

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION 13/09/2023

Mayor of Gateshead Officially Opens 'Green Heart', a brand new Second Hand Shop on Gateshead High Street

The Mayor of Gateshead, Councillor Eileen McMaster, officially opened Green Heart Collective's new shop, Green Heart, at 231-233 High Street, Gateshead, NE8 1AS on Wednesday 13th September 2023 at 11:00am.

The new Green Heart shop provides an affordable alternative to fast fashion and mass consumption on Gateshead High Street. It also bucks the trend of constant bad news stories about High Streets being in decline.

Since Gateshead-based social enterprise Green Heart Collective opened its doors on Team Valley in January 2021, it has rescued and rehomed thousands of items from landfill, from preloved fashion to books, as well as yoga and wellbeing products. Most of these items were sold online and in-store, but some were also donated to local charities such as Peace of Mind North East, Care4Calais & Red Sky Foundation, and local organisations and schools like Eliot Smith Dance & Brighton Avenue Primary School.

In August 2023, Green Heart raised £2170 via a crowdfunder to cover the costs of getting a new High Street shop up and running on Gateshead High Street, as well as setting up their brand new Green Heart Clothing Voucher Scheme. The scheme will be run alongside local organisations like the Job Centre, Citizens' Advice and other local charities.

Helen Redfern, founder of Green Heart Collective said: "This is a huge opportunity for us to be part of a solution to make Gateshead High Street a destination for shopping small with local and independent businesses committed to sustainable retail that is better for people and planet."

"We would love to see other empty premises on the High Street being taken on by businesses like ourselves to create a collective of like-minded retailers with a heart for building community."

"We've got huge dreams, a huge vision, but we need support to help make our High Street store the best it can be. News around High Street locations always seems to be bad with shops closing and fewer people shopping, but I believe it is possible to make city centre shopping fun, diverse and a great shopping experience."

The Mayor of Gateshead, Councillor Eileen McMaster said: "Green Heart will be a great addition to the High Street."

"I've been aware of the excellent work of Green Heart Collective for several years, in reducing waste to landfill by offering a sustainable alternative to buying new. I visited Helen and Andy and the team at their warehouse on Team Valley and enjoyed discussing regenerative ideas for Gateshead with community organisations and social enterprises working collaboratively for a more sustainable future."

Yesterday's news that the Gateshead Wilko's, the town's second biggest shop, will close on Thursday 21 September deals a blow to the town centre. It feels like it's always doom and gloom on the High street.

But the new Green Heart shop turns the tide of these bad news stories on the decline of the High Street. Green Heart Collective envisions and encourages a future where empty premises on the High Street are being taken on by businesses like themselves to create a collective of like-minded retailers with a heart for building community.

Notes To Editors

Helen Redfern is available for interview, record broadcast and live broadcast.

See assets folder link below with images from the day.

Contact Green Heart Collective

Public contact information for Green Heart Collective: 0191 4771801

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For assets visit:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/19Ycas4La220GfFGSrQJbz98QfZg-Cot5?usp=drive_link

Link to crowdfunder and video of Helen explaining why a crowdfunder was needed:

<https://vimeo.com/850488517>

