

COP26 – Make do and mend diverts waste from landfill

This article has been provided by Edinburgh Remakery as part of our series of articles to be published just ahead of COP26, the UN conference on climate change which was held in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November 2021.

The Edinburgh Reporter posed a simple question to several individuals and organisations in the city: What are you doing to address climate change?

With all the world looking at Glasgow during COP26, and in the face of climate emergency, it is clear that the time to do something about climate change, no matter how small, is now.

The Edinburgh Remakery is a social enterprise committed to diverting waste from landfill, promoting a culture of repair and reuse and so building a stronger community.

The organisation has just announced an exciting move from its Leith Walk base to new bigger premises. In 2020 the organisation diverted 123 tonnes from landfill, saved 80 tonnes in CO2 emissions and taught more than 500 people how to repair and reuse household items. The organisation has donated 278 free laptops, tablets and smart phones to those who live in digital poverty and social isolation.

Edinburgh Remakery is a force for good in many senses. Here is

what they think:

Climate change is at the top of everyone's agenda right now – and so it should be! With the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) taking place in Glasgow, the pressure is on for Scotland to ensure this event marks the crucial turning point the world needs to prevent climate disaster...

We're the Edinburgh Remakery, and we work with communities to share repair and reuse skills and services which make it easy for people, organisations and businesses in Edinburgh and beyond to prevent waste and, thus, prevent pollution.

You see, it's small organisations like us and the individuals, communities and businesses we work with that are creating positive steps and opportunities to tackle climate change. The phrases "climate disaster" and "climate emergency" sound so incredibly daunting that it's easy to feel discouraged and a bit helpless in the face of such a huge crisis. And we think it's fair to say that we've been hearing these words so often over the past years and decades that they can sometimes lose all meaning.

But the truth is that we are on the verge of a climate disaster. The good news though is that there's still plenty we can do to turn the tides and help clean up our planet, reduce our emissions, and build greener communities that we can all enjoy for generations to come.

We at the Edinburgh Remakery believe that a Circular Economy model – where as many materials and items as possible are reused, repaired, repurposed and recycled to ensure as little as possible goes to waste – is an essential part of turning this tide.

For example, we teach people how to sew, repair and remake their clothing, encouraging them to reuse or pass on garments instead of throwing them away and buying new. This reduces

carbon emissions, whilst also saving people money and giving them a brand new creative skill to enjoy.

We also take in donations of old electronics, such as laptops, tablets, smart phones, computers, and more, which we repair and refurbish, and sell on or gift to vulnerable groups facing financial hardship. This stops these electronics from ending up in landfill where they can pollute soil and waterways, and also means that valuable materials and precious metals that are found in these devices can be reused, which means less of these finite materials need to be mined for production.

These very simple actions – donating a laptop for refurbishment or learning to repair your clothes or other belongings – may seem small and insignificant but added up they can have a huge positive impact on our climate. By repairing, reusing, valuing, and sharing what we already have, we can prevent pollution, reduce carbon emissions, and create a greener Scotland with circular economy at its heart.

