

How to set up a Community Composting Scheme

There are a number of steps involved in setting up a community composting scheme (CCS). The following checklist is a rough guide, but you may find that you need to swap the order of some tasks or carry out different tasks at the same time. This depends on the circumstances and requirements of your community and where you have got to now.

Stage 1: Research and fact finding

- **Set up an action group or working party** - A core group of 2 to 3 volunteers is a good starting point.
- **Conduct some market research** - Do people want a CCS for their garden waste? Do they want the product? Can they volunteer on a regular basis?
- **Parish/Town Council** - Is your parish or town council interested in supporting the scheme (particularly from the point of view of publicity and insurance)?
- **Investigate site options** - This is essential if one has not already been identified!
- **Operating model** - Do you want to collect from householders (to keep some control over the material received) or are you prepared to receive garden waste at the site (traffic management arrangements will need to be included in your plans)? Do you want to pay a scheme co-ordinator?

Stage 2: Planning

- **Site** - Choose the site and start pulling together information about how it should be laid out. Pay attention to how close neighbouring residents are, and possible environmental impacts such as noise, traffic, where local streams are, etc. This information will be required by Norfolk County Council and the Environment Agency (see separate sheet).
- **Advertise/publicise the scheme** - It is important that the local community is very much aware of the aims of the scheme and what they can expect from it – they may be, for example, a householder using the scheme, neighbours or part of the community that will benefit from the scheme. This is also an opportunity to find more volunteers.
- **Constitution** - Some schemes have a formal constitution setting out the aims of the scheme and details of who is doing what and how, etc.
- **Planning permission from Norfolk County Council, exemption or permit from the Environment Agency, composting credits from Norfolk County Council, insurance, etc** (see separate sheet)

- **Recruit more volunteers** - You need a number of volunteers to ensure that the workload is spread more thinly and over the long-term. This also means better cover for holidays, sickness, etc.
- **Funding/grants** - Look into funding opportunities and grants that may be available to help cover the set-up costs, such as the hire/purchase of equipment (eg a shredder, scales, sieve, wheelbarrow, tools - unless these can be donated to the scheme by local businesses, for example), insurance, personal protective equipment (eg gloves, masks, goggles, high vis vests etc) (see separate sheet)

Stage 3: Countdown to launch

Infrastructure & equipment - Once funding has been obtained, construct secure storage, if appropriate, and purchase or hire equipment.

Train volunteers/staff - all volunteers or staff need to know what they are doing – why, how, when and where. Some volunteers will be happy doing physical work (but will need health and safety training for handling garden waste and compost); others may prefer to do the accounts/administration; and others may prefer publicising the scheme.

Marketing plan – ‘Sell’ the scheme to the community through regular newsletters. This will not only help to continue to publicise it, but it will help persuade people to use it and keep residents informed about the benefits of the scheme, such as money raised, opportunities for local groups etc. Such a plan may also help obtain future grant funding and also attract new volunteers.