



Case Study: Menston Christmas Jumper Swap



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Introduction

Menston is a town with a population of around 5,000 located in West Yorkshire.

This project was a collaboration with St John's Church Eco group, Climate Action Menston and Rstuff, formerly known as Pledge2Recycle Plastics. St John's Eco church group has been very active over the last couple of years and gained its Silver Award through the A Rocha Eco church scheme.



A Rocha is a Christian environmental charity that helps churches to “go green” in all areas of church life from worship, to building management, outreach to personal lifestyle. In Menston, the group has held eco workshops including planting fruit and vegetables, making making bee and bug hotels as well as installing a hedgehog house. The group organises an eco quiz and publishes eco tips in the monthly magazine. The group are now working towards the gold award and lining up with the Church of England's ambition to be net zero by 2030.

Climate Action Menston was set up by residents in 2019 with the aims of raising awareness of the climate emergency, improving the local environment and striving for carbon neutrality . The group encourages active travel and instigated a new path in the park to link with a pedestrian crossing; gained funding to engage with the community about widening the pavements outside the school; as well as visiting the Leeds Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility. The group has held a quiz night and heard from residents about installing solar, batteries and insulation, no fly holidays and held a “Writing for the World “ workshop.

Rationale

1

90% of Plastic is fossil based (1)

Plastic enables much of modern day life due to its many useful qualities: lightweight, strong, waterproof, durable etc. Around 80% of plastic produced in Europe is fossil based and as a finite resources, and given the value of plastic, this requires us to consider its use conservatively.

2

60% of fabrics are synthetic (2)

On average clothing lasts around 3.3 years before it is discarded or passed on. Ensuring synthetic fabrics are used again and again and again, before they are put in the recycling bin, helps drive resource efficiency in a circular economy (3)

3

Carbon dioxide created from clothing in the UK was 26.2 million tonnes in 2016 (4)

The amount of clothing bought in the UK is increasing. Promoting pre-loved clothing not only improves plastic resource efficiency but also contributes to the mitigation of Climate Change.

4

£140 million of clothing is sent to UK landfill each year (5)

Any material that is sent to landfill, including plastic, is a missed opportunity to reuse or recycle a resource. Currently, humans are using nature 1.7 times faster than our planet's biocapacity can regenerate. Every effort must therefore be made to reduce this demand. (6)

Method

St John's Eco Church, Menston Climate Action and Rstuff collaborated to plan the Christmas Jumper Swap. The Menston groups organised the jumper swap and Rstuff created a toolkit based on Menston's experience to make it easy for other communities to hold their own Christmas Jumper Swap.

Menston's Christmas Jumper Swap was organised by the church, climate action group and school though in practice this could be organised by any community group, school, faith group or large employer.

Requests were sent out for jumper donations via a press release which was picked up by the Ilkley Gazette. Posters and social media were also used via the organisers strong network of contacts within their community. The call out was picked up by Radio Leeds and a short interview was recorded promoting the event. Two primary school children presented an assembly to their fellow pupils about the jumper swap.



Method

Donation boxes were available at the: church, two local schools, community cafe, library, Scout and Guide HQ and a local nursery up to a week before the event. This afforded volunteers the time to count the number of Christmas jumpers donated, quality check them and sort those that would need to be sent for textile recycling.

The actual Christmas Jumper Swap took place a week prior to Christmas jumper day at the towns Light up Event on the 7th of December - an annual event with a high footfall within the community.



Results

The Christmas Jumper Swap aimed to:

1. **Make sure Christmas jumpers are used again and again** before they are recycled.
2. **Reduce the cost** of buying Christmas jumpers.
3. **Increase knowledge** about the environmental benefits of buying pre-loved clothing.

This case study resulted in 69 donated Christmas Jumpers being put back in circulation. People made small donations of £1 or £2 pounds for their new pre-loved Christmas Jumpers.

The majority of jumpers were collected from the Primary School where pupils gave an assembly about the jumper swap. In total 57 children's jumpers were donated and 11 adult jumpers.

The carbon and water footprint of clothing varies depending on the company they are bought from, the material used and size. An estimate suggests, the carbon and water saving from this project was 807.3kg and 261,579 litres respectively. That's the equivalent of driving 5,492 miles in an electric car and enough water for 104 months of showers.(7)

" The Christmas jumper swap was a great opportunity to chat to people in our community about the chance to make better use of Christmas jumpers and how choosing pre-loved clothing is a simple step we can all take for the sake of the planet."

St John's Eco Church Menston



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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank St John's Church Eco group and Climate Action Menston for their insights in helping to shape the Christmas Jumper Swap toolkit and their amazing enthusiasm for this project and making it a success.

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