



NIRN

Annual Report 2024/25



Northern Ireland **Resources Network**

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An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

**Laying the
groundwork for
a thriving green
economy**

Welcome

Hello and welcome!

It's been an action packed year for us at Northern Ireland Resources Network (NIRN) and we're pleased to share the outcomes with you through our annual report.

It's great to take a step back and celebrate the hard work that has taken place over the past year from our team, members and everyone involved in keeping our much loved items in reuse and repair, and circular living as the norm.

We give a big hearted thank you to the community groups, social enterprises, educators, government and every day circular heroes who've worked tirelessly over the past year to keep our perfectly good items in use and out of landfill and incineration. From clothing to furniture, bikes to electrical goods, their work is the beating heart of Northern Ireland's circular economy.

We are truly grateful to receive funding through **DAERA's Carrier Bag Levy**. Their funding makes so much of our work possible, and we're incredibly thankful for their ongoing commitment.

Inside, you'll find highlights of activities throughout the year and some impact statistics that we're very proud of. These numbers represent carbon saved, tonnes saved from landfill, volunteer hours, turnover and people benefitted... all made possible through creativity, care, and a commitment to doing things differently.

With the right support, NIRN can lead a just transition towards a circular economy –reducing environmental impact, building stronger more inclusive communities and laying the groundwork for a thriving green economy, rooted in local and regional skills and innovation.

Thank you for being part of our journey.

Elmear

Eimear Montague

Executive Director, NIRN

www.ni-rn.com

@NIRN / Linktr.eeWelcome!



Our Vision

NIRN began as a pilot initiative, funded by DAERA and developed by Community Resources Network Ireland (CRNI), to explore the need for a dedicated voice for the reuse and repair sector in Northern Ireland. From the outset, the vision was to connect and empower community groups, charities, social enterprises, and local authorities to reduce waste and build a more collaborative circular economy — **one where reuse and repair are embedded into daily life.**

Now proudly incorporated and in its third year, NIRN has grown into a respected network that champions reuse, repair, and circular thinking across all 11 council areas. The network brings together a diverse and growing membership, creating shared purpose, stronger partnerships, and a collective voice for sustainable change.

At its core, NIRN exists to help build a circular economy that not only reduces waste and carbon emissions, but also creates meaningful jobs, training, and opportunities within local communities. The organisation holds a firm belief that everyone, regardless of income or geography, should have access to repair, reuse, and resource-sharing services. Our vision is a Northern Ireland where reuse and repair is integrated into everyday life.

As the network continues to evolve, so to do our ambitions. Today, NIRN's work spans from advocacy and skills-building, to youth education and grassroots innovation. Always ingrained in its founding values - to drive environmental, social, and economic change through community and policy action.



NIRN

CIRCULAR RESOURCES HIERARCHY



REDUCTION



REUSE



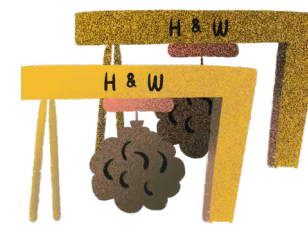
RECYCLE



RECOVERY

DISPOSAL

NI STATS



At least **9k tonnes** of this clothing ending up as waste every year

That's enough wasted clothing to fully load H & W's 2 yellow cranes at least 5 times!



533 tonnes of clothes is thrown away in NI every week - that is over **27k tonnes of clothing** that is disposed off every year.

That's a gridlocked traffic jam of lorries longer than the Giant's Causeway every year!



Approximately **7.7 million tonnes** of waste is generated annually in NI

Imagine a traffic jam of full double decker buses from Belfast to Tokyo!



£170 million spent on waste management in a year across all councils in NI.

That's almost £1000 for every Primary School child in NI!



In 2023, Northern Ireland exported over **990,000 tonnes of waste**

That's a fleet of almost 20 Titanics!



164k tonnes of household food waste generated in a year.

Imagine a train of Holstein Friesian cows all the way from Belfast to London!

Waste Electrical and Electronic waste is one of the fastest growing waste streams in the world and UK produces **6 million tonnes of e-waste every year.**

That is almost 1/10th of the amount of e-waste produced annually!



Executive Summary

In **2024/25**, NIRN significantly expanded its reach and impact, strengthening the reuse and repair sector across all **11 local authority areas with nearly 50 members**.

Through tailored support for tool libraries, repair cafés, and textile projects, NIRN helped grow community-led circular economy initiatives and build local capacity. Members benefited from opportunities to share best practices and connect through a year of innovative networking events and peer learning sessions.

A landmark moment in 2024 was the “From Niche to Normal” conference at Stormont, a groundbreaking event that brought the circular economy to the heart of policy making. Hosted inside the historic Northern Ireland Assembly Building, the event made history by featuring Northern Ireland’s first-ever Repair Café within Parliament Buildings—a powerful symbol of repair and reuse entering mainstream discourse and public policy.

Building on the momentum generated by the Stormont event, NIRN led the delivery of Northern Ireland’s first-ever Repair Week in March 2025. This high-profile, week-long campaign galvanised civic, organisational, and public engagement across the region. Events, activities, and media coverage brought repair culture into the spotlight, encouraging participation from individuals, schools, councils, and community groups. To support this growing movement, NIRN developed a suite of accessible resources, including toolkits, podcasts, and digital content on reuse and repair. These tools empowered members to broaden their reach and deepen their impact.

Through the Circular Schools programme, NIRN and partners also collaborated with schools across Northern Ireland, equipping young people to lead the way in reducing waste and promoting repair.

Organisationally, NIRN has continued to strengthen as a self-sustaining social enterprise. The team has grown to six staff members, with two new board members joining over the past year. Strategic partnerships—with CRNI, ReLondon, The Playhouse, Ulster and Queen’s Universities, —have enhanced NIRN’s capacity to drive lasting change.

With increased capacity, NIRN is now better positioned than ever to support its growing network of members and drive forward the reuse and repair agenda across Northern Ireland.

Liam Mc Nally,
Practitioner,
International Synergies



Michael Sloan
Area Manager,
East Belfast Mission



Heidi Redmond
Strategic Officer, Strategic
Investment Board (SIB)



Marcus Campbell
Project Officer,
Belfast City Council



Nuala Griffiths
Environmental, Social &
Governance Manager,
Heron Brothers



Meg Magill
Innovation & Entrepreneurship,
Project Manager at Intertrade Ireland
(new to the board since Dec 2024)



Professor Ian Montgomery
Dean of Sustainability & CSR
at Ulster University (new to
the board since Dec 2024)

The NIRN Team...



Eimear Montague
Executive Director



Catherine Taylor
Operations Manager



George Gillespie
Community Network Manager



Helen Tomb
Community Network Manager



Julie Armstrong
Project Officer, ARTITUDE



Maria McLaughlin
Events & Communications Officer

Highlights

APRIL 2024

NIRN ATTENDED THE WORLD CIRCULAR ECONOMY FORUM IN BRUSSELS

OCTOBER 2024

PARTNERING WITH ULSTER UNIVERSITY ON FUTURE ISLAND ISLAND PROJECT TO ORGANISE EVENTS TO REDUCE WASTE ON RATHLIN ISLAND

DECEMBER 2024

NIRN'S SECOND AGM - TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS OFFICIALLY APPOINTED - MEG MAGILL & PROFESSOR IAN MONTGOMERY OCTOBER

MARCH 2025

REPAIR WEEK NI (MARCH 2025) FEATURED 50+ EVENTS ACROSS ALL 11 LOCAL AUTHORITIES, WEBINARS, WORKSHOPS, AND PODCASTS

JULY 2024

'FROM NICHE TO NORMAL' AT STORMONT, AN INFLUENTIAL GATHERING OF POLICYMAKERS, CAMPAIGNERS, AND COMMUNITY VOICES TO SPOTLIGHT THE REUSE AND REPAIR AGENDA.

NOVEMBER 2024

LAUNCH OF 2ND PHASE OF ARTITUDE PROJECT WITH THE PLAYHOUSE DERRY SUPPORTED BY NATIONAL LOTTERY CLIMATE FUND, COMBINING ART, ACTIVISM, AND CLIMATE JUSTICE.

ZERO WASTE SCHOOLS PROGRAMME STARTED, EMBEDDING CIRCULAR THINKING FROM A YOUNG AGE.

APRIL 2025

INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS STRENGTHENED VIA ATTENDANCE AT THE RREUSE CONFERENCE IN BRUSSELS.

Key Achievements

Finalist in the European Week for Waste Reduction Awards (June 2024), shortlisted in the NGO category — recognising our network's collaborative efforts:

In June 2024, NIRN was honoured to be named a Finalist in the European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR) Awards, shortlisted in the NGO category. This recognition reflects NIRN's leadership in advancing community-driven reuse, repair, and waste prevention initiatives across Northern Ireland.

Our nomination was based on a special series of podcasts produced during EWWR 2023, which brought together voices from central and local government, the charity sector, and academia. Each podcast highlighted practical actions, policy initiatives and strategies to reduce packaging waste, aligning with the campaign's theme. By showcasing a diverse range of perspectives and initiatives, the series underlined the importance of collaboration in driving systemic change.

Being shortlisted on the European stage demonstrates the growing impact of NIRN's network and its collective efforts to promote a circular, low-waste future. This achievement reinforces our role in championing sustainable innovation and grassroots action across Northern Ireland.

The nomination highlighted the impact of our growing network and its collaborative efforts to build a more circular, low-waste future—placing Northern Ireland on the European stage for sustainable innovation and grassroots action.



NIRN's Eimear Montague was awarded visiting professor at Ulster University



In April 2025, NIRN's Executive Director, Eimear Montague, was appointed as a Visiting Professor at Ulster University, in recognition of her leadership in advancing sustainability, reuse, and circular economy practices across Northern Ireland. As part of a cohort of four new Visiting Professors, Eimear's appointment reflects the university's deepening commitment to sustainability through collaboration with practitioners who are driving real-world change. Her role will support the integration of circular economy principles into research, teaching, and public engagement—further amplifying the impact of NIRN's work across academic and policy landscapes.

NIRN Members & Supporters



NIRN Full Members



NIRN Supporters



Local Authority Members



Cross Network Learning & Cooperation

Throughout 2024/25, NIRN prioritised collaboration and knowledge-sharing across its network and beyond, strengthening cross-border engagement and sector-wide learning.

NIRN's strong and ongoing partnership with Community Resources Network Ireland (CRNI) in the Republic of Ireland ensured shared vision, resources, and strategic alignment in promoting a thriving all-island circular economy. Together, NIRN and CRNI continue to exchange insights, co-develop initiatives, and build momentum around reuse, repair, and resource efficiency.

A collaborative platform for members to share experience



Key events this year for NIRN included practical training sessions such as Circular Economy Education workshops, a "Rethinking Our Resources" seminar, and PAT testing certification for 12 members—building skills and capacity within the sector. The focus groups helped drive member input into major programmes like the Zero Waste Schools initiative, Repair Week NI, and the development of a Circular Resource Library.

Local Authority Forums continued to provide vital opportunities for councils and members to connect, with the September 2024 session in Limavady spotlighting innovative approaches to food reuse. These shared learning opportunities not only supported operational development, but also deepened collective impact and alignment with circular economy principles across Northern Ireland and the wider island.

The recently introduced Circular Resources Library is a collaborative platform for members to share experience, expertise and skills. It also offers opportunities for members to also share resources such as knowledge, experience, materials, and services with other members with the ambition of growing the Circular Economy with particular focus on reuse and repair.

Members' Measurable Outcomes

NIRN tracks the environmental impact of its members using a mix of self-reported data, carbon modelling, and standardised reporting tools. Members annually submit figures on the weight and volume of materials reused, repaired, or diverted from landfill — including textiles, furniture, electricals, and bikes. These are converted into estimated carbon savings using recognised UK and EU carbon conversion factors, similar as those provided by WRAP and RREUSE.

This approach allows NIRN to measure key indicators such as CO₂ emissions avoided, waste reduction, and the lifespan extension of everyday products.

NIRN collects data to demonstrate the triple bottom line impact of its members—capturing economic benefits such as job creation and turnover, environmental gains through waste diversion and CO₂e savings, and social value by tracking community reach, volunteer engagement, and the number of people trained or supported through reuse and repair activities.

The results are aggregated annually to give a snapshot of the sector's environmental, social and economic impact, which feeds into public reports, funding bids, and policy advocacy.



MEMBERS' METRICS



NIRN also supports members to strengthen their tracking practices through training, peer learning, and practical guidance. This evidence-based approach not only demonstrates the value of community-led circular economy initiatives, but also helps shape more sustainable policies and investment in Northern Ireland.

Member Focus

Repair Cafés

In 24 / 25, Repair Cafés spanned 10+ council areas, from urban centres including Belfast, Derry/Londonderry, and Lisburn, to rural and coastal areas such as Whitehead, South Down, and Dromore — highlighting NIRN's goal of equitable access to circular services.

A number of cafés (e.g., Repair Café Belfast and Repair & Share Foyle) hosted specialist textile workshops - from visible mending and upcycling to tackling fast fashion waste, in collaboration with local artists and educators.



Highlights



15th June '24 - Pop-up Repair Café in Meadowbank, hosted by Mid Ulster District Council during the Family Fayre.

16th–24th November '24 - South Down Repair Café in Castlewellan took place as part of the European Week of Waste Reduction, alongside textile repair cafés and swap shops.

April '25 - Launch of plans for first-ever Repair Café on Rathlin Island in partnership with Ulster University - marking an innovative outreach initiative to island communities.

26th September '24 - Repair Café Foyle featured at the "Starting the Loop" event—an introduction to the circular economy for beginners (also involving Belfast Tool Library).

Throughout December '24 - Repair Café Belfast began recruiting volunteers and engaging the community during the "12 Days of Christmas" initiative.

Member Visits



30+
MEMBER
VISITS
24/25

NIRN conducted member visits & collaborations across all council areas, supporting projects in Mid Ulster, ABC, Belfast, Derry & Strabane, Lisburn, Ards & North Down, and beyond—strengthening local reuse and repair initiatives.



NIRN co-hosted events, supported member-led repair cafés & took part in major public outreach activities like the Belfast autumn fair, Ikea Love Your Home, & Tools for Solidarity’s 40th anniversary, engaging thousands in circular economy action.



New Members

**NIRN HAS
OVER 45
MEMBERS!**



In 2024/25, NIRN welcomed several new organisations including South Down Repair Café, Remakery Bangor, and Ulster University—its first academic supporter member.

- Repair Café Whitehead
- Dromore Men’s Shed
- South Down Repair Café
- Ulster University
- Remakery Bangor
- Owenkillew Community Dev Association
- Gortin Wellbeing Collective
- Gortin Men’s Shed
- Queen’s University Belfast
- Rostrevor Men’s Shed
- ABC Community Food Hub
- VIA Wings
- LLTCA

European Week for Waste Reduction

NIRN played a central role in mobilising and celebrating the European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR) with its members during November 2024.

Through a series of awareness-raising activities, NIRN launched a dedicated podcast series featuring environmental champions and promoted a range of community-led waste prevention actions across Northern Ireland: <https://www.ni-rn.com/sustainable-conversations/>

Members organised events such as zero-waste school challenges, tool libraries, repair cafés, and community fridge meet-ups in towns like Castlewellan, Belfast and beyond, all registered under the EWWR banner.

These initiatives not only engaged thousands during the Week (16–24 Nov) but also helped instigate long-term behaviour change around resource reuse and waste reduction.

These initiatives helped instigate long-term behaviour change around resource reuse and waste reduction.



RETHINK REUSE REPAIR www.ni-rn.com	
EUROPEAN WEEK FOR WASTE REDUCTION EVENTS	
MONDAY 18TH TEXTILE REPAIR CAFÉ SWAP SHOP NIRN AWARENESS STAND QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY	MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY 18-20TH ZERO WASTE PROGRAMME WORKSHOPS IN SCHOOLS, Throughout Fermanagh & Omagh, Derry & Strabane council areas.
TUESDAY 19TH LAUNCH OF ZERO WASTE PROGRAMME PILOT	THURSDAY 21ST IN COLLABORATION WITH ULSTER UNIVERSITY: TALKING ABOUT THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY AT THE BELFAST CAMPUS SECOND-HAND CHRISTMAS JUMPERS POP UP SHOP, WITH PROCEEDS GOING TO FARESHARE.
WEDNESDAY 20TH LAUNCH OF NIRN HINTS & TIPS VIDEO ON HOW TO SET UP A COMMUNITY FRIDGE	

Circular Schools Programme

In November 2024, NIRN launched the Zero Waste Circular Schools Programme, the first initiative of its kind in Northern Ireland. Funded by DAERA, the programme has been designed to introduce young people to the principles of circularity. This hands-on pilot brought practical sustainability education directly into the classroom, focusing on real-world alternatives to landfill and overconsumption.

Through interactive workshops delivered in partnership with Tools for Solidarity, FareShareNI, Habitat for Humanity, and Ostrero, pupils explored topics including food waste prevention, textile reuse, basic repair skills, and sustainable consumption. This unique programme aimed not only to reduce waste but to empower the next generation with the tools and confidence to become change-makers in their schools, homes, and communities.



Participating Schools:

Belfast:
Holy Rosary PS, Knocknagoney PS, Forge Integrated PS

Derry & Strabane:
Ebrington PS, St Catherine's PS Strabane, Chapel Road PS

Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Council:
Waringstown PS, St. Francis' PS & St. Patrick's PS

Fermanagh & Omagh:
Knocknagor PS (Omagh), St Naile's PS and Jones Memorial PS

"It's inspiring to see pupils leading the way in waste reduction, repair and reuse."

Each school that completed the programme proudly became a Zero Waste Champion, recognised for its commitment to sustainability. Celebrations across districts included awards of hand-crafted, made from repurposed wood - bird boxes, bat boxes, and planters—demonstrating circularity in action.

"It's inspiring to see pupils leading the way in waste reduction, repair and reuse. Their enthusiasm reminds us that small actions can lead to lasting change—not just in our schools, but in our homes and communities."

Cllr Shirley Hawkes, Vice Chair, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

With overwhelmingly positive feedback from schools, parents, and councils, the pilot has laid strong foundations for expansion. Plans are already underway to scale up the initiative into more schools and more council areas, ensuring the values of reuse and repair are embedded further.

Highlights

12 schools across 4 council areas participated

48 Interactive Workshops

4 Celebration Events

Every participant awarded Zero Waste Champion badge



From Niche to Normal

In July 2024, NIRN hosted a landmark event at Parliament Buildings, Stormont — “From Niche to Normal: Reuse and Repair in Northern Ireland”.

Hosted by BBC NI’s Environment Correspondent Louise Cullen, this impactful day brought together policymakers, social enterprises, and community groups to spotlight the environmental, social, and economic value of reuse and repair—calling for greater policy support and investment.

A **standout moment** was the large repair café that was hosted in Stormont. MLA’s and delegates were invited to bring their much loved items to be repaired. BBC’s Environment correspondent and host for the day brought her own hair straighteners which were successfully fixed! Upcycled items for the event included bags and bow ties, made by the Fashion & Textile Design Centre (FTDC), which brought the practical creativity of the sector to life within the formal setting of government.



Guest Speakers Included:

- Louise Cullen BBC journalist
- Andrew Muir MLA Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
- Phillip Nugent Assistant Secretary, Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Ireland)
- Neva Nahtigal Director, RREUSE (European network for reuse & repair)
- Fiona Dear Co-Director, The Restart Project
- Claire Downey Policy & Research Director, Rediscovery Centre
- Sue Bamford Education Officer, Tools for Solidarity
- Dan O’Reilly Reuse Coordinator, Newcastle Lions Club
- Nicola McCool Waste Services Manager, Derry City & Strabane District Council
- Alex Jebb Climate & Sustainability Officer, Belfast City Council
- Kevin Murphy Chief Executive, The Playhouse, Derry
- Eimear McNally Graphic Recorder





Key take aways from the day:

- Repair and reuse play a vital role in supporting the development and long term success of a circular economy.
- Policies and legislations such as the Right to Repair movement in Europe, Repair vouchers and incentives in France and Ireland's Circular Economy Strategy were highlighted.
- The event marked a shift from siloed pilot projects to a coordinated sector-wide call for recognition, support, and policy coherence.
- It was also an important step in positioning Northern Ireland's reuse and repair efforts within wider European and UK circular economy conversations.



Legacy and Next Steps:

NIRN established new relationships with MLAs and DAERA officials to pursue long-term dialogue.

Plans developed for a policy-focused Repair Week event which took place in 2025 with wider participation from councils and government departments.

This was more than a one-day event, it was the beginning of a new narrative – one where reuse and repair are seen not as alternative, but as essential.

Highlights from the day can be viewed via this [short video](#).



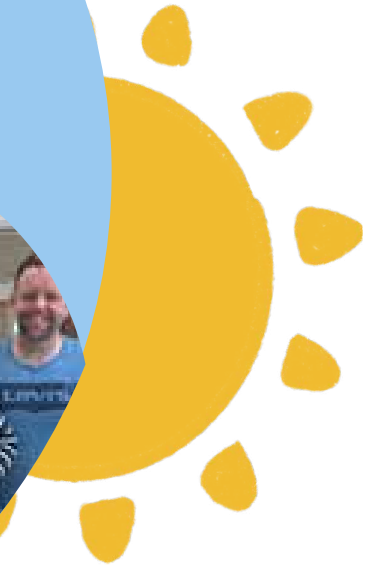
Repair Week NI 25

From 3rd to 9th March 2025, NIRN delivered a first-of-its-kind initiative - the only nationwide Repair Week in the UK. In partnership with ReLondon, the campaign successfully shone a spotlight on the power of repair, reuse, and skills sharing—and made a lasting impression across Northern Ireland and beyond.

Thanks to branding, toolkits, and guidance from ReLondon, NIRN was able to launch a campaign that connected the dots across Northern Ireland - from schools and councils, to repair cafés, businesses and spaces such as libraries.

Funded by DAERA via the carrier bag levy, Repair Week NI created real momentum. Events popped up across nine council areas, supported by 22 NIRN members and a wide range of civic and community partners. Activities ranged from textile and electronic repair workshops, to sustainable fashion shows, bike repair sessions, swap shops and seminars.

“You’re a real inspiration with how you’re managing to drive these efforts and always taking the conversation to the next level”



One of the week's most powerful outcomes was the boost in community and political engagement, with endorsement from Minister Andrew Muir adding visibility and credibility.

RREUSE Director Neva Nahtigal praised NIRN's leadership and impact on the European stage, recognising the campaign as a powerful force for change.

"You're a real inspiration with how you're managing to drive these efforts and always taking the conversation to the next level. And great to see the continuous engagement and support of Minister Andrew Muir! Keep up the great work, Eimear Montague and everyone else at NIRN – Northern Ireland Resources Network! We're lucky to have you in our network."

Repair Week NI helped grow repair confidence, share intergenerational skills, and build pathways into the green economy. It provided a platform to reframe waste as a resource, and repair as a practical, empowering solution. The event was described by many as a "door opener" and has sparked new partnerships—some of which are already shaping future initiatives.

Looking ahead, plans are forming for a broader All-Island Repair Week, and deeper collaboration with schools and public bodies. The movement has only just begun.

For a link to the Repair Week NI Report - <https://lnkd.in/e5XdXrEe>



**59 events
took place
throughout NI**

200+ hours
of repair events/
workshops

52 events
with the support of
RWNI25

**Skills shared
with 426 people**
(in person)

**Across
9 council
areas**

**400+ items
repaired**

1.7k+ people
attended events in
person

**8087 people
impacted
by Environmental
Repair Knowledge
Share**

8.6k+ people
viewed NIRN digital
content (videos/
podcasts/ webinar)

**413 people
involved**
in hosting/
facilitating events

37+ Tonnes
of CO2e saved

**12+ tonnes of
waste** diverted
from landfill

ARTITUDE: CLIMATE, CULTURE, CIRCULARITY

The **ARTITUDE Project** is a pioneering collaboration between The Playhouse, NIRN, Derry City and Strabane District Council, and Queens University Belfast. It is an exciting community engagement project grounded in the circular economy, that uses the arts and creative practice to encourage behaviour change and challenge attitudes to waste, consumption and climate action.

A second phase of funding was awarded to the ARTITUDE project through the National Lottery Climate Action Fund, enabling the continuation and deepening of its creative, community-led climate work. As part of this next stage, NIRN appointed a dedicated Project Officer, Julie Armstrong, whose role focuses on developing practical toolkits and resources to share learnings from both phases of the project.

Julie's work has helped to ensure that the insights, methods, and impact of ARTITUDE are captured and shared widely — supporting other groups to embed arts-based approaches to climate resilience, repair culture, and community engagement. Julie is also an active member of the National Lottery Climate Action Fund community of practice, where she collaborates with other funded projects to exchange learnings and best practices, further strengthening the sector's collective capacity for climate action.

NIRN plays a key role in connecting ARTITUDE with the wider repair and reuse movement



Throughout 2024/25, the project delivered a rich programme of workshops, exhibitions, storytelling events, and repair-focused art activities. Highlights included 'The Story of a Jumper' ([Unravelled: The Story of A Jumper](#)), co-launched at Stormont as part of NIRN's "Niche to Normal" event, and "The Climate Wheel of Fortune", an interactive sculpture symbolising circularity.

NIRN plays a key role in connecting ARTITUDE with the wider repair and reuse movement, supporting storytelling podcasts, case studies, and video content for Repair Week NI.



Crucially, ARTITUDE engages underrepresented voices – youth, older people, and marginalised communities, bridging environmental and cultural sectors. Initiatives like the Museum of Hope at Ulster Museum and hands-on eco-arts festivals showcased how creativity can build climate resilience from the ground up.

Looking ahead, ARTITUDE continues to evolve as a national model for inclusive, arts-led climate action—placing imagination, joy, and community at the heart of sustainability.

During Repair Week NI 25, five short videos were launched via Artitude, to celebrate the power of repair – showing how small actions can have a big impact on sustainability, creativity and community. The launch of the videos tied in with International Women’s Day, celebrating 5 women spearheading sustainable initiatives through repair, reuse and sharing knowledge and skills.



Strategic Partnerships and Policy Influence

Throughout 2024/25, NIRN strengthened its role as a leading advocate for community-powered circular economy solutions by bringing the voices of local reuse and repair organisations into key policy spaces and helping shape regional strategy on waste, sustainability, and resource efficiency.

From the launch of Repair Week NI 2025 by DAERA Minister Andrew Muir (with a video statement and photocall - <https://youtu.be/iNkkFHiVRo4>), to the Stormont event “From Niche to Normal” attended by political representatives, Philip Nugent (Assistant Secretary DAERA) and Alex Jebb (Climate & Sustainability Officer, Belfast City Council). NIRN demonstrated its growing credibility as a connector between government, communities and the green economy.

Eimear Montague, Executive Director of NIRN joined The Playhouse in welcoming Secretary of State Hilary Benn MP and Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA to Derry, using the ARTITUDE project as a platform to highlight the vital role of the circular economy and community-led climate action in shaping environmental policy.



To shape a more inclusive and resilient circular economy for Northern Ireland



NIRN actively contributed to the development of environmental policy, influenced public procurement consultations, and participated in shaping the Rethinking Resources Survey.

NIRN also promoted DAERA's Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) and supported the DEFRA WEEE consultation, helping ensure policy reflects real, on-the-ground experience.

NIRN presented to the Department for the Economy on the vital role of reuse and repair in advancing the Circular Economy in Northern Ireland. At a grassroots level, NIRN continues to host its quarterly Local Authority Forums at members' sites, enabling direct engagement between councils and local reuse and repair initiatives.

NIRN's alignment with policy and public sector priorities is also supported through media and learning platforms, including a [podcast episode](#) and [webinar](#) with DAERA's Rachel Hook on the Rethinking Resources strategy.

NIRN also contributed to the NI School Uniforms Bill, ensuring affordability, reuse, and waste reduction are part of school sustainability discussions.

By championing local innovation and amplifying its members' work, NIRN continues to influence policy, support decision-makers, and shape a more inclusive and resilient circular economy for Northern Ireland.

Awareness & Communication

- **NIRN** significantly expanded its visibility and engagement through a diverse programme of awareness and communications activities. Stands were hosted at several events including the Belfast City Council Autumn Fair, where thousands of attendees learned about reuse, repair, and the work of NIRN's members.
- **NIRN** also represented the sector at key national and international conferences, including CIWM, the RREUSE conference in Brussels, and the World Circular Economy Forum, strengthening connections and learning from leading circular economy initiatives across Europe. The team delivered a guest lecture at Ulster University to inspire students about circular practices.
- **An active social media presence** was maintained across Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to promote NIRN's objectives of reuse, repair, and circular economy initiatives. Regular posts showcased member activities, upcoming training opportunities, and key campaigns such as Food Waste Week and Secondhand September. Engaging video content, including the Story of a Jumper animation and the Artitude series celebrating women in repair, helped reach new audiences. Across platforms, NIRN also shared podcasts, event highlights, and policy updates, strengthening connections with members, stakeholders, and the wider public.

Strengthening connections and learning from leading circular economy initiatives across Europe.

- **NIRN's e-newsletters** kept members, MLAs, and stakeholders informed of developments, including the launch of the Fixing the Future podcast in partnership with Ulster University during Repair Week.

Finally, the launch of the Circular Schools leaflet and Zero Waste Schools features across BBC platforms helped raise awareness among educators and the public of the benefits of circular education.

