

Waste not want not: recycling website a big hit

Isabel Hayes

THEY say there's no such thing as a free lunch, but thanks to a new Dublin website, it is now possible to get almost anything for nothing, be it a fridge, a dog kennel or even some old Kate Bush cassettes.

Since its launch a few months ago, the Free Trade forum belonging to Dublin local authorities' website, Dublinwaste.ie, has taken the city by storm. The idea is simple: Instead of throwing away old items, advertise them for free on the website and they can be collected by whoever wants them. Likewise, people looking for particular items can put out requests.

This is exactly what James Cowzer from Rush, Co Dublin, did and now he is reaping the benefits. A few weeks ago, he advertised for a fishing rod. Within days, he was the proud owner of one, and all it cost him was

a trip to Blanchardstown.

"My man came across the site first and told me about it," he said. "So I went online, had a look, thought I'd chance it and put up ads looking for a fishing rod. After a couple of days, a guy rang me and said he had one. It's in great working order and I've already caught a few fish with it."

"When you think about it, whatever you want, the chances are there's someone out there who is looking to get rid of it."

At the moment there are 400 pieces of furniture up for grabs on the website, 46 household appliances and seven musical instruments. There's a fish tank, a 1,500-litre oil tank, aviation magazines, a coal bunker, a garage door, a Ford Fiesta and even a two-bed mobile home all waiting to be claimed by whoever wants them.

A collection of 100 plastic pots of assorted sizes has been languishing on the site for

45 days now, while three bags of women's clothing have been ignored for two months.

"Since we launched the site in collaboration with all the Dublin local authorities in August, we have been amazed at the success," said Hugh Coghlan of Dublin City Council. "The thinking behind the scheme was that we wanted to try and divert the huge amount of waste that finds its way to the dumps and to encourage more recycling. Now we are getting in the region of 60,000 hits a month and have seen the trade of some 4,000 items."

Some antiques, including a 1922 Broadwood piano and an old gymnastic horse and springboard have changed hands.

Tom Hewitt from Ranelagh has made great use of the waste website. He recently got rid of an old bed base and is now looking for a new home for a dining-room table and four chairs.

"I try to reuse as much as possible, so I was delighted when I found out about this website," he said. "The table and chairs are in great working order and don't deserve to be thrown in a skip. Instead, a whole new family can now make use of them, which is a nice idea."

In the wanted section of the website, one man requests religious books of any kind, while a woman is looking for old nylon slips and vintage lingerie. A clothes mannequin, a violin, a banjo and out of date polaroid film are all being sought. Several optimistic people have put feelers out for a new digital camera and Walker, from Dublin, has gone as far as to specify the make.

"I'm searching for a Canon A1 or F1 camera please," he posted. "Will collect anywhere in Dublin."

www.dublirwaste.ie



Nice catch: James Cowzer picked up a fishing rod



www.rtlwaste.ie