

News Letter

local pages today

Hi-tech rubbish bin sends email when full



Launching the solar powered BigBelly smart bin at Carnfunnock, Larnie, are Larnie Borough Council chief Executive Geraldine McGahey, Ald James Alexander, Chairman of the Joint Committee of the EU Programme; LBC Director of Environmental Services Philip Thompson and Larnie Deputy Mayor Mark Dunn

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THE cleanliness of one of Northern Ireland's most popular tourist routes is set to be further enhanced thanks to a new, hi-tech, solar-powered bin which can send its own emails and text messages when it's full.

No longer will overflowing bins, surrounded by wasps and flies, spoil the scenic splendour of the Antrim coast after the deployment of 19 "Big Belly smart bins" this week.

Larne Borough Council has become the first local authority in the Province to introduce the solar-powered compactor containers at sites along the stunning coastline and in many other beauty spots in the area.

Their plain and, of course, tidy appearance, gives little indication of the incredible technology that lies within.

The compactors typically hold six to eight times the amount of rubbish a standard bin can hold.

When litter reaches a certain level inside the bin, an internal compactor is triggered and this process is repeated until the bin eventually becomes 85 per cent full.

At that point the bin, which has its own SIM card, will send either an email or text message to alert council staff to empty the bin.

"These new solar bins complement the aims of the council in terms of environmental excellence, efficiency gains and innovation, whilst also addressing important operational needs," said Geraldine McGahey, who is Larnie council's chief executive.

Speaking at the official launch in Carnfunnock Bay, the council chief said research had shown the bins will produce savings in staff time, fuel and other transport costs.

Alderman Jim Alexander said the ratepayers of Larnie would also benefit from the smart-bin initiative. He added: "These innovative bins will help to reduce litter in public places, thus presenting a positive image to visitors to any area where they are provided."

Moreover, the Big Belly smart bins are "pest-proof", eliminating the potential for birds and rodents to access the litter.

Philip Thompson, director of environmental services for the council, said the bins were "ideal for busy tourist locations".

Solar-powered bins are in use in major US cities including Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, and at sites including The Alamo in Texas, and Harvard University.

The ultra environmentally-friendly bins are of course made from recycled plastic.