included less waiting time and refreshments while waiting. Individual comments included: "Difficult to say. It is a victim of its own success. It would be lovely if it was held more times in the month, say once a fortnight"; "Not sure maybe basic online tutorials for the most common issues"; "Just keep doing what you're doing - get more people to use the service and get more volunteers"; and "More repair stations, twice a month sessions, more publicity as there are many people throwing items away for want of minor repairs, eventually representations (in conjunction perhaps with other consumer advice organisations e.g. 'Which?' magazine) to manufacturers to design for repair and supply parts."

Q28: Any other comments? [68 responses]

For this open-ended question, comments included the following: “Gratitude for those who give time and energy to the project - thank you”; “It is a great asset to the community, especially and very good to know it is there and can help, and so enthusiastically”; “Thank you so much for repairing an item for me that had negligible monetary value but huge sentimental value”; “I don't like the idea of wasting something that could fairly easily be repaired, especially when all but the elbow was in good condition. In the case of the jumpers I had tried myself to fix them but wasn't successful. I now have the skill to repair them myself, which is a great outcome. I think that skills sharing sessions or workshops would be a good idea, if volunteers had the time.”

4. Discussion

The following key conclusions are drawn from the report:

- The respondents to the survey were older, biased towards females, environmentally aware and do not like to waste. Customers (product owners) tend to come to FRC to have a product repaired, and appear to come away very satisfied with having a product repaired (more often than not) and also experience a positive sense of community – perhaps related to shared purpose and goals²². For many customers attending FRC, it seems that the experience engenders a feeling of “We’re all in this together” (community) mindset. It’s clear that many customers share a desire to make a difference through repairing products not throwing them away.
- As described above, people primarily come to FRC to get a product repaired. However, some customers also appear going away from FRC with a renewed sense of purpose and confidence, and are attempting repairs at home, and a number are achieving successful repairs. Indeed, as indicated above some 33% have personally completed a successful repair after visiting FRC (Question 19). Advice for repairers and online videos are highlighted as key resources that help support the self-repair process and learn new skills (Question 12) to help them carry out their own repairs.
- FRC attains high satisfaction levels amongst customers primarily due high levels of repaired items (65%) but also secondarily, due to the experience of attending FRC providing a broader sense of being part of the local community. A conclusion to be drawn from this is that having a sense of purpose and community makes people more satisfied with their lot in life; and FRC is perhaps a means to more positive wellbeing for some Farnham citizens. When like-minded people are in a like-minded community, the expression “We’re all in it together” can have very real meaning and further empower individuals and their aims.
- It also could be concluded that as people age they may become more inclined to become community minded, and/or more likely to participate in a community where they see their ideals in action at a practical level e.g. getting products repaired that help reduce environmental impact. An alternative view is that through having things repaired, people find a sense of community in the presence of like-minded people. In FRC’s case, like-minded people includes other customers and the FRC volunteers. There is a need for further research into areas such as: does attending FRC sessions give customers a sense of purpose or added sense of purpose? If so, what is that purpose? There may be more than one purpose. For example, “to keep occupied” amongst retired people? And/or maintain the ability to socialise - and “keep the brain active”? Social isolation reduces that ability.
- It’s interesting to note that there are more females than males on the email list of attendees to FRC and that more females than males responded to the survey. It is also worth noting that females are also generally greener and better communicators than males (that might be

²² <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/docs/default-source/senseability/sense-of-purpose-hand-out.pdf>

a key reason why awareness about FRC via “word of mouth” is quite high). There should be further research into the responses by females and males.

- As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, FRC was forced to temporarily shut down its physical events from April 2020. During lockdown FRC shifted its activity online. Throughout the summer of 2020, FRC ran a series of four very successful webinars sharing its knowledge and experience to other Repair Cafes. By August 2020, FRC had also organised a pilot and four online Repair Advice sessions via the FRC Facebook. From August, FRC decided to launch an open Repair Advice service rather than restricting advice to specific sessions. In October, after considerable detailed research and planning FRC launched a COVID-19 secure physical Drop-off service. This was very well received. However, due to a new UK government lockdown, FRC was forced to cancel its November session. At the time of writing, FRC is launching a new online initiative called Repair Connections designed to help customers to re-connect with the sense of community that FRC engendered for many.
- During COVID-19 lockdown, perhaps more people have turned to repairing products themselves? However, what many people may be missing is the socialisation and “sense of community” resulting from attending an FRC session (and Repair Cafés in general). This desire for a social dimension could see an increased attendance at Repair Cafés when they finally re-open. FRC has organised virtual Repair Café sessions on Facebook but, currently, this is restricted to giving advice only. Although these sessions are proving to be of interest to some Facebook users, the level of traffic to sessions is substantially lower than for the physical FRC sessions. Facebook was stated by FRC customers as the main area of social media engagement; but it unlikely to be relevant for the majority of older FRC customers who may not Facebook users. FRC’S Facebook service only enable advice to be given rather than the completion of physical repairs; and most the majority customers are unlikely to complete repairs individually. And as a final note - the face-to-face community dimension is clearly missing from the Facebook approach, which will be an issue for many customers who value the experience of ‘community atmosphere’ from attending FRC.

APPENDIX A: Farnham Repair Café Visitor Survey

We hope you enjoyed your previous visit(s) to Farnham Repair Café (FRC). FRC are constantly looking to increase our understanding of visitor's experiences and are undertaking a survey to enable us to improve our service to citizens of Farnham.

The survey will take around 10 minutes to complete and it would be excellent if you could complete all the questions. All responses are anonymised and will only be used for research purposes in compliance with GDPR regulations.

You are not required to enter your contact details. However, if you would like to be entered into a free prize draw for £30 in vouchers to dine at Farnham's Côte Brasserie (www.cote.co.uk), then we ask you to enter your name and email address so that we can contact you in the event that you win - Good luck!

When you answer questions that require a single response, the survey will automatically scroll to the next question. For questions that require more than one response, you can click OK or scroll down when you are ready to move to the next question.

It would be really helpful if you could complete by 19th July 2019

If you have any questions or observations about the survey please contact Ros at rcarruthers@uca.ac.uk

Once again many thanks for help and cooperation in completing the survey; the information that you provide will help us improve the service of FRC.

Professor Martin Charter
Chair
Board of Trustees
Farnham Repair Café

1. Please enter your name and email address in the boxes below. **Only complete this question if you would like to be entered into our free prize draw**

Name

Email Address

2. Are you? (*Please tick all that apply*)

Employed

Self-employed

Unemployed

Retired

Other: Please specify

Staff at UCA

Member of Farnham Community Farm

Member of Farnham Hoppers

Member of Farnham Eco-cinema

Student at University for the Creative Arts (UCA)

3. What is your gender?

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

4. What is your age?

Under 18

18 - 24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65 - 74

75 - 84

85+

5. Which of these statements best describes your lifestyle and behaviours in relation to helping to protect the environment?

I'm environmentally friendly in everything I do

I'm environmentally friendly in most things I do

I do quite a few things that are environmentally friendly

I do one or two things that are environmentally friendly

I don't really do anything that is environmentally friendly

6. Which of these statements best describes how you feel about your lifestyle/behaviours and helping to protect the environment?

<input type="checkbox"/>	I am happy with what I do at the moment
<input type="checkbox"/>	I'd like to do more to protect the environment

<input type="checkbox"/>	I'd like to do a lot more to protect the environment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

7. How did you hear about Farnham Repair Café? *(Please tick all that apply)*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Word of mouth
<input type="checkbox"/>	(CfSD) Farnham Herald
<input type="checkbox"/>	Free magazines delivered to your home
<input type="checkbox"/>	Free newspapers delivered to your home
<input type="checkbox"/>	Radio
<input type="checkbox"/>	Television
<input type="checkbox"/>	Flier
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Farnham Nextdoor social network
<input type="checkbox"/>	Farnham Repair Café
<input type="checkbox"/>	Facebook
<input type="checkbox"/>	Farnham Repair Café webpage on CfSD website
<input type="checkbox"/>	Farnham Repair Café Twitter
<input type="checkbox"/>	Farnham Repair Café Youtube channel
<input type="checkbox"/>	Farnham Repair Café Instagram
<input type="checkbox"/>	Banner outside Spire Church

8. How could we improve communication about Farnham Repair Café?

9. How many times have you attended Farnham Repair Café?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Once
<input type="checkbox"/>	Twice
<input type="checkbox"/>	Three times

<input type="checkbox"/>	Four times
<input type="checkbox"/>	Five times
<input type="checkbox"/>	Six times or more

10. Which repair stations have you visited? *(Please tick all that apply)*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Electrical/electronics
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mechanical
<input type="checkbox"/>	Laptops
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bicycles

<input type="checkbox"/>	Clothing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Furniture
<input type="checkbox"/>	Creative upcycling

11. Why did you attend Farnham Repair Café? (Please tick all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	To have item(s) repaired	<input type="checkbox"/>	To meet specific people
<input type="checkbox"/>	To have an electrical product PAT tested	<input type="checkbox"/>	To engage with people in the Farnham Repair Café community
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	To seek advice about repair

12. What were your motivations for bringing an item for repair to Farnham Repair Café? - Please use the drop downs in each row to rank the following with 1 as the most important to 6 as the least important.

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have an emotional attachment to the item	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wanted to learn skills to repair my own stuff
<input type="checkbox"/>	The cost of professional repair is prohibitive	<input type="checkbox"/>	It seemed such a waste to dispose of the broken item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Finding a professional repairer is too difficult	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wanted to meet with others who care about repair

13. How many items have you brought to Farnham Repair Café for repair?

<input type="checkbox"/>	0 None	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	6 or more
<input type="checkbox"/>	3		

14. Thinking about the last item you brought to Farnham Repair Café - what was the repair outcome?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Successful repair	<input type="checkbox"/>	Repair not undertaken but advice on repair given
<input type="checkbox"/>	Partial repair	<input type="checkbox"/>	Repair was unsuccessful

15. Thinking about the last item that you had repaired by Farnham Repair Café - approximately how many months has the item continued to be usable or continued to work?

<input type="checkbox"/>	less than 3 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	from 19 to 24 months
<input type="checkbox"/>	from 4 to 9 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	more than 25 months
<input type="checkbox"/>	from 10 to 18 months		

16. What did you learn as a result of attending Farnham Repair Cafe?

17. Has attending Farnham Repair Café made you more or less likely to attempt to repair your own possession?

Much less likely

Less likely

Neither less nor more likely

More likely

Much more likely

18. What actions, if any have you taken as a result of visiting Farnham Repair Café?

19. As a result of visiting Farnham Repair Café have you personally completed a successful repair?

Yes

No

20. What type of item have you most recently repaired as a result of visiting the Repair Café?

Electrical/electronic

Mechanical

Laptop

Other (please specify)

Bicycle

Clothing

Furniture

21. How easy was item for you to repair?

Very easy

Easy

Neither easy nor difficult

Difficult

Very difficult

22. What was the prime source of information that you used to help you complete the repair

23. How satisfied are you with the service provided by Farnham Repair Café?

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

24. Do you agree that good local professional repair services are accessible for Farnham residents for the following products/items?

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
Smart phones					
Laptops/computers/tablets					
Kitchen appliances, eg toasters, kettles etc					
Clothing/textiles					
Gardening equipment - electrical and mechanical					
Furniture					
Bikes					
Small electrical equipment including vacuum cleaners					

25. What would you say are the strengths of Farnham Repair Café?

26. What would you say are the weaknesses of Farnham Repair Café?

27. How could Farnham Repair Café be improved?

28. Any other comments?



The Centre for Sustainable Design



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