



Particularart

Press Release

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Campaigners' knitting exhibition reveals incinerator is not a woolly issue

An innovative community art installation goes on show this week to bring alive the impacts of Exeter's new 'Energy from Waste' incineration facility [1]. Members of the community have been knitting larger than life versions of the particles that will be emitted from the new facility. The exhibition [2] which will be on display at the Real Food Café in Paris Street, is designed to tell people about the incinerator, encourage Devon County Council to ensure it is operated properly over its 25 years contract and think harder about their future waste management strategy.

Local campaigners, Diana Moore and Clare Bryden, have written to Devon and Exeter City Councils expressing their concerns about the incinerator which include public health and environmental damage and the cost to the tax payer [3].

Diana said: "The incinerator's regulated and unregulated emissions of ultra-fine particles will add to Exeter's current pollution levels and have long-term impacts on public health. Information about the operation of the incinerator needs to be transparent so the public can see when emissions have been above the legal limits and what subsequent action has been taken by the operator and the Environment Agency."

The exhibition will contain the work of several enthusiastic knitters who have creatively replicated the chemical molecules emitted from the incinerator in wool. Clare Bryden, one of the leading knitters, said:

"This exhibition is a creative way of getting a serious message across. We have knitted carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide and dioxins amongst others and I urge people to come along to see how resourceful a ball of wool can be!"

The campaigners are also worried that the incinerator may undermine Exeter's efforts to recycle. Diana said:

“We support the Councils’ aims to reduce, reuse and recycle. We need to ensure that recycling isn’t undermined by the idea that it’ll be ok to burn the waste to create energy.”

Campaigners are also calling for diverting food waste and electrical waste away from incineration. They cite public information from both Devon County Council and Exeter City Council. Ms Moore said:

“We need better public information about how to dispose of small electrical items and metals. Devon County Council acknowledges that 74 tons [4] was recovered after initial incinerator tests in June. This is unnecessary; these items should end up at one of the city’s recycling centres instead. Exeter is the only district in Devon which doesn’t collect and compost food waste. Instead, this resource, which makes up about 34% of the black bin waste will be incinerated, when it could be disposed of in a cheaper and more environmentally friendly way.”

ENDS

Notes

[1] The Energy from Waste Facility has been developed as a partnership between Devon County Council and Viridor, part of Pennon Group Plc, as an extension to their pre-existing Public Private Partnership contract. The facility is being formally inaugurated on Wednesday 16th October 2014.

[2] Particulart also features three new specially commissioned works by photographer Benjamin J Borley. The exhibition is running in the Real Food Café in Paris Street, Exeter from 13th October to 8th November. **The exhibition launch will be from 6.30pm on 15th October at the Real Food Store, Paris Street, Exeter.** More information <http://particulart.org.uk/> @ParticulartExe

[3] Campaigners have written to Devon County Council seeking reassurance that the facility offers value for money. This is currently difficult to ascertain as there is no publicly available information, nor disclosure in DCC accounts about the contract in general. There is lack of clarity about the key terms of the agreement, for example whether there are to be any penalties applied for under supply of waste from the Councils and, if technology and recycling improves and less combustible material is available, whether waste would be imported from further afield or whether highly combustible recyclable material would be required to fulfil the terms of the contract.

[4] <https://www.devonnewscentre.info/getting-the-most-from-our-waste-in-devon-2/>

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