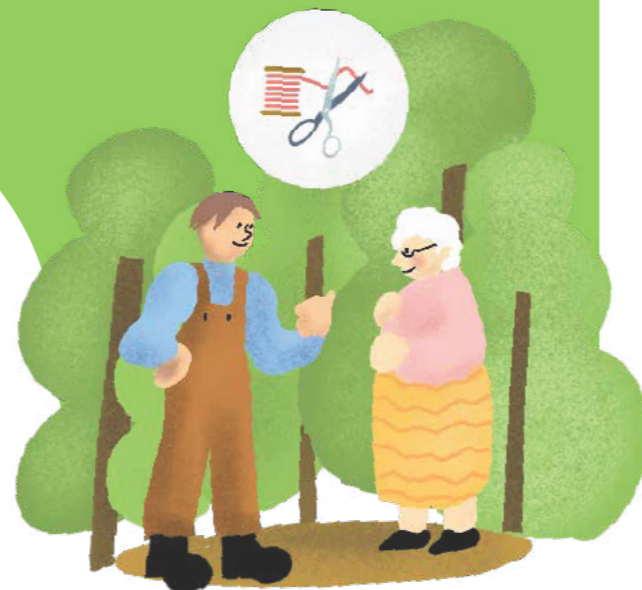


FODC Halloween Clothes Swap October 2025



Case Study

Introduction

In October 2024, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC) coordinated their first Halloween Costume Swap for children in both Omagh and Enniskillen. Due to the success of the pilot, FODC are running another kids Halloween Swap this year to save another round of Halloween costumes from landfill.

Background

Textile waste is one of the fastest-growing waste streams, with clothes typically worn only 7–8 times before being discarded (Lujan-Ornelas et al., 2020; Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). Items like Halloween costumes are often worn even less. In Northern Ireland alone, around 533 tonnes of clothing are thrown away every week. Now more than ever, initiatives like clothes swaps are essential to conserve resources and protect our planet.

A 2019 study by [The Fairyland Trust and Hubbub](#) revealed that Halloween costumes alone generate around 2,000 tonnes of plastic waste in the UK each year, with 7 million costumes being discarded annually. Clothes swaps offer a practical solution, not only diverting textiles from landfill but also encouraging communities to see clothing as a valuable resource rather than a disposable product. Recognising this opportunity, the climate team at FODC decided to take action, drawing inspiration from existing clothes swap initiatives when designing their own event.

Presentation of Findings

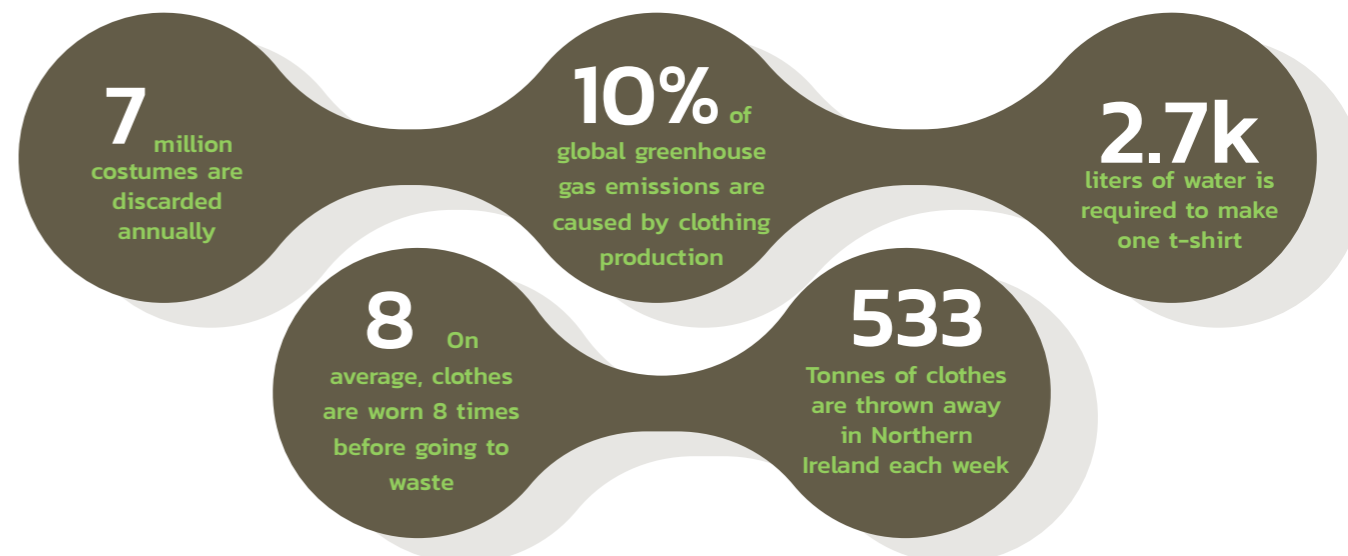
In the lead-up to the swap event, FODC invited the public to donate unwanted children's Halloween costumes, with collection points available at Omagh, Enniskillen, and Omagh libraries. The public could still donate on the day of the swap, however they were encouraged to do so beforehand where possible.

When sorting through donations, it came to light that a number of costumes were missing parts and weren't complete. This sparked the idea to run a craft stall at the swap event so children could make their own masks to complete their costume. This ensured that partial costumes were not disregarded but rather opened up an opportunity for creativity.

The swap brought families and children from across the community together, giving them the chance to choose a Halloween costume for free. With the cost of living crisis, this was a great resource for families struggling as well as those trying to reduce their waste. Costumes left over from the first swap in Omagh were then taken to Enniskillen for their swap on the following day. Any remaining were stored and made available for the public again in March 2025 for World Book Day.

Analysis

The FODC team were delighted with the positive response to the Halloween Swap. They received many donations in advance of the swap. Both swaps had a great uptake, with the majority of the costumes finding new homes.



In reflection, the team felt that there was room for the event to grow and support more families. This year, the team at FODC began their social media campaign earlier in hope of reaching more families and increasing awareness.

In addition, FODC had to ensure that the costumes being distributed had a CE mark meaning they met European Safety Standards. This is a requirement for children's Halloween costumes and therefore preparation and sorting time was required in advance of the swap to ensure that all costumes distributed were safe. All advertisements of the Halloween Swap ask that the public check costumes for a CE mark before donating to ensure that it could be safely distributed as part of the swap.

Whilst expanding the swap to include adult Halloween costumes was considered, there is no legal requirement for adult costumes to meet European Safety Standards. This restricts the ability to safely and ethically distribute such costumes at present.

Conclusion and Recommendations

For Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, they hope that this year's Halloween Swap will be bigger than ever, saving more costumes from waste! Collections have already begun at both Omagh and Enniskillen libraries, and are running until 3rd October. This year's swaps are as follows:

- Omagh Library – Thursday 9 October 2025, 2–4pm
- Enniskillen Library – Friday 10 October 2025, 2–4pm

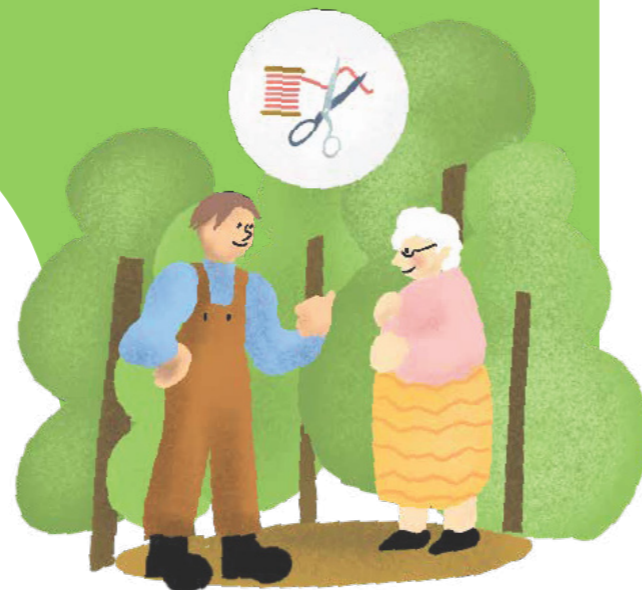
Alongside the children's costume swap, there will also be spooky crafts and activities, including an opportunity to make your own Halloween mask.

FODC are not the only council who have run these great initiatives: MUDC ran a Communion Outfit Swap in 2025, and DCSDC ran a Halloween Swap in 2023 and 2024. Non-council swaps are also in the mix, including The Wee Shop which hosted their second swap in Belfast in August, attracting over 500 keen swappers and saving bags upon bags of clothes and toys from landfill. We are also seeing a growing number of schools running clothes and costume swaps internally.

Clothes Swaps are a great way to engage the local community and divert textiles from waste. These events also raise awareness about the damage of textiles being treated as disposable. The uptake at these events illustrates the public desire for these types of events which don't only save money but also take a step to reduce textile waste.



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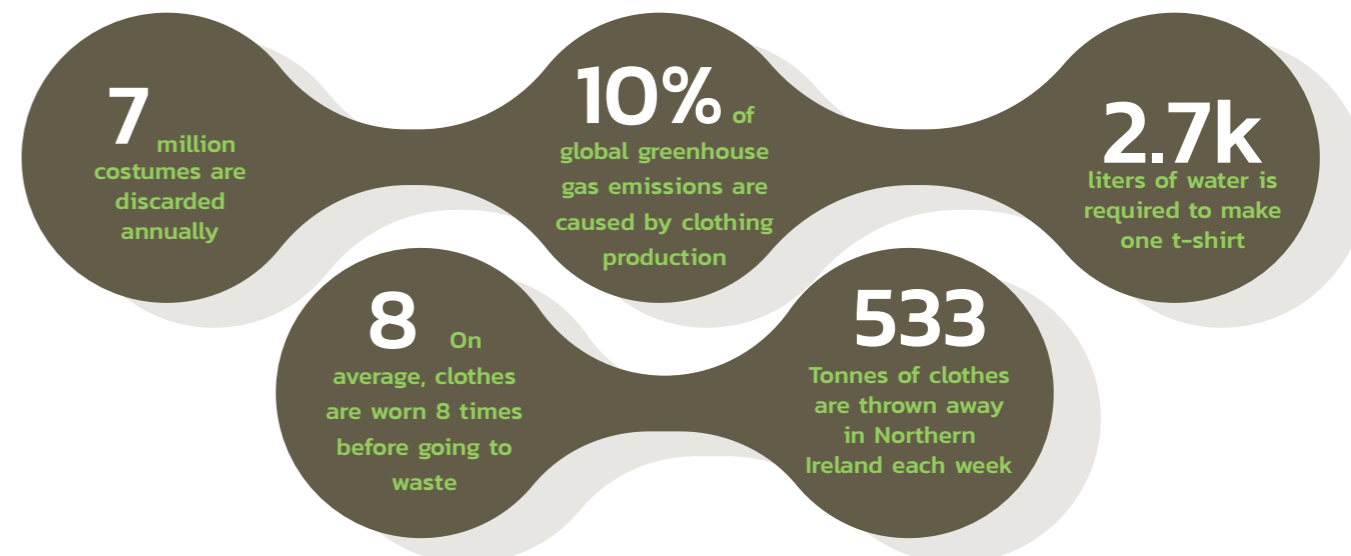
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