

Consultation will help determine future of slime-covered High Street eyesore

Vandalised phone box could be removed... it's BT's call

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A vandalised phone box covered in slime is set to be removed from Tenterden High Street.

The town council has received confirmation from BT that the future of the modern booth outside Lloyds Bank in the High Street will be subject to consultation with a view to it being taken away permanently.

The move comes after Cllr Sue Ferguson highlighted the near-derelict state of Tenterden's phone boxes in the Kentish Express and the town council contacted BT to demand action over the state of the booths.

However, the unsightly box cannot simply be taken away overnight as BT has a duty, known as the universal service obligation, to provide a suitable number of working phone boxes.

To meet Ofcom requirements the firm has to consult a number of organisations and put a notice on the call box to tell the public it plans to remove it.

People can object to their local authority if they disagree with the plan and even veto it.

Town clerk Phil Burgess said: "The box outside Lloyds Bank seems to have been a target for vandals and all the town coun-



Vandalism to the phone box in Tenterden High Street may result in its removal

cillors are in agreement it is an eyesore.

"BT are normally quite keen to decommission boxes because many of them don't make any money, but they have to put it

out for consultation and find out if people are using the box.

"Hardly anyone uses public phone boxes any more and the town council can offer to take them on for other uses, such as

putting defibrillators in them, but we wouldn't want to take on the box outside Lloyds Bank.

"It's in very poor condition and is not at all in keeping with the traditional aspect of the town."

'HORRIBLE OBJECT'

Cllr Sue Ferguson previously labelled the box a "horrible object right in the heart of the High Street", while Cllr Roy Isworth described it as "an abomination".

Two listed red telephone boxes outside the Ashford Road sorting office, which have problems ranging from shattered windows to a missing handset and cable, plus loose hanging wires, are to be repaired by BT. The Station Road phone box is intact and will stay.

Commenting on the planned removal of the box outside Lloyds Bank, Cllr Ferguson said: "I will very be pleased when this eyesore gets removed.

"We don't need as many phone boxes in Tenterden now as most people have mobile phones, but we need to keep some of them and the red phone boxes are much more in keeping with the town."

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