

Volunteers are needed to help run the Demelza Hospice Care for Children charity shop in Tenterden.

Demelza opened its shop in High Street earlier this year but has only been able to attract four volunteers.

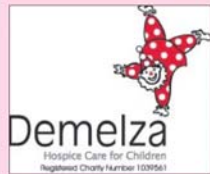
Jessica Williams, voluntary services assistant for the charity, said: "The shop is proving to be incredibly successful.

"We are so pleased that the people of Tenterden have embraced us, and it seems that they enjoy visiting our shop.

"One thing we severely lack in the area is volunteers, and after five months of trading we still only have four, compared with around 30 in most of our other shops."

She added that Demelza relied on its volunteers to be able to continue supporting families in Kent, Sussex and south-east London.

Anyone interested should call in to the shop or contact the voluntary services department on 01795 845200.



Pictures: Thinkstock/Lewis J Brockway



The interior of a charity shop and town councillor Sue Ferguson

Controversial plan for town charity-shop trail

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A town bursting with charity shops could warrant its own map to help visitors locate them.

Residents are debating the subject on the Tenterden Forum after a map was posted showing a charity shop trail in the town of Ludlow in Shropshire.

Traditional visitor attractions might include Smallhythe Place, the former home of Victorian actress Ellen Terry, or the Kent and East Sussex Railway, but

the idea of Tenterden becoming a destination for charity shop tourism is a controversial one.

The map was put on the site by Tenterden town councillor Sue Ferguson, who wanted to open up debate about the subject.

Cllr Ferguson said she was personally against the concept, describing it as a "bad idea" – especially because promoting charity shops could damage independent businesses.

Her thoughts were echoed by businesswoman Anne Nelson of Nelsons Legal practice in Bells Lane, who said: "Having a char-

ity shop trail map could mark the beginning of the end for the independent businesses in the town.

"Already, charity shops are selling new goods that in some cases are nearly identical to those being sold by the independents, yet they are only paying 20% rates and take up prime retail positions in the High Street."

One commentator on the forum, the Landlord, said: "If we want to speed up the death of Tenterden as a town of diverse and independent traders, then yes, let's go ahead and print one up."

Cllr Ferguson believes that the more pressing problem with the charity shops themselves is the lack of volunteers.

The Oxfam shop is now closed on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week due to staffing issues, and Demelza – the latest addition to Tenterden's charity shop portfolio – is separately short of volunteers.

Cllr Ferguson said: "The number of charity shops in Tenterden is self-limiting as there are not enough people to staff them – we are all volunteered out."