

THE SCOTTISH SHEDDER

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE SMSA



SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION

SCOTLAND'S LARGEST
MEN'S HEALTH & WELLBEING CHARITY

In Scotland, For Scotland



“I’m soaking it all up!”

Meet Arran, GEMS (Montrose) Men’s Shed’s newest and youngest member who is soaking up all of the knowledge, skills, and banter like a sponge!

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Send a contribution

The Scottish Shedder magazine promotes the latest news from the SMSA and Men's Sheds across Scotland to inform and inspire others. The magazine is sent digitally every second month to over 4,500 Individual Member subscribers and supporters of the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement.

DEADLINES FOR NEXT ISSUE:

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T R U S T



TALKING SHEDS

Autumnal greetings to you all! As the darker nights start drawing in we see Sheds becoming busier and thank heavens we have them to keep connected and enjoying life like only a Scottish Shedder knows how to.

If you haven't already registered your Shed for the [Shed Open Doors Day](#) please do so. This is an opportunity to celebrate and showcase men's health and the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement to a wider audience in your community on International Men's Day –19th November. The time to be quiet and silent about men's health is over and the SMSA and Scottish Men's Sheds movement is leading the way in this awakening so please get involved. Invite funders, social prescribers, Councillors, MSP's, local community and attract new members and support! [Posters](#) and a [press release template](#) are available for your Sheds so please maximise the potential of this day.

Posters have been included with your Shed membership subs and if you haven't paid your SMSA subs this year please do so you can benefit from all the latest posters and policy docs.

We've taken our popular '[Shedloads of Opportunities](#)' resource to the next level! The platform recently moved online and is **only available to paid up SMSA Shed members** and this handy tool has now been transformed into a fully searchable database—complete with categories to help you find exactly what you need, faster than ever!

Whether you're looking for funding for building work, equipment, visits or partnership projects, you can now search and filter Shedloads to suit your Shed's needs. Explore the new database and discover what's out there for your Shed!

A wee reminder about the Shed-to-Shed Learning Exchange visits. We're delighted to see so many Sheds making use of the [Scottish Community Alliance's](#) Community/SMSA partnership Learning Exchange fund to visit and learn from other Sheds across the country ([see pages 22-24](#)). It's a fantastic opportunity to share ideas, inspiration and good practice—and we're thrilled to see the enthusiasm which is another benefit of being a [Shed member](#).

I have noticed over the last few months however that there is some confusion around the subsistence allowance. The full £25 per person allowance is if you are away for a full day and overnight stay. To allow the limited funding to go as far as possible in learning please take your own sandwiches or claim £7 per head if you

are there over that period of the day. This brilliant partnership funding pot is designed to help as many groups as possible benefit from visits, not to be spent on fancy lunches or extras.

Let's make sure we're all using it wisely so every Shed can take advantage of this amazing opportunity for shared learning and connection.

Personal stories

When our Communications Officer, Michelle, began interviewing people for The Scottish Shedder magazine to share their personal stories and journeys with Sheds, we had no idea how much it would grow. Today, we have a waiting list of people eager to tell their stories—young, old, veterans, and now... a [woman's perspective](#) on why Men's Sheds are for men!

Our Development Officers report that this is still an issue in some Sheds, with certain funders and the Land Reform bill criteria which excludes protected gender groups like Men's Sheds from acquiring land.

These personal stories aren't just for the magazine. They're powerful case studies that we use on our website, grant reports to funders, and in our funding applications—helping to show the real impact Sheds have on men's health, wellbeing, and community life and you can also use them as evidence in your applications. We are your central Scottish support hub making all this information available.

You may have noticed that the last few editions of the magazine have featured three stories instead of just one, so if you'd like to be interviewed and added to the list, get in touch with [Michelle](#). Let's keep showcasing the impact and benefits of Sheds as many of our members are not just Shedders but doctors, nurses, social prescribers, MSP's, Councillors and funders. So a BIG thank you for sharing your stories and being a part of the very necessary system change to make Scotland a wellbeing country.

More good news is that not only were we a finalist in the Scottish Charity Awards earlier this year but we are happy to announce that we are now a finalist in the Community Led Regeneration category of the 2025 [SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration](#).

I am also delighted to share that the SMSA has accepted an invitation to partner with the Concrete Repair Association (CRA) for their AGM & Awards in Glasgow on 11th December 2025. The CRA partners with a local charity each year as part of its

commitment to giving back, and this year, the SMSA has been chosen following recommendations from members in Glasgow's construction community—specifically Mark Brown at Mackenzie Construction.

We're thrilled to be part of the event, where SMSA will be recognised as a charity partner and receive a donation in support of our work to improve men's health and wellbeing across Scotland.

Some of our members have been asking if we have Fair Work Policy documents. 'But Shedders are all volunteers', I hear you say. It appears like with some insurers they use the term employee/volunteer together. We have just [created templates](#) in connection to this if funders ask or if you feel it is good to have it anyway. We have also added a [Key Holders policy](#) which are now all available in the [online Resources section](#) for SMSA Shed account owners, managers and team members.

And last but not least, we're thrilled to launch a brand-new range of SMSA merch! Three T-shirts (to start with) for Sheds and Shedder fans alike! From the bold "Shedder Unite" (think Avengers, but with power tools) to "EAT SLEEP SHED REPEAT" and cheeky favourites like "Never Mind the Strong and Silent Bollocks", there's something for every Shedder personality.

We had a soft launch at our National Gathering, and it seems many Shedders are Sex Pistols fans—they absolutely loved our "Bollocks" t-shirt! Treat yourself, surprise a friend, or grab a few as perfect Christmas presents—they're 220g organic cotton comfy, fun, and a great way to spread the message. Keep an eye on your inbox as we open for orders!

Jason Schroeder
SMSA CEO



New Policy Templates Available for SMSA Shed Members

Fair Work Policy & Key Holder Policy

The SMSA is delighted to introduce two new policy templates designed to help Sheds across Scotland strengthen their governance and good practice — the Fair Work Policy and Statement Template and the Key Holder Policy Template.

These new resources have been created in response to feedback from members Sheds, including those who told us they have recently been asked to provide a Fair Work Policy when applying for funding. Both templates will make it easier for Sheds to stay aligned with best practice, promote fairness, and ensure the smooth and safe running of Shed activities.



Fair Work Policy and Statement Template

The purpose of this new Fair Work Policy is to outline [insert Shed name] Men's Shed's commitment to the principles of Fair Work in all aspects of Shed life. Even though most Sheds are run by volunteers, this policy ensures that everyone — from members and volunteers to any paid staff or contractors — is treated fairly, has clear roles and expectations, and operates in line with Scottish Government guidelines.

This policy applies to:

- All Shed members and volunteers
- Any paid staff or contractors engaged by the Shed
- All activities, workshops, and events organised under the Shed's name

The policy encourages open communication, respect, and inclusion within the Shed environment, ensuring that everyone has a voice and feels valued. It also reinforces good governance — something that supports both the health of your Shed and the wellbeing of those within it.



Key Holder Policy Template

Alongside the Fair Work resource, the SMSA has also created a Key Holder Policy Template — a straightforward guide to help Sheds manage access and responsibilities for anyone holding keys to the Shed premises.

This policy makes it clear that certain members of the Shed hold the main responsibility for providing keys and monitoring buildings.

This ensures all key holders understand their responsibilities, know the Shed's security protocols, and help maintain a safe environment for everyone who uses the space.

Supporting Sheds to Thrive

The SMSA has designed both templates to be easily adaptable—Sheds can simply insert their own name and roles where required and tailor the content to suit their needs.

These policies help set clear expectations, support accountability, and demonstrate a Shed's commitment to fairness, health and safety, and good governance.

Download the new policy templates via the [SMSA Members' Resources portal](#) or [contact your regional Development Officer](#) if you wish to discuss further.

Together, let's keep building a strong, fair, and well-governed Men's Shed network across Scotland.

Take me to the policies >>

🔑 **Log-in required:** These templates are accessible to your nominated Shed Account member via SMSA's Online Resources

Not yet an SMSA Shed Member?

Click here to learn more about the membership benefits of being an SMSA Shed Member

Head to the Shed this International Men's Day!

**Opening doors.
Starting conversations.
Making connections!**

Every year on the 19th November, the world marks International Men's Day—a chance to recognise and celebrate the positive value that men bring to their families, communities, and society. And, what better way to mark this occasion than encourage our Scottish communities to come along to find out more about their local Men's Shed and the potential to really improve the quality of life of men.



For the second year running, the Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA) – Scotland's leading men's health and wellbeing charity – is facilitating Shed Open Doors Day with participating Scottish Men's Sheds to afford the opportunity to reach an even wider audience to spread the word about our Scottish Sheds and the ways they support men by keeping loneliness, isolation, and boredom at bay.

It's the perfect opportunity for communities to step inside their local Men's Shed, meet the Sheddors, and discover how these spaces operate and the activities they have to offer to our husbands, fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, and sons.

Nothing to lose, everything to gain.

 **Save the date: Wednesday 19th November 2025 (and every year after that!) and keep an eye on the [SMSA website](#) for details of participating Sheds and their opening times.**

 **Can't make it on the 19th? No problem—explore SMSA's ['Find a Shed'](#) map to locate and arrange a visit to a Shed near you.**

 **Curious about what Men's Shed are all about? Watch the ['What is a Men's Shed?'](#) animation on the SMSA YouTube channel.**

 **[Join the SMSA for free](#) as an Individual Member and receive a welcome pack and regular updates from the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement.**

PRINT A HARD COPY OF THE SCOTTISH SHEDDER MAGAZINE FOR YOUR SHED'S SOCIAL AREA

KEEP YOUR DETAILS UP-TO-DATE WITH THE SMSA



The SMSA recommends that Scottish Men's Sheds have a hard copy of The Scottish Shedder magazine available in your social areas for members, that are not online, to read in the Shed and also have a library of past issues.

All previous issues of The Scottish Shedder magazine are available to [download here](#) (log-in required)



**New email address?
Moved house?**



**Change of Office Bearers?
New Chair?**



Not sure if you are a member or not?

If any of your information has changed, don't forget to let us know



GOLD WINNER: Clyde Coast & Cumbraes



"We praise the group for its welcoming atmosphere, volunteer-led spirit, and the tangible impact it has made in connecting local men, reducing isolation, and creating a supportive space where skills and friendship flourish. This is what Men's Sheds are all about."

"Scottish Sheds, all run by volunteers, are springing up across Scotland at an impressive rate, in response to a real need to tackle isolation, boost men's health and wellbeing, and make a tangible difference in our local communities. I'd like to thank our SMSA individual members for taking part in the vote and our event sponsors for supporting this very important awards programme and celebration of Sheds across the country."

Ian Murdoch, Chairman of Clyde Coast and Cumbraes Men's Shed, added: "We are absolutely delighted to receive this national recognition. The award belongs to every single member of our Shed who contributes their time, skills and friendship to make our Shed such a welcoming and supportive place. This achievement will inspire us to keep growing, keep sharing and keep supporting each other. We are grateful to everyone who took the time to vote for and support us."

The SMSA extends thanks to Perth & Kinross Council for generously hosting the event in its Chambers and Civic Hall, enabling Sheds from across Scotland to gather, connect and celebrate their collective impact.

This year, the Awards programme introduced an exciting new regional format, recognising five regional winners instead of just one national Shed. Each of the regional winners proudly received their own title and certificate. From there, three Sheds progressed to the national final, where they were presented with a large trophy and a fantastic package of prizes and funding - from SMSA and its valued partners and sponsors - to support their Shed's development.

The 2025 SMSA Awards are generously supported by Axminster Tools, Costco (Aberdeen), David Young Training, Morrison Construction, Scotmid Co-op, Thyme Accountants and supermarkets Asda, Morrisons and Tesco.

'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' 2025 title goes to *Clyde Coast & Cumbraes*

Clyde Coast and Cumbraes Men's Shed has triumphed to take this year's coveted title of 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year'—an award decided by Scottish Shedders, for Scottish Shedders. The announcement was made at the Scottish Men's Sheds Association's (SMSA) National Gathering, AGM and Awards Ceremony at the Perth & Kinross Council Chambers and Civic Hall.

The Clyde Coast and Cumbraes Shed topped the national vote ahead of St Andrews Men's Shed (1st runner-up) and Dalkeith Men's Shed (2nd runner-up) and each of the three finalists received prizes in recognition of their achievement. Clyde Coast and Cumbraes Men's Shed, as the overall winner, was presented with the renowned and unique Scottish Men's Shed of the Year 2025 large trophy to proudly display at their Shed for the next 12 months, along with cash prizes, vouchers and services to support the development of their Shed.

The annual event brings together Men's Sheds from all across Scotland for a day of connection and collaboration—sharing ideas through workshops, presentations, and ample networking opportunities—while celebrating the achievements of Scotland's growing Men's Shed movement.

Jason Schroeder, CEO of the SMSA - Scotland's leading men's health and wellbeing charity, said: "Huge congratulations to the members of Clyde Coast and Cumbraes Men's Shed on becoming our 2025 title holders, and to St Andrews and Dalkeith for their superb achievements in reaching the finals. These awards shine a light on the incredible work happening in communities the length and breadth of Scotland."

"Clyde Coast and Cumbraes Men's Shed stood out for its exceptional commitment to fostering community, health, and wellbeing among its members. The Shed has delivered a range of innovative projects over the past year, including skills workshops for the Scottish Women's Institute and Boys' Brigade, social outreach programmes, and collaborative community events and initiatives."



SILVER: St Andrews



BRONZE: Dalkeith

SMSA named a finalist in the 2025 SURF Awards for Community Led Regeneration



The Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA) charity is proud to announce that it has been shortlisted as a finalist in the Community Led Regeneration category of the 2025 SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration—Scotland's most prestigious platform for recognising excellence and innovation in community regeneration.

Now in its 27th year, the SURF Awards, delivered by SURF (Scotland's Regeneration Forum) in partnership with the Scottish Government, celebrate outstanding projects that are making a real difference to communities across the country.

The SMSA is one of three finalists in the Community Led Regeneration category, alongside Number 30 The Square (Huntly) and The Medan Centre (Udny). The shortlisting recognises the Association's national impact in empowering, connecting and supporting over 200 Scottish Men's Sheds—community spaces where men can come together, share skills, and improve health and wellbeing through camaraderie and purposeful activity—and the 10,000+ volunteers that are part of this thriving grassroots movement.

"We are delighted that the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement has been recognised at a national level for its community led approach to regeneration," said Jason Schroeder, SMSA CEO. "Men's Sheds are grassroots spaces that bring men together to make, share, and support one another—rebuilding not just Shed buildings and the areas around them, but also lives, skills and local connections. This recognition from SURF is a huge honour for our team and trustees and for every single Shed in Scotland contributing to the wellbeing of their communities."

The SURF Awards independent panel of 20 judges assessed applications from the Isle of Skye to the Scottish Borders, across five categories, and agreed upon 15 shortlisted projects for 2025. The judging panel visited the shortlisted projects earlier this month to gain insight into their work and the difference they make on the ground.

The winners in each of the five categories will then be announced by Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Gaelic, Kate Forbes, at the SURF Awards Presentation Dinner on Thursday 4th December 2025, at Glasgow's Voco Grand Central Hotel—which SMSA CEO Jason Schroeder and SMSA Chairman David Gardner will attend.

Deputy First Minister Kate Forbes said: "The SURF Awards provide a valuable platform to acknowledge the dedication, innovation and perseverance of communities across Scotland.

"Community led regeneration helps to enhance economic, social and environmental wellbeing, which is why we are supporting regeneration projects across Scotland's with an investment of £62.15 million this year.

"I extend my sincere congratulations to all shortlisted projects and look forward to presenting the awards later this year."

SURF Chair Brian MacDonald reflected: "Every year, as autumn kicks in the SURF Awards start to come to life. The quality of the nominations continues to impress. As a nation we are fortunate to have a significant community which continues to produce outcomes of the highest quality. This year is no different. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of the assessment panels."

SURF's Emma Scott said: "SURF was delighted to see a lot of new entrants to the SURF Awards this year, and the 15 projects, which have been selected by the judges as finalists, showcase inspirational examples of what can be achieved through pro-active collaboration. The SURF team look forward to learning more about this year's finalists, and bringing the projects together to celebrate their success at the Awards Dinner in December."

The 2025 SURF Awards are delivered by SURF in partnership with the Scottish Government, with additional support from Creative Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scotland's Towns Partnership, Scottish Procurement Alliance and South of Scotland Enterprise.

Since 1998, the SURF Awards have identified successful regeneration projects of all sizes from across Scotland. This year's shortlisted projects feature major place-making investments, employability initiatives, and activities delivered by community groups and arts organisations in both urban and rural contexts, from Dumfries and Galloway to Aberdeenshire, and projects operating at a national level.

Turning the tables: Think not what businesses can do for Sheds – but rather what we can do for business

By Donald Reid, SMSA Trustee

Many third sector organisations, like Men's Sheds, often find themselves looking to local businesses for financial support, hand outstretched. But, perhaps if we shift the focus and demonstrate how we can be of value to them, they might be more willing to support us in return.

Every Men's Shed is unique, with members from all walks of life, but we share a common goal: supporting one another and creating an environment that nurtures men's health and wellbeing. In short, Sheds give us a reason to get up each morning, look forward to the day ahead, and find purpose in our lives—while being an active part of our community.

Sometimes we might assume that simply having a Shed—with steady numbers, a friendly environment, plenty of tea, and the occasional cake—is enough. But, could we be doing more? A thriving Shed is about continually fostering connections, purpose, and reaching as many men in our communities as possible that need the Shed in their lives.

Should we be reaching out to local businesses and their male employees who are still working or nearing retirement—the next line of Sheddors—and offer them opportunities to join us during evenings and/or weekends with additional Shed hours?

Many of us who are now retired, became trapped in the relentless busy routine of working every day—whether in a small, medium, or large organisation—and sometimes forget that one day, maybe even tomorrow, that routine could end and we have never considered what comes next.

Shouldn't individual Sheds be reaching out to local businesses now to raise awareness and offer a stepping stone into retirement for their male employees—where they can connect, build routines, and start preparing for life after work? At the same time, highlighting that Sheds can provide a space for healthy socialisation for working men—away from the pub and bookies.

Attendance at Men's Sheds is entirely voluntary—you can come when and if you want. For men approaching retirement, even attending one meeting a month during their final six months of work can help. It offers a gentle introduction to a new routine, providing a supportive space to connect and build purpose as they transition from full-time employment.

This approach benefits employers too, helping them fulfil their duty of care while demonstrating genuine support for their staff. It also shows men that life after work can be positive and fulfilling. Men's Sheds offer so much more than a place to gather, and we should be actively promoting the benefits they provide for both working men and men entering retirement.

This is where the SMSA and Scottish Men's Sheds, working in partnership with the [Scottish Chamber of Commerce](#), could make a real difference.

The Chamber sits at the heart of Scotland's largest and most influential business-to-business network, with 30 local Chambers representing over 12,000 companies.

By connecting Men's Sheds with local businesses, we can open up important conversations that highlight the value Sheds bring—not just to individual men, but to workplaces and communities as a whole. Together, we can create stronger partnerships that support wellbeing, purpose, and healthier futures.

Let's shift the mindset...

In short, this is a call to shift the dialogue from Sheds as passive recipients of support—'what can you give us?'—to proactive contributors in communities: 'what can we offer you?' The focus is on engagement, community impact, and supporting men's health and wellbeing."

Rethinking Shed relationships with business

By connecting with the Chamber or making direct contact with local businesses, Sheds can promote themselves as valuable partners in their local economy and social fabric, not just as recipients of support. Instead of always asking businesses for donations or support, Men's Sheds could approach businesses and show how they can add value—for example, by helping employees transition smoothly into retirement.

Promotional opportunities and networking

Promoting the value of Men's Sheds for mutual benefit through the Chamber's communication channels could include Men's Shed presentations, features and success stories—giving businesses insight into the benefits of engagement and possibly leading to sponsorships, volunteering, or collaborative projects.

Supporting working men and future retirees

There is a real opportunity for Sheds to extend their reach and engage more working men—offering a place for healthy social connection as well as helping them prepare for life after employment. This could involve attending a monthly meeting before retirement to establish new routines and community connections.

Most younger men express 'a lack of 'time' as their biggest reason they do not attend a Shed. Imagine if workplaces created a culture that valued wellbeing by offering initiatives like the SMSA's 'Wellbeing Wednesday'—a paid day where staff could choose to engage in positive community activities such as attending a Shed. That would be a huge step forward for men's health.

Of course, this also raises the question of fairness—what similar opportunities might be offered to female employees? These are the kinds of conversations worth starting with businesses to ensure that wellbeing is supported across the workforce.

WIGWAM-S Research Project

Dr Julie Cowie and Dr Dani Hutcheon from Glasgow Caledonian University presented to delegates at the SMSA National Gathering on Friday 3rd October 2025 in Perth, sharing their [findings from the WIGWAM-S Project](#) (Wellbeing in dsadvantaGed, Working Age Men – Sheds). Their presentation offered valuable insights into the impact of community interventions on the health and wellbeing of disadvantaged men, here is a summary of their key findings.

Men living in disadvantaged areas (areas that, for example, might have lots of unemployment, few facilities, or poor housing stock) can face a unique set of health challenges—higher rates of obesity, drug use, social isolation, and significantly lower life expectancy than those living in affluent areas. Yet, male-targeted interventions remain underrepresented in both research and policy. The WIGWAM-S project aimed to explore how, why and for whom male-targeted interventions, such as Men’s Sheds work.

Why this research matters

While initiatives like Men’s Sheds have shown promise in supporting older men’s health and wellbeing, there’s a gap in understanding their impact on “working-age men” (for the purpose of this research, men aged 16-65). As part of the WIGWAM-S project we conducted: (1) a review of the evidence around the impacts of male-targeted interventions, (2) a series of café events with community members and Sheddors to find out more about what works well to support working-age men living in disadvantaged areas with their health and wellbeing.

What we found in the literature

Our scoping review found and analysed 23 articles covering 14 types of interventions, primarily from Australia and the UK. The review showed a wide variety of approaches to engaging with working-age men in disadvantaged areas. This included: **Men’s Sheds** which typically involve woodwork, repair projects, gardening, cooking, playing cards, social support, talking and yarning circles; **Football Health Programs** which combined physical activity, health checks, health education, and group discussions; **Peer Support Groups** that focused on social networking, community outreach, and group activities, and **Indigenous Health Programs** that incorporated culturally appropriate health screening, education, group discussions and yarning.

Successful interventions shared common traits:

- Using environments outside traditional health settings to deliver health education and care
- Activities carried out “shoulder to shoulder” like making things or problem-solving
- Provision of space for socialising or social activity (e.g. group discussions, coffee)
- Provision of (in)formal peer support
- Using metaphors, symbols and materials (e.g. football language)
- Giving men ownership in the process as equals

Reaching men where they are—community events

The WIGWAM-S team hosted four Shed events and nine community events, reaching 117 men across Ayrshire, Forth Valley, and Glasgow. The events featured café-style gatherings such as “Breakfast and Bletcher”, “Curry and Chat” evenings and online events, and proved effective in engaging men who might not otherwise participate.

Data from café events combined with the review revealed some key theories around why male-targeted interventions, such as Men’s Sheds work well:

1. **Provide an environment for emotional regulation:** where men feel comfortable sharing emotions, perhaps in terms of banter, creating a sense of brotherhood, which helps them deal with how they are feeling, helping themselves and their relationships with others.
2. **Help with giving a purpose in life:** producing items, using new or existing skills, that are useful and help/improve the local community provide feelings of being useful, being an active citizen, and being a role model for others.
3. **Promote healthy behaviours:** men are more likely to engage in unhealthy and risky behaviours such as smoking, excessive drinking and not getting regular health checks. Interventions can provide access to physical activity, health education and supportive peers.
4. **Somewhere to discuss help-seeking:** As trust and friendships grow, participants may begin to talk about their struggles, and through this, realise that others in the group have similar experiences. This shared understanding normalises their feelings and builds the confidence to seek help.
5. **Re-affirm identity:** providing a safe environment for promotion of a shift towards a more positive and expansive perspective of masculinity and identity. Participants are able to find a sense of belonging and value that is not reliant on traditional gender roles.
6. **Promote connection:** development of genuine friendship and a feeling of connection that extends beyond the program’s physical space. Participants gain a sense of belonging and reassurance, knowing that they have a support network to call upon. This social connectedness reduces feelings of loneliness and promotes a stronger, more resilient sense of self.

Barriers and opportunities

Some men in the communities we visited viewed Men’s Sheds as “old-fashioned” or “for older men”. Others faced logistical barriers of getting to Men’s Sheds such as transport or scheduling. Men’s Sheds that want to encourage working-aged men along might consider:

- **Engaging with community link workers/other community organisations** to let working-age men know about Sheds
- Using **social media** for outreach
- Offering **flexible hours**
- Address **accessibility** of the site and **affordability** of transport to the site
- Look at **widening activities** available in Shed
- Promoting **social area** over the workshop area
- Thinking about how to engage men that perhaps only currently socialise as part of online communities

What next?

Based on the findings of the study, the WIGWAM-S team is currently developing guidance material that could be used by Sheds, as well other male-focused organisations, to help encourage new, working-age men to join. This will include social media suggestions, ways of engaging with other community organisations to help recruit new members as well as a short toolkit of possible recommendations your Shed might consider to support wider interest in what you do. The ultimate goal? To shape future interventions that are inclusive, effective, sustainable and scalable. For further information or to contact the research team, email: wigwams@gcu.ac.uk

Protecting a space for male health and wellbeing – update

Further to our ‘Protecting a Space for Male Health and Wellbeing’ article in the last issue of The Scottish Shedder (page 7 of the [August 2025 edition](#)), the SMSA is delighted to hear that it has sparked valuable conversations within Sheds across the country. We also wanted to share an important update with our members following recent discussions around funding and Shed identity.

In response to the article, one of our female Individual Members shared her support for the importance of maintaining single-gender Shed spaces:

“As a female SMSA Individual Member, I completely agree with keeping Men’s Sheds as a single gender service. Our Shed hosts a Community Shed on a different day and time and it works for us. Men are as entitled to single gender work as women- we just need to look at suicide figures to understand just how critical these spaces are.”

Following this, we were also approached by the partner of a Shedder who wanted to share her thoughts on this topic—see [page 28](#) for Gaynor’s perspective.

SMSA Chairman, David Gardner, then recently attended a fundraising event where representatives from [The National Lottery Community Fund \(Scotland\)](#) were present. Our Chairman took this opportunity to raise some concerns that some Sheds had shared with him in that they were under the impression that they **might need to change their name to ‘Community Sheds’ in order to secure funding**. The worry was that some funders would no longer support single-gender spaces such as Men’s Sheds.

The SMSA is pleased to report that **this is certainly not the case**. The National Lottery has confirmed that Men’s Sheds are not discriminated against and, in fact, are highly valued and respected by the fund.

This reassurance should give confidence to all Sheds that they can continue to **operate proudly as Men’s Sheds** while still being recognised and supported for the important work they do in improving men’s health, wellbeing, and community connection.

We’d love to [continue this conversation](#)—whether you agree with the SMSA’s stance or not, we want to hear from you—if your Shed has views and/or stories to share on this topic, please get in touch. Your voice helps shape the national conversation and ensure the Men’s Shed movement in Scotland continues to thrive.



Bridging Generations: Mintlaw & District Men’s Shed’s Intergenerational Project

At the heart of Scottish Men’s Sheds lies community, learning, friendship, and connections across generations—and now we’ve finally captured that ageless spirit on film! The SMSA’s latest powerful film highlights how Sheds bring people together, young and old, to share skills, stories, and laughter while strengthening the fabric of local communities. It’s a celebration of what happens when experience meets enthusiasm and generations unite to make a real difference.

SMSA’s new ‘Bridging Generations through Scottish Men’s Sheds’ video showcases the incredible ways one Scottish Shed, [Mintlaw & District Men’s Shed](#), is connecting with a

local school (Mintlaw Academy) and sharing skills, stories, and laughter across the age spectrum.

From woodworking to making improvements in their community, the video highlights the exchange of knowledge that happens naturally when men of different generations come together. Young members bring fresh ideas, energy, and curiosity, whilst our older Sheddors share wisdom, practical skills, life experiences and laughs. It’s a two-way street of learning and respect that enriches everyone involved.

Intergenerational projects between schools, academies, and Scottish Men’s Sheds offer pupils a unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience that goes beyond the classroom. The Mintlaw Academy pupils, who had no technical teachers at the school, have been working alongside skilled Shed members to develop practical skills, build confidence, and learn workplace etiquette in real-world settings. They also experience the satisfaction of taking pride in giving back to their community, seeing the tangible impact of their efforts.

These interactions often lead to strong references and a network of contacts that can be invaluable when applying for future jobs, particularly in trades, crafts, or community-

focused roles—similar to the careers highlighted in this film. Beyond career benefits, pupils also gain a sense of purpose and understanding of community collaboration, equipping them with both professional and personal skills that set them apart in the competitive job market.

We’re proud to say that the Bridging Generations video not only demonstrates the impact of Sheds on individuals, but also serves as an inspiration for community groups and educational authorities across Scotland. It’s a reminder that Men’s Sheds are inclusive spaces where all ages are valued, and where intergenerational learning strengthens bonds and builds confidence.

You can [watch the full film](#) (13 mins and 38 secs)—created by the SMSA in partnership with Mintlaw and District Men’s Shed, Mintlaw Academy and Police Scotland, and launched at the SMSA Gathering earlier this month—on the SMSA website and/or [YouTube channel](#).

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in making this collaboration such a success.

Please share this resource with your Shed members and networks.



In the Woodshed

When I was a child, my grandfather used to sing ‘Home Boys Home’ from his sailing days on tall ships including the replica of the Mayflower and maintaining the rigging of the Cutty Sark in Greenwich. The chorus includes the lines “Where the Oak and the Ash, and the bonny Rowan tree, Are all growing greener in the old country.” Hearing that gave me an early interest in trees. He would have loved Men’s Sheds and the brilliant things they do with wood and the trees they plant.

According to the Woodland Trust’s ‘State of the UK’s Woods and Trees 2025—a summary for Scotland’, our trees are in trouble right now. There are just not enough of them, “18% of Scotland has tree cover compared to a European average of 37%”.

Climate change is threatening the trees we do have through storms, drought, fire and diseases like ash dieback, Dutch elm disease and Phytophthora ramorum of larch and sweet chestnut trees.

Men’s Sheds have an important relationship with timber ensuring fallen trees are not just used for firewood but once seasoned (or green) used to make objects that celebrate the beauty of wood for example walking sticks, furniture, bowls, bookends, pens, spurtles and spoons.

As well as utilising timber Sheds are repurposing wooden items into new uses, keeping for example, pallets, furniture and oak barrel staves out of landfill. Now



obsolete bowling balls that were made of lignum vitae or Ironwood, *the hardest and heaviest traded wood*, 3 times the hardness of English Oak. Recently on Shed visits, I have seen these balls turned into clocks, trophies, bowls, bookends urns and even mallets.

Sheds have found premises in community or Forestry and Land Scotland woodlands and are helping to be stewards of the trees. Many Sheds and are planting fruit trees and/or native species on their surrounding land. Planting trees improves environmental quality by absorbing carbon dioxide, producing oxygen, reducing air and noise pollution, and preventing flooding and erosion.

Trees also enhance ecosystems by creating habitats for wildlife and supporting biodiversity. Additionally, trees improve human health and wellbeing by providing shade, creating calming natural spaces, and fostering community by beautifying urban areas.

If you have space for some trees at your Shed you can access free trees and information on planting and after care from the following websites: [The Woodland Trust](#); [Trees for Life](#); [Forestry and Land Scotland](#); and [The Tree Council](#).

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Tim at Portsoy Men’s Shed’s official opening this month

Upcoming Regional Shed Network Meetings 2025/2026

- **Islands** – Tuesday 11th November 2025 at Orkney Men’s Shed from 10.30am – 2pm
- **Perth & Kinross** ([Shed-Wise workshop](#)) – Tuesday 11th November 2025 at Kinross & District Men’s Shed from 10am
- **Angus and Dundee**, - Tuesday 18th November 2025 at Carse of Gowrie Men’s Shed from 10am
- **Moray** – Tuesday 25th November 2026 at Finecht Men’s Shed from 10am
- **Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire** – Tuesday 3rd March 2026 at Aboyne Men’s Shed from 10am
- **Aberdeen City Men's Shed Network (trial first meeting)** - Tuesday 10th March 2026 at Bridge of Don & District Men's Shed from 10am

If you wish to attend a Shed Network meeting in your area, please contact your [regional Development Officer](#) for your region.



It's been another very busy period on the West Coast, with plenty of Shed visits keeping me on the move! From early starts to friendly chats over tea, every visit has been a reminder of the great work happening in our Sheds—and the wonderful people behind it all.

A big mention, firstly, and huge congratulations must go to Clyde Coast & Cumbræ Men's Shed in the great wee west coast town of Largs—famous for Vikings, Nardini's ice cream, walks along the prom... and now, as the town with the Scottish Men's Shed of the Year 2025 title!

What a fantastic shed, and very well deserved, guys. In fact, I think we should get it mentioned on the town signs!

Again, it was great to see Sheds from all across Scotland gather in Perth for SMSA's annual national conference and AGM. Networking, connecting and catching up with Sheds, Sheddors, and all the wonderful stories and innovations. And, what a great way to kick the conference off with the fantastic ukelele orchestra, which set the tone for the rest of the day.

In the afternoon, Tim and I facilitated the workshops on Shed-Wise, our re-branded men's health session, and it was great to run my very first full Shed-Wise session very soon after at Girvan Men's Shed.

I vividly remember trips to the seaside at Girvan as a child. Sunny days spent on the beach and at the boating pond, spending my pocket money in the local shops, and rounding things off with tasty fish and chips in the evenings.

I can honestly also say, as an adult (although some would say I haven't grown up much!), that Girvan hasn't lost its magic. Situated on the beautiful South-West Coast, looking out to Ailsa Craig, and to the Isle of Arran, Girvan



Men's Shed sits in the grounds of Girvan Football Club, who very kindly host a group of local Sheddors who are making a real difference to health and wellbeing in the town.

It was a joy to open up discussion on a whole range of health topics with the guys, and to be honest, we could've chatted all day. I didn't, however, round off my trip with a visit to the local chippy this time, but I was glad to hear that a number of the lads had made appointments to visit their local health practice.

Farther afield in Lanarkshire, I visited, amongst others Bellshill, Douglas, Strathaven, Coalburn, Carstairs and Wishaw. In the Stirling area, I visited Callander, Zetland and Denny & Bonnybridge, who have also requested a Shed-Wise session. I am very much looking forward to getting over to see Dave and the lads at Denny for what promises to be a very open and honest discussion about men's health.

Also included have been very positive trips to Dumfries & Galloway, including Moffat, Lockerbie, Dalbeattie and Dumfries. It's exhausting all this travelling around, but it's also very worthwhile. Thanks to everyone who welcomed us so warmly—your enthusiasm and community spirit make every mile worth it.



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New Shed activity continues. I had very positive meetings with the Community Land Association in Lochaline, Morven and across the water with the Mull and Iona Trust. In the Northwest, some men in Scourie have been in touch about starting up a Shed. Public meetings are scheduled in these three locations.

I've not met the Scourie men in person yet, but they've already visited the Dingwall and Inverness Sheds. They were well impressed, made to feel very welcome and are raring to go. Watch this space!

I visited Inverness to hand over their regional Shed award where 28 men attended (see top pics). Great craic guys and thanks for the hospitality. Good to see you all in the Inverness Courier too! A busy five-day a week Shed with a talking and writing group, woodwork, singing group, iPad course, windows course, AI group and clock restoration!

As some of you know, the Nairn Men's Shed model railway group conducted two presentations at the SMSA's National Gathering in Perth earlier this month. Tony, from the Shed was the driving (pun, sorry) force behind this and it was his tenacity that kept things on track. (sorry again). Not least the issue of getting a large model railway from Nairn to Perth. Spying my Berlingo, a measuring tape solved the problem. "No worries, it folds into three pieces and will fit nicely."

Shedders at Cromarty Firth Men's Shed, have been taking their creativity and skills to a new level. Up until

now, their attic storage space has been accessed by a dodgy staircase. Not now. The Ambassadors staircase in Versailles has nothing on this. See photo bottom left. The inventiveness and expertise in Sheds never ceases to amaze me.

I always like to get informal feedback on shed visits and at the Beaulieu shed we had a great chat.

- ⇒ "It's like an older person's version of the scouts. We play and make friends."
- ⇒ "It's not just the craic and the stuff in the Shed but the getting out and about doing things in the community too."
- ⇒ "It was my wife who insisted I go. Lots of guys are encouraged by their wives."
- ⇒ "It's a place you feel you belong."
- ⇒ "Mental health, physical health, helps both."
- ⇒ "I'd love it if this place was open every day."
- ⇒ "It's the access to tools and machinery and help that you get with this."
- ⇒ "There's a lot of lonely guys out there. This place is important."
- ⇒ "It can be hard but, when you lose one of the boys."

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Does the SMSA Development Team get the thumbs up?

**Has your Shed received support from the SMSA or a Shed visit from one of our Development Officers recently?
If so, we want to hear your thoughts.**

Please let the SMSA know what you think of our support services so we can continue to meet the needs of our members:

<https://scottishmsa.org.uk/smsa-support-evaluation>

SHEDLOADS OF OPPORTUNITIES



FUNDING | CONSULTATIONS | CONNECTIONS | OPPORTUNITIES

'Shedloads of Opportunities', the SMSA's roundup of all of relevant funding, consultations, connections and opportunities open to Scottish Men's Sheds, is available to view in our online resource area (login required)—accessible to the Shed account owners registered with the SMSA.



Portsoy Men's Shed is officially open!

Formed in December 2024, [Portsoy Men's Shed](#) has transformed a former bakery and shop in The Square into a welcoming workspace and social space. Over recent months, volunteers have worked hard to reorganise the premises, install machinery and tools, and even fit out a small shop area where handmade crafts created by members and local vendors are now on sale.

Earlier this month, on Saturday 11th October 2025, the Shed proudly celebrated its official opening, with Andrew Simpson, Lord Lieutenant of Banffshire, cutting the ribbon to mark the occasion.

The community turned out in great numbers to support the event—enjoying guided tours, games, fundraising activities, and a fine spread of home baking and refreshments. The lively soundtrack for the day was provided by Portsoy Pipe Band, who added a touch of local flair to the celebrations.

Deveron FM was on hand to capture the excitement and cover the story with listeners across the region. Neighbouring Sheds from Banff, Macduff and Aberchirder also joined the celebration, showing the strong sense of camaraderie that defines the Men's Shed movement.

Their support—along with a very generous contribution from the Portsoy Co-op, which helped make the grand opening possible—was warmly appreciated by all involved.

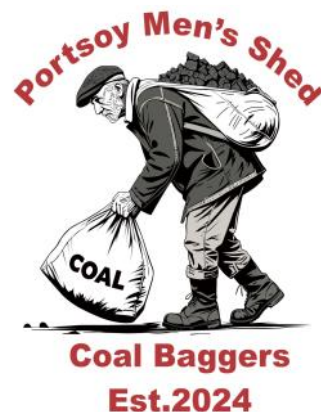
Chairman of Portsoy Men's Shed, Richard Smith, commented, "We're absolutely delighted to finally open the doors to the Shed. It's a place for local men to gather, socialise, and share skills, stories and interests."

"We've already welcomed over 40 members, all with different interests—from woodworking and metalwork to restoration and even cart building! There's no need to have a particular skill to join in; just come along for a coffee and a chat, and see what's happening."

The group has already gained momentum in the local community, with members undertaking various maintenance and landscaping projects to benefit the town and local organisations.

The Men's Shed movement, which began in Australia over three decades ago, continues to grow worldwide—offering men a welcoming space to connect, learn, and support one another while tackling loneliness and isolation. The Scottish Men's Shed model has adapted to serve not only older men but anyone aged 18 and over, providing a valuable social lifeline for all generations.

Anyone interested in joining or finding out more about Portsoy Men's Shed can pop into the Shed in The Square, check out their [Facebook page](#), or email portsoymensshed@gmail.com.



From waste to wonderful: The Wee County way

Wee County Shedders turn scrap into community gold!

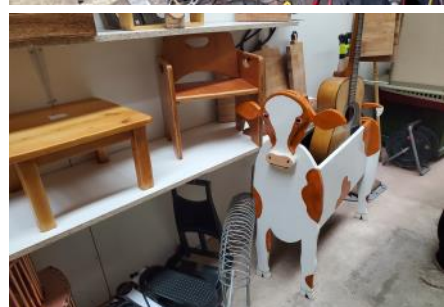
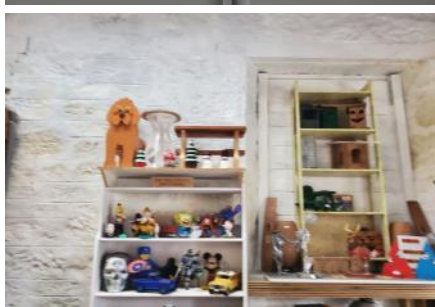
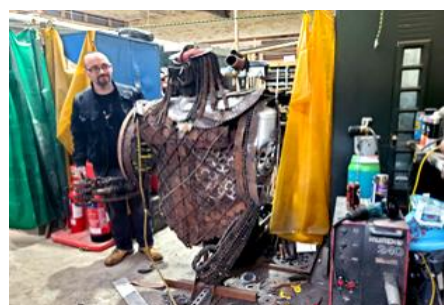
Wee County Men's Shed is proving that one man's rubbish is another man's treasure, thanks to a new partnership with Clackmannanshire Council.

Clackmannanshire Council has given the Shed access to the local recycling centre, opening the door to a steady supply of materials that can be transformed into practical projects, creative builds and items for donation sales to raise funds for the Shed.

On a recent visit, the SMSA was impressed to see how Shed members are already making the most of these resources.

From scrap metal, a fearsome Predator sculpture is emerging—a true testament to the skill and imagination of the group. Other projects include building noticeboards for Strathdevon Primary School and Tillicoultry Community Centre, crafting whisky barrel coal trucks for Wimpey Park, repairing goal posts for Wasp Leisure Juniors Football Club, and producing handcrafted pew benches for the garden at Alloa Chapel.

What makes it even more inspiring is that all of this is possible because materials that might otherwise have gone to landfill are now being put to good use, creating benefits for the wider community while giving Shed members a sense of purpose and pride. Wee County Men's Shed shows how reusing and recycling can spark creativity, strengthen communities, and keep the Shed buzzing with activity!



On the 22nd September 2025, 30 members of the South Lanarkshire Men's Shed Network enjoyed the hospitality of the Biggar and District Men's Shed for their monthly meeting and exchange of ideas. Over the last couple of years, the Biggar Shed has developed significantly, with their main hall providing an ideal space for gatherings.

Graham Curtis, the Network's Chairman and Chairman of Stonehouse Men's Shed, said: "Our thanks to Jill Keegan from the [Scottish Community Alliance](#) who outlined their partnership with the SMSA and explained how Sheds could benefit from their funding for inter-Shed learning visits.

"We then had a chance to have updates from the developing Sheds in South Lanarkshire including the WATIF Shed at Tarbrax and the Douglas Valley Shed. A new Shed is in development in Strathaven where a committee has been established and an initial meeting saw 20 people attending. And, efforts are also underway

to start a Shed in Carstairs with existing members from the Carluke Men's Shed. Kirkmuirhill and Blackwood Men's Shed have recently acquired a pub in the village and Graham Stewart presented a slide show of the building and the extensive repairs in the pipeline. With many members experienced in securing funding present at the meeting, a valuable funding discussion also took place, particularly beneficial to the newer Sheds.

Meetings over the previous months have taken place in venues able to accommodate big numbers and Network Chairman Graham Curtis is keen for this to continue and meet in person rather than on Zoom. "We have seen an increase in attendance at our network meetings taking place in person—and of course, the bacon rolls and home baking are always an attraction. It's wonderful to see new relationships forming and mutual support developing," said Graham.

Check out the [latest edition of Shedders Together](#)—A magazine for Shedders in South Lanarkshire.



Turning containers into community: The Rosyth Men's Shed story

The SMSA recently visited [Rosyth Men's Shed](#) and were inspired by the progress the group has made in establishing a permanent home after many years of operating from temporary spaces.

Thanks to securing a lease on the former Fife Council King's Road garage site, the Sheddars finally have the land they need to shape their own future. What started as a patch of waste ground is being transformed into a thriving hub, with welfare units, shipping containers and cabins forming the bones of their new Shed.



Progress on the ground

The build is moving at pace. Walls are being lined, insulated and painted, and the team has had outstanding support from partners including BAM UK & Ireland, Robertson, Purvis and the Wernick Group. Avant Homes also visited the site recently to explore how they could get involved.

The next exciting development will see the arrival of a polytunnel donated by Fife Council along with raised beds, allowing the Sheddars to create a community growing space.

Every nail hammered, wall painted and bed dug brings with it a tremendous sense of ownership and pride.

Managing two Shed sites

Whilst commissioning work continues at King's Road, there are some temporary changes to operations. The North Queensferry workshop will now only open on Saturdays. Until the build is completed, access to the King's Road site will remain restricted to Rosyth Men's

Shed members for health and safety and insurance reasons.

A long road to approval

This milestone has been years in the making. In February 2023, before becoming Chairman, Bruce Lumsden began searching for land suitable for a Shed. With the help of Peter Duncan, Fife Council's allotments officer, and months of searching, the team secured the former lock-up site on King's Road.

In May 2025, their hard work paid off when Fife Council Planning Department approved their application, officially giving the green light to begin developing the Shed.

Community backing

The project has enjoyed unwavering support from local councillors Brian Goodall and Andrew Verrecchia, with Cllr Goodall going the extra mile—literally—by completing a 10k run to raise funds for the Shed.

Architect Stephen Lynus also played a vital role in shaping and steering the plans, while local supporters such as Mike Payne and Martin Copper from BAM provided invaluable advice, resources, and donations.

A story still unfolding

Rosyth Men's Shed is the result of a committee that pulled together, a community that backed their vision, and members who believed in the dream of a permanent home.

The journey has been filled with determination, generosity, and sadly, the loss of two Sheddars who did not live to see this new chapter realised.

The Sheddars are clear: this story is far from over. With every brick laid and every friendship forged, Rosyth Men's Shed is building something truly special—not just for today's members, but for all those who will join in the years to come.



HEAD TO THE SHED

THE MOST POWERFUL & PROVEN PRESCRIPTION
FOR MEN'S HEALTH PREVENTION



EAT

**TAKE ONE SHED VISIT
...REPEAT REGULARLY**



SLEEP



**MAY BECOME
ADDICTIVE**



SHED



REPEAT

SCOTTISH MEN'S SHEDS
WHERE PREVENTION STARTS, AND MEN THRIVE!

Catching up on two wheels: The Dalry Shedders stay connected on the ride

There's something very special about a group of Shedders hitting the road together on a sunny morning. Recently, SMSA Development Officer Stewart Beck joined some [Men's Shed Dalry](#) members for a cycle that was equal parts of exercise, friendship, and sheer enjoyment.

The group met at Dalry Public Park and set off along the footpath beside the River Rye—the namesake of Dalry—before climbing gently to join NCN Route 7. The route then rewarded their efforts with a speedy downhill into Longbar, then led them along the cycle path that follows the old railway line to Lochwinnoch.

“It’s not just the scenery that makes rides like this memorable; it’s the chance to share the experience with others, supporting each other every pedal stroke of the way,” says Stewart.

One of the highlights of the day was Gus McLafferty introducing the group to [Zello](#), a clever little app that turns your mobile phone into a walkie-talkie. For a large group, it’s a

game-changer: no one gets left behind, help is always at hand, and the sense of connection is constant, even when the group stretches out along the route. From quick check-ins to a friendly “Are you OK?,” Zello keeps everyone linked in real time, boosting both safety and camaraderie.

The ride ended with lunch outdoors at the café, soaking up the sunshine and sharing stories from the trail. For the Dalry Shedders, this ride wasn’t just a chance to get some exercise; it was an opportunity to strengthen bonds, support each other, and enjoy the simple joy of being active and outdoors together.

In many ways, it’s a perfect example of what Men’s Sheds are all about: creating spaces where men can connect, share skills, and look out for one another. And now, with tools like Zello, staying connected to our fellow Shedders has never been easier—whether you’re on two wheels, on foot, or taking part in a group activity at the Shed.

The SMSA team recently tested out this handy app at their National Gathering, proving just how effective it can be for keeping everyone connected—making sure that no one loses touch with the camaraderie that makes Sheds so special.



Shedwise hits Aberchirder

On Saturday 20th September 2025, [Aberchirder & District Men Shed](#) hosted a special session of [Shedwise](#)—SMSA’s new Men’s Health course—for the [Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Men’s Shed Network meeting](#).

The Shed’s welcoming space on Market Street, Aberchirder became a hub of lively health discussion and practical learning, as members from across the region gathered to explore ways to support men’s health and wellbeing.

The three-hour session (10am–1pm) blended engaging talks with hands-on activities, all designed to inspire Shed members to take proactive steps for their own health and to support others in their communities.

Participants also had the chance afterwards to tour the Aberchirder Shed and admire their beautiful community garden, a real testament to the creativity and hard work of their members. The visit also coincided with the Foggie

Farmers’ Market, giving attendees a flavour of local produce and community spirit.

The feedback received from participants was overwhelmingly positive:

“It was fantastic to meet others from nearby Sheds and to learn more about health in such a friendly, down-to-earth setting.”

“The Shedwise course gave me some practical tools I can use straight away—and the tour of the garden was an added bonus!”

“Great venue, great company, great learning.”

The day proved that health education can be both informative and enjoyable, especially when paired with good company, fresh air, and a few tasty treats from the market.

If your Shed is interested in a SMSA [ShedWise](#) session, please [get in touch with our Development Team](#).



Skills Sharing Shed for Glencorse and Penicuik communities

Big changes are underway at the former nursery site at the Glencorse Centre!

What was once a real eyesore has now been cleared back to its foundations, ready to be transformed into an exciting new community resource: the Skills Sharing Shed.

This new facility will be shared between the Glencorse Community Garden and the [Penicuik and District Men's Shed](#), providing a welcoming space for hands-on projects, learning, and connection.

The base of the old nursery will become the platform for three portacabins, with decking built around them. The existing concrete ramps will also be retained for accessibility. To ensure the new building blends into the surroundings, the cabins will be timber clad.

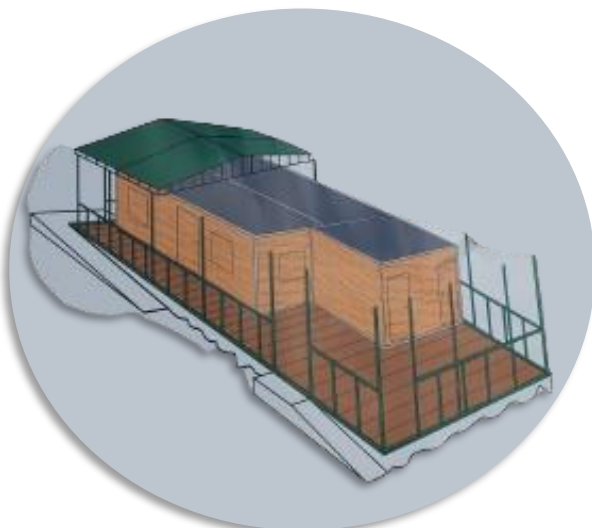
Once complete, the Skills Sharing Shed will offer modern facilities to support both the Men's Shed and the Community Garden in their work—encouraging skill-sharing, social connection, and creativity.

Planning permission has already been secured, and work will progress in phases. First, the portacabins will be lifted into place onto the steel base. Next, the roof will be constructed using the existing trusses, followed by timber framing, roofing panels, and decking to complete the floor area. Finally, the cabins will be fully timber-clad, with balustrading added around the perimeter.

During the construction phase, the area may look a little messy however short-term disruption will result in long-term gain. Three containers are currently stored on the grass around the car park, and the site itself won't be winning beauty prizes just yet. The team is grateful for the community's patience and understanding while this important project takes shape.

When finished, the Skills Sharing Shed will provide a much-needed hub where people can come together to learn, share skills, and enjoy the benefits of working side by side. Both the Glencorse Community Garden and the Penicuik and District Men's Shed are excited to see the project completed—and to welcome neighbours into the new space.

The wait will be well worth it. Watch this space!





Photos: CycleKarts GB

A Scottish Men's Sheds Cyclekart Vision—From Workshop to Racetrack!

There's something nostalgic about the rev of an old motor and the gleam from a hand-built racer taking shape— harking back to a time when inventive individuals tinkered away in sheds and garages, building their own small race cars for the sheer fun of it. And, that same spirit is alive once more at [Portsoy Men's Shed](#), where members have been working on their own Cyclekart Project — and now they're keen to get other Scottish Sheds involved in what could become a national hobby... and even a friendly race meet next year!

Cyclekarts are small, hand-built race cars inspired by pre-1950s machines. They're quirky, stylish, and achievable for anyone with a bit of mechanical curiosity and a Shed full of tools. Don't be fooled into thinking you need a degree in engineering—these karts are about creativity, resourcefulness, a nod to classic motoring heritage and taking your time.

When the SMSA caught up with Portsoy Men's Shed Chairman Richard Smith, he was quick to credit fellow Shedder Pat Walton—or as his fellow Shed members fondly call him, “Toad” from *Wind in the Willows*—for getting the wheels turning on this project.

“Pat's got a real passion for motorcars,” said Richard. “He's even got the driving goggles and tweed to match! While he's been off enjoying a well-earned holiday in Rome, the rest of us have been admiring his handiwork — a beautiful green cyclekart based on a Singer La Mans. Our next one will be a classic ‘Halford Special’. The original Halford Special was built by engine designer Major Frank Halford using an Aston Martin chassis in the 1920s.”

And, Portsoy Men's Shed isn't stopping there, the team already has plans to build a third kart—*Alfa Romeo*—style, and even bigger dreams beyond that. They're working on a Scottish Men's Shed Cyclekart Information Pack, including regulations, specifications, and build guidelines — everything another Shed would need to get started.

“It's a great way to promote creativity, recycling, and repurposing,” said Richard. “Many of these karts use engines salvaged from old lawnmowers, so it's a low-cost, sustainable, and a brilliant engineering hobby.

“It's also a chance for Sheds to move beyond the usual bird boxes and planters—not that there's anything wrong with that—but something like this might just attract a new wave of kart-mad Shedders... and even some younger men keen to get stuck in!”

Scotland's First Men's Shed Race Meet?

If all goes to plan, the dream is to bring the karts and their makers together for **Scotland's first Men's Shed Cyclekart Race Meet in 2026**. The vision is a weekend of camaraderie, competition, and community—with local food vendors, spectators, and plenty of friendly Shed rivalry. The event already has the support and backing of the [Cyclekarts Great Britain Club](#) (CKGB) and early interest from the Banff, Macduff & District, and Aberchirder & District Sheds.

“If we can get at least 15–20 Sheds involved, we'll go for it,” said Richard. “Picture it—a field full of hand-built karts revving to get on that track, Shedders from across Scotland cheering each other on, and the public discovering the fun and ingenuity that's at the heart of the Scottish Men's Sheds movement. Let's do this!”

Interested?

Boys with toys I hear you say? Maybe...but this time, it's *Mannies with Motors* — and they're off to the races!

If your Shed would like to be part of this Scotland-wide project vision, express your interest by emailing portsoymensshed@gmail.com.

Portsoy Men's Shed aims to have their full Cyclekart Information Booklet ready in time for the December 2025 issue of *The Scottish Shedder* — so watch this space!





Ian's Shed connection journey is right on track

Ian Lamb, a prolific writer on both real and model railways, is a familiar name in the Hornby and Bachmann Collectors' Club magazines. He is now on a mission to connect with Men's Sheds across Scotland to share his passion and expertise and inspire more Sheds to get on board.

"I've been passionate about railways—and building and exhibiting model layouts—for over 50 years," says Ian. "And now, I want to explore this through Scottish Men's Sheds."

"With my life-long support of the Fife Railway Heritage Centre, coupled with being in the area to help establish the reinstated Leven and Edinburgh line, I was fortunate to reunite with Alan Fraser and Jim Hamilton—former technical students of mine in the mid-1960s—who were now heavily involved in the Bayview Shed in Levenmouth."

Ian added: "I found it absolutely fascinating that it was the local Men's Shed that brought Alan and Jim back together. Before then, I was unaware of the SMSA and Scottish Sheds."

"Interestingly, I then found out it was The Bayview Shed that was the first to receive logs cleared by Network Rail from the former Thornton Junction–Leven branch line."

"Railway modellers know that creating a layout is a team effort. Success depends on learning from others, sharing skills, and enjoying the social connections that such collaboration naturally fosters—so Sheds are an ideal place for this."

"I contacted the SMSA team and was delighted at how many Scottish Men's Sheds actually had—or were about to start—a model railway group. The SMSA team shared a list of potential Sheds, with a railway model project, that I could contact. I then sought out, last year, to connect with as many Sheds as possible wherever I happened to be travelling to."

"The SMSA invited me to attend their national gathering where a specific display (pictured above centre) was presented by Nairn Men's Shed, which is based at Nairn train station, to encourage others to become involved in railway modelling."

"At the event, I had lots of opportunity to chat with potential modellers and it was encouraging that out of the 100 delegates, 40 had booked themselves on the Model Railways Workshop. Although I had lots of material with me to encourage railway modelling, it wasn't actually needed."

"A new report by 'Disrupt UK' commissioned by Hornby Hobbies concentrates on the excessive screen time which is having such a negative impact on the nation's mental health and wellbeing, whereas the SMSA focusses strictly on men's health and wellbeing only. Where this can sometimes be misread as exclusionary, within the 'Shed Movement' it is about having a protected safe space for comfort, friendships and understanding."

"Many who walk through a Shed door have spent years in isolation or searching for purpose. For them, stepping into a local, familiar, male-only environment provides a sense of ease that encourages engagement."

"Research shows that many men are far more likely to open up in male-only spaces, where cultural expectations and inhibitions are lowered, and trust can develop more naturally. If this element were to be removed, the dynamic shifts."

"My paternal ancestral home is in the Borders at Galashiels. For many years, I've had a long association with the Hawick & District Model Railway Club on exhibition duties, so I was delighted when they took up a permanent space within Hawick Men's Shed. It's quite a hive of activity at their Shed and I was made very welcome."

"The Fraserburgh Community Men's Shed has involved just about every

regular member in one way or another and together they have created a stunning model railway that they are extremely proud of. A collaboration of many talents within their membership."

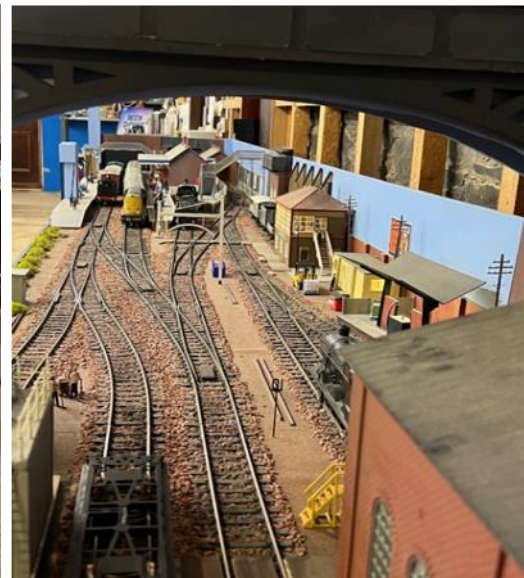
"The Hornby Hobbies/Disrupt UK document pointed out that spending time with your hobby is not just about whiling away the hours. It's an addictive pastime that is becoming even more popular than ever before, developing new skills whilst escaping the daily hassles of life—very much like the Men's Shed model. Model-making hobbyists no longer fit a traditional profile. Almost half of enthusiasts are now under 35 years old, and 28% are women, proving that scale modelling really is for everyone."

Olly Raeburn, Hornby Hobbies CEO stated: "The benefits of having a hobby cannot be overstated. Our research underscores how hobbies contribute to mental wellbeing, happiness and social connectivity. At Hornby Hobbies, we are dedicated to supporting and growing the hobbyist community, as we believe that hobbies are a fundamental part of a balanced and fulfilling life."

Despite his extensive experience, Ian stresses that anyone, regardless of skill level, can create a model railway station that is both attractive and functional. "You don't need to be an expert," Ian points out. "Anyone can make a model railway station that's neat and presentable with a little time."

"Patience builds skills, confidence, and ambition. It also does not need to be an expensive hobby. You can keep costs low utilising everyday household items to make the best tools and materials. And with 3D printers today—and many Sheds now using this technology—it opens up endless creative possibilities."

"In many ways, railways—real or model—are my reason for living and I'm extremely keen to connect with more Sheds, so if you're interested, please do [get in touch](#) for a chat."



The Armadale Shedders visit Peebles!

On the 18th September 2025, members of the [Armadale Shed](#) set off on a much-anticipated journey to visit [Peebles & District Men's Shed](#)—thanks to funding through the Scottish Community Alliance's [Community Learning Exchange](#).

It was a promising start to the day—the first blue sky seen all week—and the sunshine stayed through the rolling countryside to Peebles. Spirits were high, and the sense of adventure even higher.

Upon arrival, the Armadale Shedders were greeted by Malcolm Bruce, Secretary of the Peebles Shed, who shared the fascinating history of their premises.

The building, originally a church, now has a new structure built around it — a fitting reflection of how Men's Sheds often grow from solid foundations and community spirit.

After introductions, the Armadale members were free to explore the Shed, meet and chat to the Peebles members, and exchange ideas about their respective projects. There was plenty to capture interest.

For some, the standout attraction was the model railway setup, which brought back fond memories of childhood.

Others were particularly taken with the 3D printing facilities, where the Peebles members shared their expertise and offered valuable insights.

Inspired by what they saw, the Armadale members discussed how such technology could be introduced into their own Shed and added it to their wish list of future equipment.

Lively conversations also surrounded the CNC machine, as well as the walking stick making activities—of particular interest to two Armadale members who are part of a local stick-making club in West Lothian. Ideas and techniques were exchanged, benefiting both Sheds.

The visit also revealed a variety of other engaging projects, including woodturning, stained glass work, and metalworking, each sparking discussion and inspiration.

The day concluded with a light lunch, where everyone enjoyed a relaxed meal and chatted about our productive day, before beginning the bus journey home.

The Armadale Men's Shed extended heartfelt thanks to the Peebles & District Men's Shed for their warm hospitality, to the SCA Community Learning Exchange for funding the visit, and to the SMSA for their valued endorsement and support.

It proved to be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for all involved — one that strengthened connections, encouraged collaboration, and highlighted the shared creativity that defines the Men's Shed movement.





Back in July 2025, [Banff, Macduff & District Men's Shed](#) paid a visit to [Broughty Ferry Men's Shed](#) on a learning trip partially funded by a grant from the Scottish Community Alliance's [Community Learning Exchange programme](#) and endorsed by the SMSA.

Banff, Macduff & District Men's Shed Chairman Bob Copland said: "We set off from our Shed at 8am in a hired mini bus, fuelled by a fine bacon roll and a cup of tea for the road prepared by our fellow member, Jim.

"On arrival at Broughty Ferry Men's Shed we received a very warm welcome from our hosts and it wasn't long before it felt as if we'd known them for years, with everyone chatting and having a laugh over cups of tea."

"We were given a tour of the Shed and a brief history of how it all began, along with an insight into their journey to where they are today.

"Although our premises differ, our shared stories felt surprisingly similar. We recognised many shared challenges: finding suitable premises, navigating the jargon required for securing funding, and figuring out ways to grow our membership and widen our reach. It was clear that our Sheds—and our members—have a lot in common.

"We also had the opportunity to learn about their 3D printing, laser cutting, and CNC processes, and received some valuable advice on choosing the right equipment. Seeing the projects they had produced and hearing the inspiration behind them was truly fascinating.

"We can't thank the Broughty Ferry Shedders enough for their warm hospitality and for generously sharing their knowledge and ideas with us. We're already looking forward to welcoming them to our Shed soon for another enjoyable day of sharing ideas and chatting over a cup of tea.

"On our way home, we stopped at [Discovery Point Dundee](#). One of our members who was on the trip, Alfie Wood (81)—[check out Alfie's personal story here](#)—worked at Macduff Shipyards and in 1991 was tasked with making two of the masts for the restoration of HMS Discovery. The Discovery is currently undergoing some repair work and Alfie was delighted to meet some of the team working on her while we were there. Alfie was invited below deck to see some of the work being carried out first-hand. It was the perfect end to a perfect day of learning."

Pictured below (left to right): Alfie in the 90s working on the HMS Discovery masts; Alfie during the trip; and Alfie in the Shed.





Stonehouse Men's Shed visits Lanark!

On Tuesday 16th September 2025, a group of 14 [Stonehouse](#) Shedders enjoyed a visit to [Lanark Men's Shed](#), made possible through funding from the [Scottish Community Alliance's Community Learning Exchange](#)—a benefit of being an official Shed member of the SMSA.

The exchange programme offers a brilliant opportunity for Sheds to learn, share and connect with another Shed community. The highlights of the day were exploring Lanark Shed's impressive 3D printer and the musical Stonehouse members were particularly interested in chatting with Richard at Lanark about making guitars.

With Stonehouse Shed considering buying its own 3D printer, they were keen to see the technology in action and learn about its creative potential. The woodworking team was equally inspired by the wide range of items Lanark members have been making and selling, which ignited a creative flare for projects back home.

Graham Curtis, Chairman of Stonehouse Men's Shed, said: "This exchange has strengthened the ties between our two Sheds, sparked new ideas, and reminded us of the value of learning from one another. The visit was followed by a relaxed lunch together—making the day as social as it was educational.

"We want to express our thanks to the Scottish Community Alliance and the SMSA for the opportunity and the Lanark lads for their superb hospitality and taking the time to talk to us. In recognition of this, £100 of the grant was donated to our host. It was great to see all of the items they produce in their workshop and we just had to purchase some souvenirs to take back home with us."

Have you got an idea for your Men's Shed but aren't sure how to go about it? Don't want to reinvent the wheel?

The [Scottish Community Alliance's](#) Community Learning Exchange is an opportunity for Sheds to visit fellow Sheds or community groups and learn from their experience.

The programme funds 100% of travel and subsistence expenses (up to £1,000) including a fee (£100 recommended) for the host that you wish to visit. Funding is also available to develop and deliver a virtual learning experience. Hundreds of communities have already taken advantage of this fantastic opportunity.

Step one:

- Are you eligible? Your Shed must be a member of the SMSA to apply. This opportunity is a membership benefit through the SMSA's partnership with the Scottish Community Alliance. Not yet a member, please [click here for more info](#).
- Take a look through the SCA's [Case Studies](#) to get a flavour of what is possible through the fund.
- Read over the [Guidance](#) and [FAQs](#) to gain an insight into the what is and isn't eligible, to ensure you have all the information you need to apply and to understand the full fund requirements—such as submitting receipts and feedback after the visit.
- SMSA Shed members should [complete an online proposal form](#) in the first instance for review by SMSA CEO Jason Schroeder.

Step two:

If your proposal is endorsed by the SMSA, all that's left to do is [apply online](#)!





**SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION**



Could you donate a wee cup of kindness to help shape the future of the SMSA and the Men's Sheds Movement across Scotland?

Although there are a host of funders and organisations who already recognise the life-changing and life-saving benefits of the Men's Shed model and are currently supporting the SMSA, the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement has only reached about a third of its potential!

Gifting the SMSA the cost of a cup of coffee each month (£3), can make a HUGE difference to men's health and wellbeing across Scotland.

Help the SMSA, the national support hub for Scottish Men's Sheds, reach more men across Scotland and bring us one step closer to our vision of a Men's Shed in every single Scottish city and town.

There are many ways to support Scotland's largest member-led men's health and wellbeing charity:

- ⇒ **Set up a regular payment—donate the cost of a coffee (£3) every month**
- ⇒ **Make a direct one-off donation**
- ⇒ **Leave a gift in your will**
- ⇒ **Donate by shopping online**



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> scottishmsa.org.uk/donate



Arran's Shed adventure: Bees, banter and building skills!

At just 22, Arran Robertson is one of the newest and youngest members at [GEMS \(Montrose\) Men's Shed](#), and he's already soaking up all of the knowledge, skills, and banter like a sponge. The former RAF Air Cadet has an extremely varied mix of experience as he grabs every opportunity he can—from small animal care to computer technology, cyber security, hairdressing and now he's buzzing with a newfound passion for beekeeping.

"I was referred to the Shed by my social worker at the health centre in Montrose," Arran explains. "I went home, checked it out online, and thought, yeah, I'll give it a shot. I was nervous at first, but the members could not have been more welcoming. They were delighted to see a younger man walk through the door."

Arran's friendship group from school is still very important to him. He reminisces about hanging out with his mates Fraser, Cameron, and 'the other Arran' at their 'special spot' back at Mearns Academy in Laurencekirk.

"To be honest, I didn't really like school much at the time due to some bullying from my tutor group, but now I'd do anything to rewind and spend more time with just the crew, my crew" he says. "When we first left school, we used to be really chatty on [Discord](#)—a free communications platform for voice, video, and text—but that doesn't happen much anymore, and I really miss that connection."

Now, with a gap to fill in his life and being currently unemployed, Arran is grabbing the opportunity to attend his local Men's Shed twice a week with both hands. He helps out with practical tasks—sometimes as simple as handing up tools—but also soaks up skills and wisdom from every single member he meets. "Every opportunity is an opportunity to learn—every day is a school day," he says.

"The Shed is brilliant for that. There's always someone happy to show you how to do something, no matter your experience. And the banter is just brilliant."

Arran remembers his school friend Fraser tending hives with their woodwork teacher, Mr Sim and has recently dived in to learn more. "Now I'm absolutely hooked—I want to absorb all the beekeeping knowledge I can—Google and YouTube are your best research friends!—and I love to share what I learn with others. My goal is to own a single hive soon, then expand to more, and maybe even sell my own honey one day. That is the plan."

Arran laughs as he recalls one of his biggest pet peeves: "It drives me crazy to see people not wearing bee suits or using a smoker to calm the bees during hive inspection! You've got to build trust and respect with the bees, and they will respect you. You can't rush it—be patient, be careful, and they'll work with you."

For Arran, the Shed is more than just a place to learn trades and skills—it's a community, a space for laughter, support, and growth. "Whatever happens in life, don't dwell on the past. Focus on the future. Try new things—give it a go! You can be anything you want to be, and the Shed is the perfect place to start learning how."

"I really wanted to be interviewed and feature in The Scottish Shedder magazine to highlight that Sheds are not just for elderly men. For me, the Shed is a place to learn, laugh, and grow, proving that men of all ages can bond and benefit from this space in our local communities. I've experienced firsthand how welcoming and inspiring the Shed can be for young men."

"I really want to get the word out and encourage more young people to join or even just to go and take a look. It's a brilliant place to learn, have a right good laugh, and meet people—no matter your age or background."

Arran's story and hive-full of ambition shows just how Men's Sheds across Scotland are changing lives for the better and for the future, one member at a time.



Finding friendship and purpose at the Men's Shed

By KBMS Chairman, Alan Watson

My name is Alan Watson, and I've had the privilege of being the chairman of the [Kirkmuirhill and Blackwood Men's Shed](#) since it was established in 2019. In that time, I've not only seen the Shed grow—I've made many friends along the way.

To be clear, I don't run the Shed. The Shed is run by the members, and I'm fortunate to have a very capable committee supporting me.

Their help, and the contributions of every single member, are what make the Shed the welcoming, supportive place it is today.

The story began before 2019, when Thornton Road Community Centre organised small discussion groups to see if there was any local interest in starting a Men's Shed.

I attended one of those meetings, along with over 20 other people. The enthusiasm was clear, and it wasn't long before we decided to form a committee. I'll admit I was "gently pushed" into the role of chairman back then, while other committee members were also "pulled out of the hat." But looking back, I can honestly say I've enjoyed every moment of the role.

What makes it worthwhile is seeing the difference the Shed makes in people's lives. Many of our members come to us after losing a bit of routine in their day-to-day lives. Some were spending too much time at home on their own and the Shed offers them a place to regain that sense of purpose, structure and routine that they may feel is missing from their lives.

It's not about what you build or fix—it's about having somewhere to go, something to be part of. Members can drop in for a few minutes or stay for hours.

Some work on projects, others are happy just to sit with a cup of tea and enjoy the company. There are no expectations, no pressure—just a welcoming space where friendships grow naturally.

For me, being chairman has never been about a title. It's about helping to create that environment of support and belonging, and I'm immensely proud to be part of it.

"For me, being chairman has never been about a title. It's about helping to create that environment of support and belonging, and I'm immensely proud to be part of it."

Alan Watson
KBMS Chairman



From strangers to friends: Life at the Shed

By Bill Dewar, KBMS Trustee

Like many of the men who find their way to the Men's Shed, I joined after retiring from work. I'm proud to be a member of the [Kirkmuirhill and Blackwood Men's Shed](#) and serve on the Shed committee, and was also involved with the Thornton Road Community Centre.

At first, I spent a few years pottering about in my garage—fixing things, building bits and pieces, and keeping myself busy.

But I always worked alone, and after a while I realised something was missing.

Then, I heard talk of setting up a Men's Shed in the area, I decided to get involved. Looking back now, it was one of the best decisions I've made.

The Shed has become so much more than just a place to tinker with tools. Yes, there's always a project on the go, but what makes it truly special are the people.

You come here, and there's always someone to talk to, someone to share a laugh with, and someone who will listen if you need to get something off your chest.

It's a place where men can open up about their problems, share experiences, and, more often than not, find a way forward together.

For me, the Men's Shed has been about building friendships. None of the men I spend time with now were people I knew before I joined. Every one of them was a stranger, but now I regard them as good friends.

That's the magic of the Shed—it brings people together who might never have met otherwise, and it gives them a sense of belonging.

I truly believe the Men's Shed has been a great thing not just for me, but for everyone who walks through the door.

It's a place of laughter, support, and connection to your community. And for those of us who have joined, it's become an important part of our lives.

“The clue’s in the name” – A partner’s perspective on Men’s Sheds

By Gaynor Solomon (82)

When I got chatting to a member of the SMSA team at their national gathering earlier this month, I did not expect to be asked to be interviewed for ‘The Scottish Shedder’ magazine to share my thoughts. I was honestly surprised. I’m not a Shedder myself—I’m a Shedder’s partner and only went along to help my partner set up for his workshop at the event the next day.

We had got chatting about how much these spaces mean to men as well as their families, and I was told, “We’ve never actually interviewed a woman to get their perspective before.” My reply? “Well, let’s do this!”

Now, let me get straight to the point—in my personal opinion, women should not be in a Men’s Shed. The clue really is in the name.

Before anyone gets ruffled, let me explain. I’m not saying that women shouldn’t have spaces to socialise, learn, and connect. In fact, there are countless women’s groups doing amazing things across Scotland—craft circles, “meet and natters,” book clubs, community projects, the Scottish Women’s Institute— all providing friendship, skills, and purpose. These are safe, empowering spaces for women to share, laugh, and grow together so, why can’t we let men have the same?

Men’s Sheds give men a rare thing—a *space of their own*. Somewhere they can talk shoulder to shoulder doing activities together, not face to face, because that’s how men often open up. Somewhere they can be themselves, joke, support one another, and share what’s really going on without feeling they need to put on a brave face.

If you were to put a few women in that mix, it changes the dynamic instantly. Men talk differently in front of women—we all know it. Some clam up. They filter what they say. And that defeats the purpose of having a Men’s Shed in the first place. Another issue that’s rarely mentioned is jealousy.

I’ve heard from wives who feel uneasy about their husbands spending time in mixed-gender Sheds—and that tension can ripple through relationships unnecessarily causing marital strife and the man stops going to the Sheds. Keeping Sheds as male-only spaces avoids all of that and keeps the focus where it should be: on men’s health and wellbeing.

Now, I’m not against sharing resources sensibly—I think it’s perfectly reasonable for men to use a space in the mornings and for women to use it in the afternoons for example, if that helps a community make the most of a building. But the groups themselves should stay separate.

I don’t even step foot inside my partner’s Shed—it’s *his* place, and I respect that.

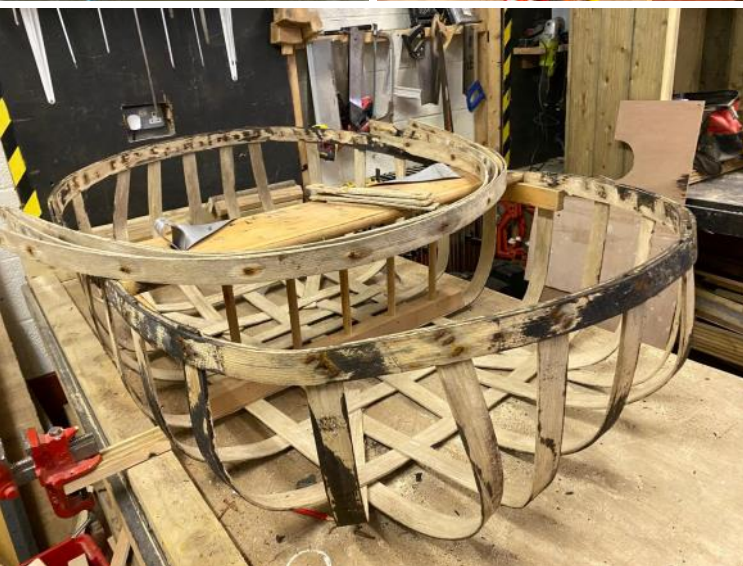
I’ve seen the difference it’s made in him. He’s more confident, more talkative, and genuinely happier. And I’ve heard stories from other Sheds where men who’ve lost their wives have found incredible support—from learning how to cook or even use a washing machine, to just having a mate to talk to over a cuppa. That’s powerful.

In a world that’s changing fast, we need to protect what works. And *the Men’s Sheds model works*. They improve lives, they bring laughter, and they give men back their sense of purpose and belonging.

So yes, let’s celebrate the women’s groups that empower women—and let’s protect the Men’s Sheds that deliver the same for men. That’s equality.



“I don’t even step foot inside my partner’s Shed—it’s his place, and I respect that.”



DadsWork SCIO Men's Shed Brings Coracles Back to Life

Last year, [DadsWork SCIO Men's Shed](#) took on a remarkable responsibility – the care and restoration of two locally built coracles that had been hidden away for more than three decades. These unique vessels had been stored at Prestongrange Mining Museum for around 30–35 years, unseen and unused.

The coracles themselves carry a wonderful local story. They were originally built by local children alongside David Purvis and the Eyemouth EISCA Maritime Museum. At the time of construction, however, the coracles were never permitted to be launched and were instead placed straight into storage, where they remained untouched until the museum's recent renovations brought them back into the limelight.

When the coracles were discovered, they found their way into the safe hands of the DadsWork Shedders, where members embraced the challenge of restoring them to their original state.

Shed members set about researching traditional restoration techniques and have already completed work on the first coracle.

The process was painstaking but rewarding. The coracle was stripped back to its original ash laths, carefully cleaned, and inspected to ensure the wood was still sound. Fresh calico was added, treated to make the vessel watertight, and then finished with three protective coats of bitumen – ready for sailing once more.

Importantly, the original seat, still bearing the handwritten names of the children who helped to build the coracle all those years ago, has been preserved. The carrying handle and ash laths also remain true to the original construction.

The results were celebrated with the successful launch of the first coracle, marking the vessel's maiden voyage after three decades of waiting.

Now, the Shed is turning its attention to the second coracle, which will be restored with the same care and attention as the first. Looking ahead, the Shed hopes to host a special launch day for the second coracle, inviting some of the original builders – now adults – to join in the occasion and witness their childhood craftsmanship take to the water at last.

Through this project, DadsWork SCIO Men's Shed has not only revived two forgotten boats but also reconnected the community with a unique piece of local history, proving once again how Men's Sheds can play a vital role in preserving heritage, skills, and stories for future generations.





From Shed to school— Inspiring young woodworkers

When Welly Walkers Childminding Family in Portsoy asked for a bit of help, Portsoy Men's Shed saw the perfect opportunity for some budding junior carpenters. But instead of tackling it themselves straight away, they decided to have a bit of fun.

Chairman Richard Smith said: "The most vertically-challenged member of our Shed, Graham Legge, was

approached and tasked with building a workbench... for himself! Armed with tools, determination, and perhaps a step stool or two, he set to work.

"There is plenty of harmless banter in our Shed, but he took it all in good stride as set to work on the bench. "And, once the bench was complete, it wasn't kept in the Shed. Instead, it was handed over to the Welly Walkers. A little bit of intergenerational Shed magic for a truly top-notch team!

Christine Mathieson from Welly Walkers said: "The Welly Walkers Childminding Family absolutely love our new workbench and are eager to get started. We are so thankful to the Shed members as children aged from 2 –8 years old from Portsoy and the surrounding areas will be benefiting from the skills woodwork brings."

A small piece of Shed ingenuity, helping to inspire the next generation.



Alford Men's Shed is expanding and thriving

Last month, Alford & District Men's Shed officially took ownership of empty garages on Murray Terrace from Aberdeenshire Council—a huge milestone that will allow them to expand activities and provide even more opportunities for members to connect, create, and contribute to their community.

It's been an exciting few months, bursting with activity, from selling handmade wares at the Alford Bus Museum Open Day to crafting waste stations for Alford Golf Club and a sandpit cover for Torphins Playgroup.

Members Alister Gauld and Willie Thomson, with a hand from Charlie Taylor, rolled up their sleeves to repair

the gates at Murray Park. And, Rob Hughes and Tom Milne have refurbished the 'beloved bench' in town—fine examples of their ongoing commitment to their community.

That said, regular tea breaks filled with banter, fine pieces, and camaraderie are a much-loved staple. As any Shedder knows, a good chinwag is the most important part of Shed Life.

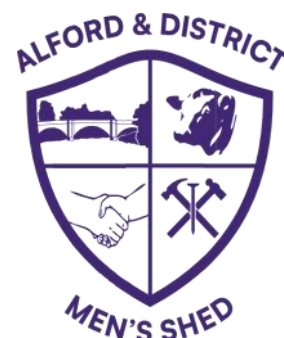
Members also gratefully accepted the donation of a forge, gifted by two local men. It's a tool that will undoubtedly fire up new skills and projects in the months ahead.

Meanwhile, the Shed garden is looking fantastic. It is lovingly tended by Roddy Kennedy and Bill Coutts, who have also carried out a big clear out of the greenhouse to make way for

future plans. The public can visit their sensory garden at the old academy technical block at any time and enjoy its true oasis of colour and calm.

If that wasn't enough, members are also sporting a fresh new look thanks to donations from local companies, which helped fund smart polo shirts embroidered with their new crest logo, building team pride and identity.

The logo symbolises heritage (the Bridge of Alford and the Alford Bull), craftsmanship, and the friendship that defines Men's Sheds perfectly.



Kirkmuirhill and Blackwood intergenerational projects bring the young and 'young at heart' together

The Kirkmuirhill and Blackwood Men's Shed (KBMS) members are showing how decades of hands-on experience can be put to work in today's community projects to benefit younger generations. From refurbishing a nursery boat, to restoring a historic telephone box, and completing the final stages of a living roof at St John's Primary, the Shedders are using their traditional skills in innovative ways—bringing generations together, inspiring creativity, and leaving a lasting mark on local schools and green spaces.

At St John's Primary and Community Garden, the KBMS Shedders have been working on the renovation of an old telephone box, giving it a new lease of life as part of the school's outdoor learning space. Alongside that, the Living Roof Project has been taking shape—with members (Graham Stewart in particular) quite literally going to new heights to complete the final stages. The result? A fantastic green feature that will inspire pupils for years to come. The living roof will not only provide natural thermal insulation, but also creates additional habitats for pollinators, supporting both sustainability and biodiversity in the community.

The collaboration doesn't stop there. The team also restored a boat for Woodhill Nursery, bringing a much-loved play feature back to life—complete with fancy steering wheel and speedometer. And, the Shed members were delighted to receive a colourful 'Thank You' card from the children—a gesture that perfectly captures the community spirit these projects create.

The kids at St John's are still deciding whether to include a wash up area and/or water butt with a solar pump to the phone box but whatever path they choose, you can be sure KBMS will be on hand to support them. [See overleaf for feedback from the St John's pupils in regards to working alongside their local Shed.](#)

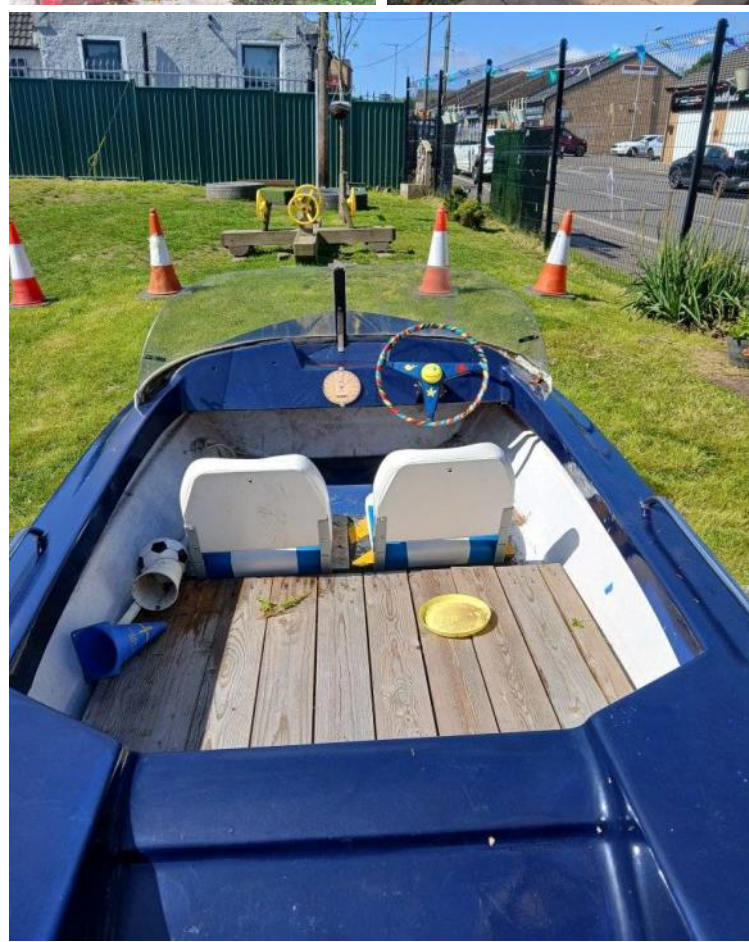
A New Chapter: Moving into the Kirkmuirhill Inn

The 1st October 2025 marked an exciting new milestone for the Shed—it was the day KBMS were officially handed the keys to their new home, the former Kirkmuirhill Inn.

The next step will be to make the building wind and watertight, followed by renovations to suit the Shed's needs. The team anticipate the project could take several months and wherever possible, KBMS hope to use members' skills as well as local suppliers, contractors, and tradespeople to complete the work.

The group is now seeking feedback and ideas from their members, local community and Scottish Men's Shed Movement supporters on how best to fit out their new space to maximise its potential and meet their members' needs. They are planning on having a large meeting space to accommodate their Shed meetings as well as host regional Shed Network meetings. The [floor plan](#) is available to view and if you have any suggestions, please [get in touch](#).

From nurturing green spaces and supporting local schools to settling into a new home, KBMS has shown what can be achieved when generations come together with shared purpose and a sprinkling of fun. Well done to everyone involved—and here's to many more community connections and creative projects in your new Shed!



Kirkmuirhill and Blackwood Men's Shed

Collaborating with the Men's Shed – Pupil Feedback



Pupil Focus Group Comments

I learned lots of new skills and things that I would not have learned in the classroom.

It was great working with someone from our local community and it's helping to improve our garden too.

I am proud that we made our own bird's house. We all worked together to make it.

The pupil feedback highlights positive outcomes from community collaborations, such as gaining new skills, improving the garden, and feeling proud of teamwork. This shows that community partnerships offer valuable learning and foster connections. The next step will be to include community member feedback to gain a fuller understanding of the collaboration's impact. Focus groups are particularly useful for capturing in-depth qualitative insights and giving students the opportunity to express their thoughts in a more personal and detailed way.

How did working with the Men's Shed members make you feel about learning new skills?

- 💬 "It helped me to grow in confidence."
- 🔧 "I am more confident about my woodwork skills."
- 🔪 "It helped with skills of joinery."



The photographs from the collaborative woodworking activities with the Men's Shed highlight the effective mentorship and hands-on learning approach, where children are guided by experienced adults. These activities help develop essential practical skills, teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking. The positive interactions and guidance foster confidence and independence in the children, providing a rich learning experience that supports their growth in life, learning, and work. This collaboration underscores the value of community involvement in education, creating a supportive and engaging environment.



What did you learn from the Men's Shed members that you think you couldn't have learned on your own?

- 🔧 How to use different tools
- 🔪 Join benches
- 🌀 Use a circular saw
- 🔪 Markings for bolts and nuts

Did working with the Menshed make you feel more connected to your community? How?

They were so willing to work with us and come in to help

One of the members is Cameron's papa – he lives next door to me.



Can your Men's Shed help save Scotland's red squirrels?

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels (SSRS) is a partnership project led by Scottish Wildlife Trust, that is working to ensure red squirrels continue to be a part of Scotland's special native wildlife.

While around 80% of the UK's remaining red squirrels are found here in Scotland, their populations have dropped sharply in recent decades. The main culprit for this is the invasive grey squirrel, introduced from North America in the late 1800s. Grey squirrels compete with reds for food and habitat, and some carry squirrelpox virus—harmless to greys but often fatal to red squirrels.

With the help of partners, landowners, volunteers and members of the public, SSRS is monitoring squirrel numbers across Scotland, combatting the spread of grey squirrels and managing the impact of squirrelpox.

SSRS targets areas where reds and greys meet, helping reds to persist and reclaim habitat by removing the greys.

The project targets three priority regions: South Scotland, the Highland Line, and the North East, concentrating efforts where red squirrels have the best chance of survival.

Each area has its own unique problems, solutions, and ways of working. Joined up working with landowners is essential for conservation work in each area.

In the South, grey incursions come from all angles, with grey strongholds in England to the south, and the Central Belt to the north. This is an area where, sadly, squirrelpox is found in higher frequency.

SSRS's work here is to maintain the red squirrel pockets, raise awareness of red squirrels and the problems they face, limit the spread of squirrelpox by reducing grey squirrel density and deal with outbreaks when they occur. A network of independent volunteer groups support SSRS across the south, providing additional capacity for monitoring and control.

The Highland Line control zone runs from Helensburgh to Stonehaven. Helped by a natural geographic barrier which prevents greys spreading further north into the highland

red squirrel stronghold, SSRS are holding this line and increasing the range where red squirrels can thrive, by creating more grey-free areas.

In the North East, an isolated population of greys was introduced in the 1970s, and SSRS is working to completely remove all the greys, already on the way to returning Aberdeen and the surrounding shire to the red squirrel haven it once was. This is possible as the population is not connected to any other greys which could recolonise, and the work along the Highland Line prevents any further incursions. When complete, this will be the first successful mammal eradication from a UK city.

SSRS uses specially designed feeder boxes to monitor the populations of red and grey squirrels in the three priority areas. Each box has a sticky tab on the underside of the lid, which collects hair from any mammal entering the box. The hair samples are then analysed using a microscope to determine the species. This data, combined with reported sightings of both species by the public, helps determine where efforts should be concentrated to have the most impact for red squirrels.

Help Scotland's Red Squirrels – Shed Style!

The [Penistone Men in Sheds group](#) (pictured below) recently crafted 12 feeder boxes for the SSRS, to be used along the Highland Line to support red squirrels in the wild.

Scottish Men's Sheds can play a vital role in helping protect Scotland's iconic red squirrels. Whether it's **crafting feeder boxes, reporting sightings, and/or spreading the word**.

By **building feeder boxes**, Sheds can directly support conservation teams monitoring populations in key areas where red and grey squirrels overlap. If your Shed would like to get involved, simply contact the SSRS team at squirrels@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk.

Another simple way to support red squirrels is by **reporting sightings** of both red and grey squirrels online. Every piece of information helps conservationists track populations. Scottish Men's Sheds can make a real difference — combining community skills with wildlife conservation. Let's give Scotland's red squirrels the best chance to thrive!

[Report a squirrel sighting](#)

[Follow SSRS on Facebook](#)

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SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
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