

Zero Waste Café Project



How-to Guide

This guide offers more detailed information and advice for those who may be interested in adopting or adapting the initiative in their local area.

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Zero Waste Café Project



Title	Zero Waste Café Project
Organisation	Arran Eco Savvy
Category	Emerging Project
Poverty Impact	Mitigation
Introduction to the Project	
<p>The Zero Waste Café project comprises of multiple pop-up cafés across the Isle of Arran. The project works in partnership with supermarkets and local communities around the island to promote sustainability and limit food waste. The Café is part of the North Ayrshire Fairer Food network of larders and is supported by North Ayrshire council to provide subsidised tinned and bulk goods to help the Isle of Arran’s community with the cost-of-living crisis. The café adheres to the ‘dignity in practice’ principles to provide dignified access to food for all.</p>	

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Initial Idea

Who had the initial idea?			
Collaboration between North Ayrshire Council and Arran Eco Savvy: With the support of North Ayrshire Council, Arran Eco Savvy designed the project in 2021 after research was conducted to better understand if there was a need for additional food support on the island.			
How did the idea for the project come about?			
The project evolved from an existing Food Share scheme (established in 2018) that was set up to re-distribute short life food from the Co-op supermarket. Rather than a static community fridge, this was done through a collect and distribute model to ensure that communities across the island had access to the food. The success of this de-centralized model led them to develop a mobile pop-up café which services the island's rural, geographically spread community well.			
Were plans informed by any published reports / papers / research evidence or practice from elsewhere?			
A survey of 100 island residents was conducted by North Ayrshire Council canvassing opinions on sustainability and zero waste schemes. They also looked at other community food models such as pantries and community fridges before designing the Zero Waste Café Project.			
Was anyone else involved in developing the initial idea of the project?			
Were those with lived experience of poverty involved in developing the initial idea of the project?			
No, not initially.			
Was funding required to support the development of the initial idea of the project?			
No		Yes	xxx

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Please provide details of the funding that was used to support the development of the initial idea of the project.

Which organisation provided funding?

National Lottery and North Ayrshire Council.

What, if any, barriers had to be overcome when developing the initial idea of the project?

The COVID-19 lockdown was a barrier when developing the initial idea.

What, if anything, helped enable development of the initial idea of the project?

Pre-existing local connections were helpful when developing the initial idea of the project.

How long did it take between having the initial idea and starting the project?

The initial idea occurred in 2021. This was a development of a similar project that had begun in 2019. The pilot project began in 2022 and the official project launched in 2023.

Who made the decision to introduce the project?

Arran Eco Savvy.

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Early Development – Pilot Project or Feasibility Study

Was there a pilot project or feasibility study?		
	No	
	Yes, a pilot project	xxx
	Yes, a feasibility study	
What did the pilot study or feasibility study involve?		
The project involved two mobile pop-up cafés that operated across the island.		
Who was responsible for the design and/or delivery of the pilot or feasibility study?		
Arran Eco Savvy.		
Were those with lived experience of poverty among those involved in the design or delivery of the pilot project or feasibility study		
	No	
	Yes	xxx
They consulted a diverse range of Arran residents in the planning and design of the project, including those with lived experience of poverty.		

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Was funding required to support the pilot project or feasibility study?			
No		Yes	xxx
Please provide details of the funding that was used to support the pilot project or feasibility study.			
Which organisation provided funding?	National Lottery.		
How much was required?	Not specified.		
What was the specific source of funding?	Together for Our Planet Fund.		
Were specific resources needed to support the pilot project or feasibility study?			
No		Yes	xxx
Please provide details of the resources that were required for the pilot project or feasibility study.			
Staff/Volunteer Time	Not specified.		
Facilities / Workspace	A café van.		
Equipment	Coffee making equipment.		
Local Knowledge	Local volunteers who knew the area and could provide the services where needed.		
Food and Drink	Teas, coffees, and food provided from supermarkets and sourced from local gardens.		
Was the pilot project or feasibility study evaluated?			
No			
Yes	xxx		
Yes. They were funded by the National Lottery Together for our Planet Fund in the initial year and had to provide a project evaluation report on completion of the pilot.			

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Was there evidence from the pilot project or feasibility study that confirmed that it was working / it would work?	
No	
Yes	xxx
Residents on the Isle of Arran were very satisfied with the project.	
Who made the decision to continue with the project beyond the pilot or feasibility study?	
North Ayrshire Council.	
Did the pilot project inform the final design of the project?	
No	
Yes	xxx
The café was a well-attended and sought-after service. It showed funders that it was successful and enabled Arran Eco Savvy to secure further funding.	

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Accessing the Service and Engaging with Service Users

Is there a referral process?		
	No	XXX
	Yes	
Is referral the only way that potential clients are made aware of the project?		
	Yes	
	No	XXX
Other than referral, how do potential clients come to know about the project?		
Arran Eco Savvy work with Arran Community & Voluntary Service and local support services signpost the community to the café. They also promote the work in print and on social media.		
Do you take steps to keep in touch / reach out to service users?		
	No	
	Yes	xxx
Most service users are in close contact with the volunteers and organisers and as such have multiple means of contact (e.g., through telephone and social media).		

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Working with People with Lived Experience of Poverty

Are those with lived experience of poverty involved in <u>delivering</u> the project?		
	No	
	Yes	xxx
Not specified.		
Are people with lived experience of poverty involved in <u>managing</u> the project or project governance?		
	No	xxx
	Yes	
Are people with lived experience of poverty involved <u>in any other aspect</u> of the project? <i>If so, please describe below.</i>		
	No	
	Yes	xxx
Yes. They provide budget recipes designed by a staff member available at the café and are offering supportive cookery sessions this year.		

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Leadership, Governance and Partnership Working

Who is responsible for managing the project?		
Jessica Wallace.		
Is this the only responsibility of the person managing the project?		
	Yes	
	No	
Jessica reports to Diana Turbett, the food lead trustee on the Eco Savvy board who reports on the work to the wider board.		
Is there a Project Steering or Advisory Group?		
	No	
	Yes	xxx
Yes, there is a Board of Trustees.		

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Links to Wider Policies, Strategies and Statutory Requirements

In your opinion, is the project aligned with national and/or local anti-poverty strategies and priorities (e.g., local authority or health board priorities)?		
	Don't know	
	No	xxx
	Yes	
Is the project part of any other strategy?		
	Don't know	
	No	xxx
	Yes	

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Funding

Has external funding been secured to support the work?		
No		
Yes		xxx
Please provide details of the external funding that was used secured to support this work?		
Which organisation provided funding?	The National Lottery, and North Ayrshire Council through NAVT.	
What was the specific funding stream/source/scheme?	Project-grant.	
How much funding was secured?	Unspecified.	
For how long has funding been secured?	Till 2026.	
Is future funding from the same external source a possibility?		
Don't know		
No		
Yes		xxx
Is future funding from the same external source based on pre-agreed outcomes or outputs being delivered from this work?		
No		xxx
Yes		

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Staffing and Resources

Are volunteers involved in delivering the project?			
			No
			Yes
			xxx
Yes, as café baristas, servers and drivers.			
Are specific resources – other than staff/volunteer time and money - needed to support the delivery of the project?			
		No	Yes
			xxx
Please provide details of the resources that are required to deliver the project?			
Facilities / Workspace	Yes. A shed was used for the storage of café equipment, which was supported by North Ayrshire Council through the Arran Outdoor Centre.		
Equipment	Yes. Café equipment and an electric van were secured to deliver the project.		
Local Knowledge	Yes. The project's design was informed through consultation with the local community. They deliver the project in under-utilised community spaces such as village halls.		
Food and Drink	Food and drink are provided by supermarkets, for instance food that had been reduced for quick sale and/or was ready to be disposed. They also receive donations from local food businesses and use surplus locally grown produce in their meals.		
Are any of the resources needed to deliver the project provided in-kind, rather than budgeted from project funds?			
			No
			Yes
			xxx
Local knowledge and food and drink are provided in-kind.			

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Were new IT systems, additional software, or upgrades existing software (databases, Apps) required to deliver this project?

No	xxx
Yes	

Was additional training – for staff or volunteers - required to deliver this project?

No	
Yes	xxx

All staff are trained in food hygiene and safe manual handling, and most have undertaken 'dignity in practice' delivery workshops.

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Monitoring and Evaluation

Is there baseline data to describe what things were like before the start of the project?				
			No	xxx
			Yes	
What methods, techniques or strategies are used by the host organisation to impact of the project?				
Informal feedback from users, extensive surveying in the community, records of attendance and use of the café offer.				
What information is collected by the host organisation about the project?				
Number of users	Yes	xxx	No	
Profile of users	Yes	xxx	No	
Experience of users	Yes	xxx	No	
Outcomes for users	Yes	xxx	No	
Anything else	Yes		No	xxx
Has the data that has been collected by the host organisation been used to adapt the way the project works?				
			No	
			Yes	xxx
Data is used to identify which areas should be served by mobile services. They adapt the model based on the feedback received from the community (i.e., the times and days we operate, what we provide through the café, which workshops we deliver, etc.).				
Has an external organisation been employed to formally evaluate the project?				
			No	xxx
			Yes	

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Is there an intention to employ an external organisation to evaluate the impact of the project in the future?

Don't know / no current plans

No

Yes

xxx

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Impact

To what extent have the aims of the project been achieved?	
Fully met	
Making progress toward meeting Aims	
Not making progress	
There is less food waste from supermarkets and other business on the island as a result of the project.	
What difference has the project made?	
The project has strengthened connections across the island, especially post-lockdown. It has also heightened awareness and decreased levels of food waste, promoted packaging-free food and local produce.	
Have conditions or demand changed since the project was introduced?	
No	
Yes	xxx
Demand has increased over the cost-of-living crisis. There has been an increase in service users as a result.	
Has the project had the capacity to meet these changing conditions and demand?	
Yes	
No	
Unspecified at this time	

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Has the project changed through time?		
		No
		Yes xxx
What changed	<p>Scale: The café has grown from operating in two villages to now working in seven.</p> <p>The Offer: The café expanded in scope to offer an extensive range of bulk dried goods, provide subsidised tinned items, act as a distribution point for local producers and community gardens and offer a broader food offering. The café also made Food Share surplus available through a series of freezers which were bought for the village halls which the café operates in. They also deliver sustainable food workshops and demonstrations drawing on local expertise to do so. Further funding from the National Lottery has enabled the café to expand its offer and scope.</p>	
Why has it changed	<p>Increased funding following the success of the pilot project. They also wanted to adapt to meet the expressed needs and preferences of residents.</p>	
Has the project had any unexpected or unintended outcomes?		
		No
		Yes xxx
<p>One surprising outcome of the project is the extent to which it goes to alleviate social isolation. This is something that is reported frequently.</p>		
In your opinion, is the project having an impact on tackling poverty?		
		No
		Yes xxx
<p>Yes. The project staff know that many of the café users come to the café to do an affordable shop. By working on a guided donation basis, then project ensures that they are inclusive and open to all.</p>		

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Learning from Experience

What is working well?		
Communicating with service users and North Ayrshire Council.		
What, if anything, is working less well?		
Achieving sufficient reach is difficult as the team is small and relies on a small team of volunteers. Not all parts of the island are served locally.		
What are the key learning points that you'd like to share with other practitioners?		
<p>Involving the community in the development of the model from the start, which informed the café project and made the organisation realise that a decentralised mobile model would best serve the Isle of Arran's rural community.</p> <p>It took the organisation a while to settle on the guided donation model (suggesting a donation price for the goods provided at the café i.e., 40p/tin or £1 for coffee and cake). Prior to this it had donations of much larger sums which was not intended. The guided donations have helped with this.</p>		
Are there plans to develop or expand the project in the future		
	No	
	Yes	xxx
There are plans to grow by delivering the project in more locations around the island, including a more frequent programme of sustainable food workshops.		
How easily do you think this project could be replicated in another setting?		
It could be well replicated in the Highlands and other rural and island communities.		

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