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Fly-tipping bags and BB gun shots close Bagshot recycle centre

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Bagshot community recycling centre will close in an effort to protect staff from being threatened with violence, Surrey County Council has said.

The depot has been plagued with issues for years with people “dodging bb bullets”, catapults fired, angle grinders used in break ins, and staff put in danger by those dumping hazardous waste, senior councillors said.

The closure would not save the authority money, they said, as alternate sites will have to their hours extended to deal with the knock on.

Waste contractors Suez has recorded 801 instances of fly tipping across all Surrey recycling sites between January 2019 and August 2024. Of these, 531 (66 per cent) were at Bagshot.

A nuisance report listed examples of flytipping at the site as well as details of break ins such as when an “angle grinder was taken to the office shutter” and “oil thrown around site”.

Other times vandals broke in and left fluorescent tubes “smashed over the site”.

Some of the break ins forced the recycling centre to close, while on June 17 “Someone fired a bb gun towards members of the public” which was later reported to the police.

Campaigners had argued that the centre was valued by the community and rather than give up on Bagshot, money should be spent on modernising and making it safer.

They argued that closing the Bagshot centre would make it harder, longer, and more expensive for many people to recycle their waste.

Councillor Natalie Bramhall, cabinet member for property, waste and infrastructure, told the Tuesday, November 26. meeting at Surrey County Council: “ Suez keeps the site safe, but it has inherent problems which are not present at other community recycling centres.

“For many many years the site has suffered from overnight vandalism and unlawful ingress.

“Containers, particularly those used for electricals, are regularly forced open and plundered and the site office has been vandalised.

“The perimeter fence has been driven into and fly tipping left outside the gates and tipped over the fences.

“Prevention measures, whatever we do, things get broken, they use catapults to knock out all the lights, they used angle grinders to get the fence and into the office and vandalise.

“Suez staff receive threats and have to deal with materials delivered to the site that are hazardous and not allowed on the site but they have to turn a blind eye to this because they are threatened with violence.”

The report described the Swift Lane site as small, unmodernised and not fit for purpose.

It serves around 7,000 people in the Bagshot area who will be redirected to Camberley. Those who came from further afield, such as Windsor and Maidenhead, will be directed to the recycling centre in Lyne, Runnymede.

Subject to Surrey Heath Borough Council approval, it is anticipated that Bagshot tip will close immediately prior to the new tenant moving onto the site. This is likely to take place in December 2024.

Photo: Bagshot Recycling Centre (Image Surrey CC)

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