



Spotlight

ReLove second-hand clothing fairs

Month 2024



The Re-Love Clothing Fair is a collaborative event between Lochbroom & Ullapool Community Trust and Ullapool Unpacked CIC, created with the aim of normalising buying second-hand items and supporting individuals to reduce consumption. The fairs bring people together, create a sense of community and reduce social isolation. Encouraging conversation around other climate-conscious behaviours, while ensuring it remains inclusive and accessible to all was another key focus.

Background

The idea emerged following a clothes swap held in July 2022 which only appealed to a handful of people. Some were reluctant to part with high-quality items and were worried about not finding anything they wanted in return. Ullapool has an active buy, sell, and swap Facebook page, but clothing is rarely listed. Online platforms like Vinted and eBay are also less convenient due to the remoteness of Ullapool with a pop-up post office operating only once a week. Selling items in person not only avoids the carbon footprint of postage and packaging, but also requires less effort overall.

In response to these challenges the aim was to create:

- A platform for buying and selling second-hand clothing
- An enjoyable, in-person shopping experience
- A social, community event to bring people together
- A different aesthetic to a jumble or car boot sale - something thoughtfully laid out and visually appealing, with no pressure for sellers to be there for the duration
- An anonymous process that removes the discomfort of browsing someone's items in front of them



Activity and impact



The first Re-Love Clothing Fair took place in June 2023, with participants submitting both adult and children's clothing to sell. **43** people dropped off items, and the event was busy throughout the day. Initially we used paper forms for submissions and handmade labels, with participants leaving items in bags for staff and volunteers to sort, label and hang. The response was overwhelming and this process quickly proved to be unmanageable. The feedback however was extremely positive, and attendees were quick to ask when the next event would be.



There have been **seven** Re-Love Clothing Fairs so far, some with a different theme including baby and children's, and an outdoor gear edition.



Alongside the clothing sales, additional activities and services have been offered such as clothing and bike repairs, and practical workshops. At the outdoor-themed fair, Alpkit provided on-the-spot patch repairs and a collection service for larger items needing more work. There have also been collaborations with local organisations, including Kinder Croft, a local outdoor nursery, and Ullapool Unpacked's refill shop was open in the hall during the event.

To enhance the social aspect, there are always hot drinks and cake, and sometimes a soup lunch, raising funds for different causes.

Across all the events so far **1091** items have been sold and kept out of landfill generating **£12,199** of sales. **90%** of that has gone back to sellers and into the local community

The ReLove model - how it works:

- Sellers fill in an online form (we've used Google) with the items they would like to sell. They then automatically receive a seller number via email, and we receive the information collated in a spreadsheet.
- Sellers can pick up a pack of labels from the LUCT or Ullapool Unpacked shop. They label the items themselves with their seller number, the size and the price. Having a seller number, allows each person's items to be displayed anonymously, but allows us to track the items.
- There are designated drop off times the evening before and morning of the fair when sellers can come and hang up their items.
- All the items are organised into categories by staff and volunteers and ready for the public to browse and buy. Staff and volunteers run the till and people can pay via cash or card for the items they would like.
- At the end of the sale, any items not sold are grouped together by seller number and available for the sellers to collect at the specified time, or donated to charity.
- Money for items sold is then transferred to sellers, minus a 10% commission that goes towards the running costs of the event

Looking Ahead



It is hoped that the Re-Love Clothing Fair can continue in Ullapool and this model inspires others to run similar events around the Highlands. The fair is now well loved and supported by the community however the current model doesn't sustain itself financially and continues to evolve. Costs are high due to the amount of staff hours required in organising and running the event, the cost of hiring the hall and advertising the event. Increasing the commission charged to 20-30% could help towards these costs but would not be enough by itself and it's important the event remains inclusive.

See also: [Thurso's thematic swap and swish events](#)

The Highland Community Waste Partnership (2022-2025)

Funded by The National Lottery Climate Action Fund, and coordinated by Keep Scotland Beautiful, the Highland Community Waste Partnership (HCWP) brought together eight community groups in the Highlands to reduce waste and promote more sustainable consumption.

Learn more here: www.KeepScotlandBeautiful.org/highlandcommunitywaste