**PRESS RELEASE
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**ECON ENGINEERING SPREADS JOY WITH GIANT GRITTER JUMPER**

Econ Engineering, the UK’s leading manufacturer of winter maintenance and highways vehicles, has partnered with a famous local knitting group to create a giant Christmas jumper and hat for one of its iconic gritters.

The Christmas jumper, thought to be one of the biggest ever created, has been handcrafted by volunteers from the Ripon Community Poppy Project to spread a little joy this festive season as ‘Goldie the Gritter’ embarks on a 900 mile tour of the UK visiting schools located near Econ’s regional depots ahead of winter.

Goldie will be visiting schools to explain the important role Econ’s gritters play in keeping the roads safe, with students taking part in a festive competition to design their own jumper for Goldie.

Built to commemorate Econ’s 50th anniversary in 2019, Goldie was designed with the latest gritting technology and has travelled the country not only training gritter drivers but also engaging with schools through educational visits, inspiring young minds about road safety and winter maintenance.

Adorned with colourful festive patterns, Goldie the Gritter’s giant jumper and hat have been designed to keep her warm as Econ embarks on another busy season keeping Britain’s roads moving.

Measuring 32ft by 28ft, the creation is one of the Ripon Community Poppy Project’s biggest yet, taking 35 volunteers a total of 4,500 hours over the last 12 months to create using 1,130 balls of wool.

Formed in 2017, the Ripon Community Poppy Project is well known for commemorating remembrance and other national events with their knitted poppies and other projects, and every Monday host a Knit and Natter group which brings together people aged from 30 to 90 from across the community.

The group recently received the King’s Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK, in honour of their work in the Ripon community and beyond.

Econ Engineering has been manufacturing winter and road maintenance vehicles at its factory in Ripon since 1969. It also has depots in Sowerby, Alloa, Cardiff and Halesworth, offering maintenance services to ensure its vehicles are always ready to go.

With an 85% share of the market, Econ prides itself in providing the vehicles and machinery needed to keep the nation’s roads open and streets safe.

Jonathan Lupton, Managing Director at Econ, said: “At Econ, we have a long history of supporting community projects so were delighted to partner with the talented volunteers at the Ripon Community Poppy Project to spread some extra joy this Christmas. Our gritter vehicles and their drivers are the unsung heroes of winter, so it’s been fantastic to celebrate our mission to keep the nation’s roads safe and moving by giving Goldie the Gritter her first jumper and hat to wear ahead of our busy winter season.”

Stuart Martin MBE, Chairman of the Ripon Community Poppy Project, said: “Creating this jumper and hat for Goldie the Gritter has been such a joy for our volunteers. Since we started the Ripon Community Poppy Project in 2017, our mission has been to bring our community closer together and this project has allowed us to do just that, with our dedicated and creative volunteers spending hours crafting each stitch to bring Goldie’s jumper to life. It's been wonderful to see Goldie in her new outfit and we hope she brings lots of joy to the schools she visits on her tour of the UK.”

**ENDS**

**Picture caption: TBC**