
COMMUNITY CLOTHING BANK

Introduction

During October, the Council was made aware that clothing banks had been installed in and around Cranbrook. The owner was contacted and requested to remove the clothing banks from land within the responsibility of the Town Council and Developer Consortium as consent had not been sought nor had the sites been assessed for their suitability.

Background

The clothing bins were supplied and installed by a company based in greater Manchester who was seeking to branch out in another region and selected Exeter. The owner installed the clothing bins without contacting the respective landowners in this case both the Town Council and Developer Consortium and therefore proceeded without consent. They have now been removed but the Committee is invited to consider whether Clothing Banks are a facility that could be provided in Cranbrook.

Considerations

Bins are generally free of charge, the company funds the supply of bins through the sale and distribution of donated clothing. However, they should hold public liability insurance and it is recommended that the Town Council seek a local charitable provider to ensure that the recycling opportunity benefits the wider community.

They are seen to be beneficial encouraging communities to dispose of unwanted clothing which can be recycled and repurposed in an environmentally friendly way and reduce landfill.

Bins need to be emptied regularly to ensure a clean environment in the installed location, any excess will likely be discarded in and around the vicinity and given poor appearance and attract the opportunity for further fly tipping and this is likely to be better managed by a local operative.

There is no guarantee that clothes will be deposited in the bins even when there is capacity and it is possible that items will be discarded in the vicinity of the bin. This has been the experience of donations made to the charity shop in the corner of the Younghayes car park, even within the stores opening hours.

Bins are located in a variety of locations, typically where there is high footfall and adjacent to car parks such as supermarkets, sport centres, industrial estates and in town centres. In all cases the recycling bank operatives would need access from the

highway to either remove the filled bin and replace with an empty one, or the means to empty the contents to a vehicle in close proximity.

Alternative Option – Kerbside Textile Collection

East Devon District Council currently collect good quality textiles and shoes, bagged and placed securely in the green recycling box, as part of their kerbside collection. These are passed on to The Salvation Army for reuse or sale. Whilst it is not possible to collect items such as duvets, pillows or cushion most textiles can be included and residents are requested to keep them clean and dry so they can be reused as part of the scheme. Items not suitable for textile recycling can be placed in the wheeled grey refuse bin and are transferred to the Energy from Waste facility in Exeter.

Summary

The Committee may suggest suitable sites within the town. However, given there is currently a kerbside collection service provided as part of the wider waste collection it may be beneficial to defer a decision until the town centre is completed and then to engage with other partners such as the supermarket and other key stakeholders in the town to ascertain the level of need and suitable locations.

Recommendation

1. To note that residents have the facility to recycle clean dry textiles as part of the household waste collection service provided by East Devon District Council and
2. To defer a decision to seek a local clothing bank provider to install bins at approved locations within the town, until it is possible to engage with local partners in determining the level of requirement for the town.