

## **From saving waste to saving lives**

Geldeston Community Composting Group is celebrating ten years of collecting garden waste and turning it into compost. By diverting nearly 120 tonnes away from landfill or treatment, the scheme has raised more than £5,500 in recycling credits from Norfolk County Council. This money has been put towards a range of community projects, from building bird boxes with local children to the latest addition, a life-saving defibrillator.

Martin Wilby, Chairman of Norfolk County Council's Environment, Development and Transport Committee, said: 'This scheme demonstrates just what can be done when a group of people from a community work together. It's one of five such schemes in the county and is a great example of the way the County Council is working with communities to put our waste management policy into action. I hope other communities are inspired to set up similar schemes elsewhere across the county.'

Margaret Stone, Norfolk County Councillor for Clavering division, added: "This is an incredible milestone for Geldeston community composting group and I am so impressed by what they have decided to do with their hard-earned credits. I look forward to hearing about other future projects to which the group has contributed."

A number of people have been involved with the scheme over the past decade, and some fourteen volunteers are currently involved in collecting green waste from 31 households. Gloria Barker and Marcia Fenwick were instrumental in starting up the scheme. Marcia said: "We are so proud of what we have been able to achieve as a group, and the income that we have earned from Norfolk County Council has allowed us to offer practical support to Geldeston projects."

The Geldeston team work in pairs to collect garden waste around the village once a week for roughly six months of the year, and they are joined on site by other volunteers to unload, weigh in the waste to claim Recycling Credits, and process and mix the material. The compost is ready in around 8-10 weeks. Leaves are collected in the autumn but take about 18 months to rot into usable leaf mould.

The launch event for the new defibrillator took place on Friday 16 December at 2pm at Geldeston village hall. It was opened by Captain Keith Loffstaff, Village Hall treasurer, who knows only too well the vital part played by cardio-arrest systems, having experienced four life-threatening situations himself. Geldeston's defibrillator will be housed in a redundant telephone box adopted by the Village Hall Committee and restored by Colin Streames, a founder member of the composting group, with labour and materials donated by village members.

Communities interested in setting up similar schemes can find out more information about composting at [www.recycleforfolk.org.uk](http://www.recycleforfolk.org.uk)