

# 'All of the clothes we sell are saved from going to landfill'

Meet the East Anglian business owners helping to spearhead the sustainable clothing revolution.  
By **Danielle Lett**

Summer is here – and that can only mean one thing. That's right, Love Island is back. A staple of many people's summers, the ITV2 dating show returned to our screens just a few weeks ago, and has already brought the drama.

While some of you may groan, this year's season has a big twist – and I'm not talking about Casa Amor.

For the first time in its history, Love Island has moved away from the usual fast fashion brands that it typically partners with – and has instead paired up with eBay, which is kitting out all of the contestants in secondhand and pre-loved clothing.

And unsurprisingly, this year's move to an eco-friendlier wardrobe has got a lot of people talking.

The dating show's influence is massive on pop culture. Each episode draws in on average three million viewers, and what its contestants wear onscreen often ends up selling out. So the move to secondhand clothing, as a way to encourage its vast viewership to make greener choices, makes sense.

Closer to home, two business owners are particularly happy about this recent move – and cannot wait to see the joys and benefits of preloved clothing reach a wider demographic.

Rosie Dearlove and Josh Byworth both own vintage clothing stores in Norfolk and Suffolk respectively, and are helping bring vintage clothing to the masses.

Explaining her love affair with all things vintage, owner of Slayyy Vintage Rosie says: "I've always been into preloved clothing. Even as a kid, we got clothes from car boot sales and charity shops.

"Then as an adult, I started selling vintage clothes online when I was working as a barista – and I got such a buzz for it that I started selling on Norwich Market."

Over the course of 18 months, Rosie's stall grew into such a

success that she was able to open up her own shop on St Giles Street back in 2021.

And thus, Slayyy Vintage was born.

Rosie's shop, which specialises in mostly 90s clothing, is certainly Norwich's one-stop-shop for all things one-of-a-kind and out there.

Think groovy pieces, lots of colours, patterns, and big brands – all given a new lease of life.

"Fashion is one big circle, and the 90s is coming back in a big way. I'm actually finding that a lot of brands at the moment are copying their old designs from back in the day, which is really funny," she adds.

Aesthetics and style aside, Rosie has noticed a huge shift in how consumers are moving towards secondhand clothing, and away from fast fashion brands.

"There's definitely been a big spike in the last couple of years. More recently, there's been more transparency – especially on social media – when it comes to where our clothes are sourced from, and how much harm the fast fashion industry is doing to the planet. And since opening the shop we've seen a lot more people come in who want to shop sustainably," she says.

Independent environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy estimates that around 10,000 items of clothing are sent to landfill every five minutes – which equates to around £140m in value every year.

And it's not just waste that's a problem with the fashion industry – but also how raw materials are used, too. For instance, it takes around 1,800 gallons of water to make one pair of jeans.

To help tackle this problem, Rosie sources a lot of the clothing she sells from clothing recycling facilities. "All of the clothes we sell are actually garments saved from landfills. US thrift stores are so massive and they can't sell



Inside Essential Vintage in Ipswich. Top, Josh Byworth from Essential Vintage, Ipswich

Pictures: BRITTANY WOODMAN





Rosie Dearlove, owner of Slayyy Vintage on St Giles Street in Norwich

Pictures: DANIELLE BODEN



enough of it, so what they do is bag it up and sell it around the world," she explains.

Rosie, who handpicks a lot of the pieces herself, also buys directly from customers.

While she loves what she does, Rosie is also pleased she's helping break down taboos often associated with preloved clothing.

"What Love Island is doing is amazing – I really hope the show keeps to it, I'm super happy about it.

"It's a big step forward when it comes to sustainable fashion. I think it also changes people's perceptions about secondhand clothing. It isn't badly worn or smelly, there's so much more to it, and there's some really great pieces out there," she says.

Another business owner who is happy to see a more mainstream shift towards sustainability is Josh Byworth. Owner of Essential Vintage in Ipswich, Josh's business goes back five years, and like Rosie, his vintage empire started from his bedroom.

"I started off on a few selling apps, as I had around three to four rails of my own vintage clothing. I sold quite a few things on there and while I wasn't making loads of money, it was fun to do," he says.

Working as a chef at the time, Josh soon realised he wanted to turn his pastime into his job – and in 2020 soon got to work making his dreams a reality.

"Originally, I looked at a place in Colchester as I wanted a shop premises, but then lockdown happened the very next day," he says.

Josh, who also sells his garments at music festivals, instead decided to open up his first outlet within Ipswich's Microshops before expanding and making the move to his very own shop on Eagle Street – to great success.

Step inside his shop and you'll be met with pieces from a variety of eras, as Josh specialises in clothing from the 1950s, right the way through to the 1990s.

But where does he source it all from?

"I go all over the country to handpicks pieces, and I stick to the UK," he says. By doing this, Josh is helping keep his carbon footprint as low as possible.

Since opening earlier this year, Josh's shop has proven a hit with

Ipswich's fashion scene – and if his success carries on, he hopes to open up a second shop at Felixstowe's Beach Street.

"I'm just trying to do what I can to help people cut down on fast fashion. And what Love Island is doing is definitely a step in the right direction. People are influenced by influencers and what they see online, and it shouldn't be down to the trends but unfortunately it is."

Let's hope this newfound shift towards greener and more eco-conscious wardrobes is here to stay.

**To find out more about Rosie and Josh's shops, visit [slayyyvintage.com](http://slayyyvintage.com) and [facebook.com/essentialvintage](http://facebook.com/essentialvintage)**

### Tips for selling your preloved clothing

**Whether you're looking to make some extra cash on Depop, Vinted, eBay, or even Facebook Marketplace, here's a few hints and tricks to help shift those preloved items quicker. "I'd say one of the biggest things when selling is to sell something you'd wear yourself," says Rosie. That way, you can get a feel for it, and market it towards the right demographic. "Try to model the clothes you're selling, to really show them off," she adds. Depop estimates that items listed with modelled shots are up to 60pc more likely to sell. Self-timer mode on your camera comes in handy for this. With that in mind, it's also important to show the clothes unworn. When listing items, a mix of flat lay shots alongside model shots really helps prospective buyers know what the piece looks like. When taking model shots, plain and simple backgrounds are key (such as white walls), so as not to distract from the garment itself.**

**And when taking model shots, use a solid white or coloured background. And natural lighting is key.**