

THE SCOTTISH SHEDDER

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE SMSA

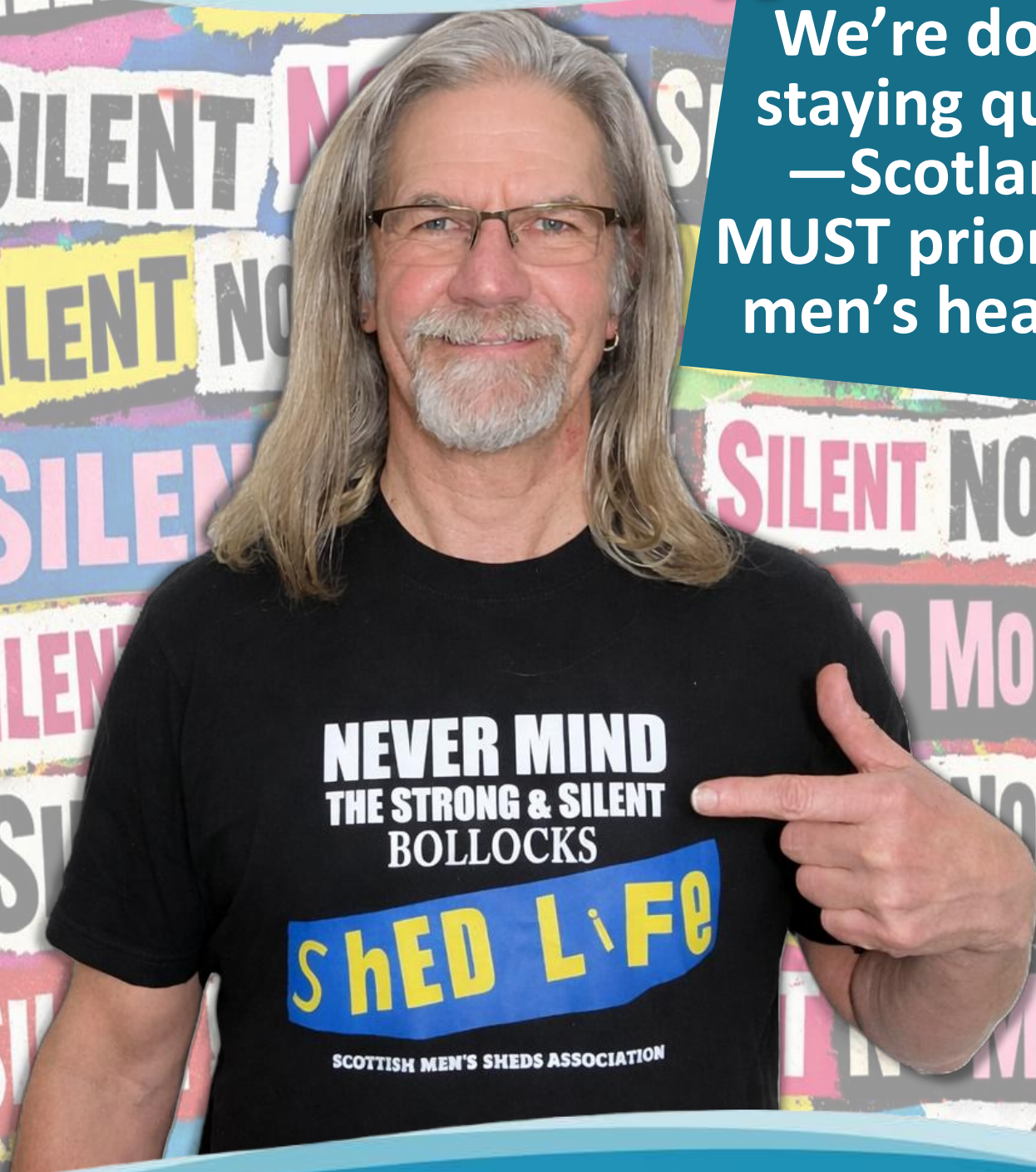


SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION

SCOTLAND'S LARGEST
MEN'S HEALTH & WELLBEING CHARITY

In Scotland, For Scotland

“ We're done staying quiet —Scotland MUST prioritise men's health! ”



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The Scottish Shedder magazine promotes the latest news from the SMSA and Scottish Sheds to inform and inspire others. The magazine is sent digitally every second month to over 5,100 Individual Member subscribers and supporters of the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement.

Send a contribution

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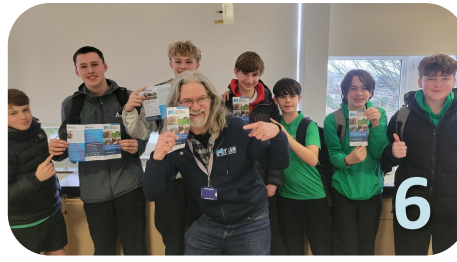
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Thank you to our funders



Let me start this edition of *Talking Sheds* with an important message.

I'm asking you to please [sign and share our Silent No More campaign](#) as widely as possible across Scotland—and beyond—to anyone who cares about the people who live here.

This is a significant issue that has the potential to affect millions of lives, including your own. I cannot emphasise enough how important it is that we come together and support this cause.

We have over 5,100 SMSA members and over 12,000 Shedders in Scotland alone. One minute or less of your time will make the difference between success and failure. I don't very often ask you to give back to the SMSA but I do need your support now. Please take a moment to have a read of our [campaign](#), and if it speaks to you—sign and share with your contacts. Thank you.

The background to this is for the past 15 years since I started working towards creating Men's Sheds in Scotland, men have not been 'seen' nor have we spoken up about the type of support men need which is different to women and so we haven't received any.

We are the product of the 'Strong and Silent' male worker model collectively 'sold' to our Grandfathers, Grandmothers, our parents and us.

Men's Sheds began as something new—a powerful step forward for men's health. Now, the time has come to take that next step: to establish a Men and Boys' Health Strategy, supported by a dedicated Men's Health Policy and Champion for Scotland.

You might not think this will make a difference and it's just another waste of time and political blah blah blah. I can assure you it isn't or I certainly would not be wasting my time nor asking for a precious minute of your time either.

Ireland was the first country in the world to introduce such a policy, back in 2009. Their Men's Shed movement is around two years ahead of ours, and given how similar Ireland and Scotland are, their approach has helped guide my thinking over the past decade. Yet, we are now 17 years behind in developing a comparable policy.

Last year, their Minister provided €2,000 to each Shed (over €800,000 in total) to help cover electricity costs during the winter months. Why? Because having a Men and Boys' Health Policy allows politicians to openly support and invest in the wellbeing of men and boys, alongside women and girls, without hesitation or political risk. Recognising they have different needs of support i.e. equality.

My experience to date in Scottish politics is very different. They all love Men's Sheds but do not feel secure enough to properly invest in them like we see in Ireland and Australia.

Do they feel if the focus goes on to men then the focus on women and minority groups which has been the main focus for many years in Scotland will go off the boil? This is not and never should be one against the other. Are men still being blamed and shamed for the inherited gender predicament?

The pendulum has swung so far the other way that I now see young men taking their lives in hopelessness and shame and far left and right groups are leading confused boys and men into their toxic ideology.

The Men's Sheds movement is the only lifestyle balanced opportunity (in my opinion) for all men over the age of 18 regardless of creed, colour or religion in Scotland to voluntarily have a way to be guided into good health and purpose together. This silent pandemic across the Western world has now been recognised and the Men's Sheds Movement is in 16 countries with many governments right now for the first time creating their own Men and Boys Health Policy and Strategies – why not Scotland?

Without your signature supporting this critical call of support in our times you are saying that men are fine, our partners, sons and daughters can go on suffering as they see us disappear into our shells and continue to pretend we are fine until we are not.

Please lend your voice of support now, so that after the elections we can present a strong case to new politicians with fresh ideas and a mandate for change.

This is a moment for new thinking and renewed energy—champions of change who are ready to make a real difference. I am asking for your support like never before to help us bring forward a collective voice strong enough to drive meaningful change for everyone's benefit.

Please [SIGN and SHARE](#) this campaign as widely as possible. We need at least 5,000 signatures for our first approach to the Scottish Government. Every signature counts.

In anticipation, thank you.

Dr Jason Schroeder
SMSA CEO

We need **YOU**
to sign the
'SILENT NO
MORE' petition!



12,000+

MEN ATTENDING
SCOTTISH SHEDS

5,125

SMSA INDIVIDUAL
MEMBERS

197

SMSA SHED
MEMBERS

32

LOCAL AUTHORITY
REGIONS

The Scottish Men's Shed of the Year Awards 2026 are now open!

The search is officially on for our 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' 2026. Applications are open to celebrate and recognise another milestone year for Scotland's thriving Men's Sheds movement.



Created by the SMSA, the awards celebrate the extraordinary role Sheds play in supporting men's health, wellbeing, and connection in communities across the country.

Following last year's new addition, the awards will again recognise excellence across five regional categories: East Coast (North); East Coast (South); West Coast (North); West Coast (South); and Highlands/Islands.

Now in its eighth year, the programme continues to shine a spotlight on the life-changing impact of Sheds—from tackling isolation to building skills, friendships, and purpose.

Each region will crown its own winner, ensuring five Sheds gain well-deserved recognition with their regional title—with all five progressing into the running for the national title. From there, the SMSA board will select three finalists, who will go forward to a public vote to decide the overall winner.

SMSA CEO Jason Schroeder said: "We want to hear your Shed's story through the Awards application and celebrate the incredible work you've delivered over the past 12 months and give it the recognition it deserves."

Find out more and apply at <https://scottishmsa.org.uk/smsotyawards>



**SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION**

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**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

[Click here to notify the SMSA](#)

The Impact of Men's Sheds in Scotland—Survey Results

A recent survey conducted by the Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA)—Scotland's leading men's health and wellbeing charity—highlights the significant positive impact Men's Sheds have on health, wellbeing and social connection.

The findings, from over 500 Scottish Shedders, show that Scottish Men's Sheds are helping men build friendships, reduce isolation and improve their overall quality of life—across all 32 local authority regions in Scotland.

Main Findings/Statements (from 509 responses):

- **Men's Sheds build friendships.** Nine in ten members have made new friends through their Men's Shed. 93% of respondents say their Shed helped them build new friendships. For policymakers this immediately positions Men's Sheds as a preventative health intervention, not just a 'hobby group'.
- **Men's Sheds reduce loneliness.** Three quarters of members say their Shed reduces loneliness. 76% say attending their Shed has reduced loneliness. Reducing loneliness (among older men especially) is a major public health priority in the UK and this shows Sheds are actively tackling social isolation.
- **Men's Sheds improve wellbeing.** 88% of members say attending their Men's Shed has improved their health and wellbeing and three in four members (75%) say their mental health has improved since joining a Men's Shed.
- **Men's Sheds reach men most at risk.** Because 90.6% of respondents are over 60, these outcomes are happening in the group **most at risk of isolation, poor mental health, and declining wellbeing.**
- **Men's Sheds improve quality of life.** More than four in five members say attending their Shed has improved their quality of life (84%).

Beyond these impressive headline figures, the SMSA's wider monitoring, case studies and reporting consistently shows that Scottish Men's Sheds deliver **high social return** for relatively **low cost** across Scottish communities. Sheds provide safe, informal, peer-led spaces where men can engage at their own pace, often re-engaging individuals who are unlikely to access traditional health or support services.

This makes them particularly effective for **early intervention and prevention**—reducing pressure on frontline health and social care services.

How can Scottish Men's Sheds use this new data?

This latest survey data from the SMSA provides robust, Scotland-wide evidence that individual Sheds can draw upon to strengthen their own funding applications and reporting, clearly demonstrating impact at a national level to complement local data. Collectively, this positions the Men's Shed movement not only as a wellbeing initiative, but as a vital community asset embedded in local resilience and public health infrastructure across Scotland.

Not completed the survey yet?

The survey remains open and ongoing, with results continuing to be analysed by the SMSA, figures will be updated annually to ensure the most accurate and up-to-date picture of impact.

Please take 5-10 minutes to complete the survey, you can remain anonymous if you prefer. Thank you in advance for your support for the SMSA and the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement.

[COMPLETE THE SURVEY](#)



Building Friendships
Combating Isolation
Enhancing Wellbeing



Young voices back Scottish Sheds

SMSA CEO Jason Schroeder attended Banchory Academy on the 12th March 2026 to deliver a presentation on the SMSA and the wider Men’s Sheds Movement to 16 S2 pupils.

The pupils – all boys, working in six groups – have all chosen Men’s Sheds as their topic for this year’s [Youth Philanthropy Initiative \(YPI\) Scotland](#) presentations.

Jason said: “What an endorsement of the impact of the movement and the value young people see in supporting their communities through Men’s Sheds!”

“This is also the first time the school has explored the YPI with such a young age group, making it even more encouraging to see the enthusiasm and interest from the next generation. The word is clearly getting out there. Result!”

Following the session, the Deputy Head has invited Jason back to speak with 100+ 5th year students later in the year about forward-thinking guidance and the positive role Men’s Sheds can play in communities across Scotland.

A big thank you to Banchory Academy for the warm welcome and for shining a light on the work of Men’s Sheds. We look forward to seeing how the pupils’ projects develop!

Shed Open Doors Week 2026

Open your Shed doors during Men’s Health Week in June and welcome your local community into your Shed!



- ⇒ **Showcase what you do** – projects, skills, conversations, and everyday Shed life
- ⇒ **Keep it simple** – a cuppa, a chat, and a tour is often enough to make a big impact
- ⇒ **Attract new members** – many Sheds find Open Doors Week brings in fresh faces who stay involved
- ⇒ **Raise awareness** – help people understand how Men’s Sheds support wellbeing, connection, and purpose
- ⇒ **Promote locally** – use the week to connect with community groups, partners, and supporters
- Flexible format** – run it in a way that suits your Shed, your members, and your capacity
- SMSA support available** – promotional materials and guidance are provided

Open your Shed, share your story, and help grow the movement. Register your Shed online at scottishmsa.org.uk/opendoors

Date for your diary –SMSA Gathering 2026

A key annual event for the Men’s Sheds Movement in Scotland—bringing Sheds together from all across Scotland to share, learn, network and celebrate.



Friday 28th August 2026 from 9am–4pm
Perth & Kinross Council Chambers and Civic Hall

- ⇒ **Networking opportunities**—connect with Sheds from across Scotland
- ⇒ **Information sharing**—hear updates, insights, and good practice from the movement
- ⇒ **Presentations & workshops**—practical sessions and inspiring speakers
- ⇒ **Short AGM business**—essential SMSA updates and formal proceedings
- ⇒ **Scottish Men’s Shed of the Year Awards 2026**—celebrating outstanding Sheds and achievements
- ⇒ **Exhibitions from partner organisations**—showcasing resources, services, and support available to Sheds

All subscribed SMSA individual and Shed members will receive an email with the programme and registration details soon.



The call for action for men's health grows louder

Silent No More

Sign for change



Silent No More – we need you on board!

At the time of writing, the [SMSA's Silent No More petition](#) has reached **1,422 signatures**—a strong start, but nowhere near enough to drive the change Scottish men's health urgently needs.

First and foremost, a huge thank you to everyone who has already taken the time to sign and share the petition. Your support matters more than you might think. Every signature, every share, every conversation helps build momentum and keeps men's health firmly on the agenda.

This campaign is about making sure men's voices are heard in a meaningful, structured way through a national men's health strategy for Scotland.

Sheds have always been at the heart of that conversation—practical, trusted spaces where men open up, support each other, and build connection that genuinely saves lives. But now it's time to take that voice further.

Every additional signature strengthens the message to decision-makers: men's health matters, and it needs action—not just discussion.

If your Shed hasn't signed yet, please take a moment today with your fellow Shedders in the Shed to support this cause. It only takes a minute, but it adds real weight to a growing national call. Let's push this well beyond 1,422—and make it impossible to ignore. A couple of minutes is all it takes to [sign and share](#) this very important petition.

Connect, share, and grow with the SMSA Member Online Forum

The [SMSA Member Sheds Forum](#) (a private Facebook group for SMSA Member Sheds) opens up a new layer of connection for our members.

Think of it as an online extension of the Shed itself—a place to network, problem-solve, and share with like-minded men across the country.

Outside of regional Shed Networking meetings, the forum is the easiest way to stay connected, get support, and make the most of being part of the Scottish Men's Sheds community.

The online forum offers a space to:

- **Share updates and news**—Celebrate your Shed's latest project, open day, or achievements with a community from Shetland to the Borders that understands and supports you.
- **Ask questions and get advice**—Whether it's about setting up a new Shed, advice on sourcing insurance or training, fundraising ideas, or

practical Shed challenges, the forum lets you tap into the collective experience of Sheds across Scotland.

- **Offer or find items**—Got surplus items gathering dust? Need a tool for a project? Post it on the forum.
- **Stay inspired**—Browse ideas and success stories from other Sheds. Save duplication of effort and bring fresh energy back to your own Shed.

And remember—you get out of the forum what you put in. The more you share, ask, and contribute, the more valuable it becomes for everyone.

So, get involved and keep the momentum going. Head to the forum and start connecting today. Share, learn, and make your Shed even stronger with the collective knowledge of online Shedders across Scotland.

PLEASE NOTE: To join the forum, your Shed must be an official SMSA Shed Member. Two people from your Shed can act as Admins on the Forum page (both need to have personal Facebook pages and let us know so we can give them posting rights for their Shed).



NEW SHED FACTSHEET: How to attract younger men into Men's Sheds

Over the past year, Dr Julie Cowie and Dr Dani Hutcheon from Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) have been conducting in-depth research, funded by the Chief Scientist Office, through the [WIGWAM-S](#) (Wellbeing in dsadvantaGed, Working Age Men–Sheds) project with working age men (aged 16-65) across Ayrshire and Forth Valley to answer a series of questions:

1. **What do working age men already attending Men's Sheds find works well to support their health and wellbeing?**
2. **What do working age men not attending Sheds think about them?**
3. **What activities are working age men actually interested in, and what is important to them?**

Findings showed that men attending Sheds enjoyed opportunities for peer learning and gaining support from others. Those who were unemployed found that Sheds gave them a sense of purpose that mimicked working life, Sheds were particularly beneficial for those with transport issues when based in a central accessible location.

Men who didn't attend a Shed felt that fixing and mending things sounded appealing, as well as opportunities to be creative, and chances for intergenerational learning. However, there was a preconception that Sheds were just for older men, and only for those who don't work during the week.

Some activities that working age men stated that they would be interested in included darts, pool, gaming, fitness, music, cooking and bike repairs.

What was particularly important to working age men were activities being inclusive, activities being free or low cost, being able to take ownership and have a voice (when they often didn't) and having a laugh! While the research was based on men living in areas of disadvantage, the results are very relevant to men living in varied contexts across Scotland.

GCU, along with the SMSA and community partners, has now co-created two WIGWAM-S factsheets of findings. The factsheets encompass the views and quotes of the 117 men engaged over the course of the study, the WIGWAM-S factsheets provide an insight into what men want and need to help them live well in their communities.

There's a specific [Men's Shed Factsheet](#) for Sheds wanting to attract more working-age men as well as a [Community Factsheet](#) for use by community organisations.

Findings from the study will inform the design of a larger-scale project to test and refine theories about how Sheds might best support socially disadvantaged men.

This new knowledge is important, as policymakers require a robust understanding of whether and how community-based interventions work before investing in approaches that supported the health and wellbeing of working-age men in disadvantaged communities.



HOW TO ATTRACT YOUNGER MEN INTO MEN'S SHEDS



Wellbeing in dsadvantaGed, Working Age Men–Sheds (WIGWAM-S)

A co-design community project to develop realist programme theories around the impact of Men's Sheds on the positive health and wellbeing of socially disadvantaged, working-age men.



University for the Common Good



CHIEF SCIENTIST OFFICE



Farewell to Tim and a warm welcome to Brian

There are moments in every organisation where you pause, look back, and recognise just how much one person has contributed to the journey. This is one of those moments for the SMSA team as we say a heartfelt farewell to our colleague Tim Green, and at the same time extend a very warm welcome to his successor, Brian McWilliam.

Tim's retirement was marked in true SMSA style—with plenty of good food and humour! At the SMSA lunch, Tim was thoroughly made a fuss of by his colleagues and friends. He was showered with cards, kind words, and gifts from both the team and Sheds he has supported over the years.

From the team, he received a very fitting combination for his next chapter: a top of the range spade and fork (laser engraved by David Young Training) so he doesn't forget us or his favourite pastime—gardening! Only the very best for our Tim.

There was also a generous supply of biccies to keep him going for a while, especially given he'll now be missing those regular treats sent in from Sheds across the country. One thing is certain – many Sheds may find themselves with surplus biscuits now Tim has hung up his boots!

Tim's contributions were also recognised locally at Banff & Macduff Men's Shed, where a special retirement lunch was held on the 14th April. The event was well attended and full of appreciation for everything Tim has done to support the Shed and its members.

During the lunch, Tim was presented with a gift voucher for a local hotel by Chairman Bob Copland. He was also made an Honorary Member of Banff, Macduff & District Men's Shed, and received a Shed T-shirt as a lasting memento of his connection to the group.

It was a fitting tribute to someone who has clearly made a meaningful impact and is well thought of and respected across the Scottish Men's Shed movement. And while we say farewell, it's not really goodbye—but more of a "see you later" as I am sure many will stay in touch.

As one chapter closes, another opens and we are pleased to welcome Brian McWilliam (pictured below) as a Development Officer. Brian will be covering a wide area, including Moray Coast, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Dundee.

Brian brings with him a wealth of experience from a long and varied career. Over 40 years with Clydesdale Bank, he worked across the UK in roles spanning Personal and Business Banking, Audit, Finance, Strategy, and Risk Management.

His most recent position was Head of Credit Stress Testing, giving him deep expertise in financial governance and organisational planning.

After taking early retirement in 2016, Brian and his wife relocated to the North East, where he pursued further study at the North East of Scotland College, focusing on skills linked to his interest in restoring classic cars.

Alongside this, he became actively involved in the community through Citizens Advice, serving as Treasurer, Board Member, and Money Adviser. Brian is already well known within the Men's Shed community as a Trustee and Treasurer of Turriff and District Men's Shed, where he has seen first-hand the positive impact Sheds have on individuals and communities.

He is also active in local life more broadly, including involvement with the Probus Club and other community organisations.

In his new role with SMSA, Brian is keen to build on that experience and support both existing Sheds and the continued growth of the network across his area. His practical understanding of how Sheds operate, combined with his professional background, puts him in a strong position to hit the ground running.

Brian McWilliam
East Coast Development Officer
(Part-time, two days a week)
Email: dev1@scottishmsa.org.uk



Brian McWilliam

Upcoming Regional Shed Network Meetings 2026

- **Aberdeenshire** – Tues 26th May at Fraserburgh Community Men's Shed, 10am
- **Aberdeen City** – Tues 2nd June at Culter Men's Shed, 10am
- **Perth & Kinross** – Tues 9th June at Comrie Men's Shed, 11am
- **Ayrshire**—Wed 6th May at Irvine Newtown Mens Shed from 11am
- **Greater Glasgow and Clyde**—Wed 13th May at Milngavie & Bearsden Men's Shed, 11am
- **Dumfries and Galloway**— Wed 10 June at Moffat Men's Shed, 11am

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



Spring is in the air... at last, I hear you say! The longer days and (slightly) warmer weather seem to bring a renewed sense of energy—and just as well, because things are really heating up along the West Coast.

It's a season of fresh starts and forward momentum. Across our Sheds, there's been a real sense of people rolling up their sleeves and getting involved—whether that's through local projects, events, or simply getting down the local Shed and making things happen.

Behind the scenes, it's been a lively few months too. Plans that have been quietly brewing are beginning to take shape, partnerships are strengthening, and there's a noticeable appetite for collaboration. It's encouraging to see so many individuals and groups keen to play their part in shaping what comes next.

Looking ahead, there's plenty to be excited about. New initiatives are on the horizon, and there are lots of opportunities for Shedders to get involved. As always, the success of what we do comes down to the enthusiasm and commitment of the Shedder community, and it's clear that spirit is very much alive.

So, let's start in Argyll & Bute. In last month's update I said we were about to hold a public meeting in Helensburgh. Well, we've now had two meetings since then, and I'm absolutely delighted to report that Helensburgh Men's Shed is now a reality.

With Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer all in place, things are already moving at pace, including a positive meeting with Argyll & Bute Council's Estates Department to explore getting a Shed building off the ground. We are absolutely over the moon! A brilliant group of men stepping up to the plate and shaping the future of this bustling West Coast town.

At the same time, another new Shed in the area has been quietly getting on with it too—building a solid membership base, achieving SCIO status, liaising with local decision-makers, meeting councillors, and generally ploughing ahead with the development of Rosneath Peninsula Men's Shed, just around the coast from Helensburgh.

It's fantastic to see both Sheds up and running, and we know they will bring real energy, connection and opportunity to men across the area. A genuine hotspot for the Shed movement.

I'm also delighted to share that Isle of Whithorn Men's Shed has now been granted

SCIO status and has moved into a workshop right on the seafront in the village. I recently visited and was given a wonderfully warm welcome—so much so it felt like half the village had turned out!

The workshop, the people, and the sense of community were hugely impressive. There's a well-known West of Scotland saying: "He'd get a piece at anybody's door." After meeting the Machars men, I can confirm this one absolutely holds true.

Back in East Ayrshire, I gave a presentation at an open/launch night for Auchinleck Men's Shed, where we actually ran out of space and I had to give my presentation twice—a fantastic "problem" to have. A strong Shed is clearly developing there under the auspices of the Auchinleck Community Development Initiative, with a purpose-built Shed, polytunnel and community garden area.

Since that event, membership has continued to grow and exciting new initiatives are taking shape. I look forward to sharing more updates in due course.

Elsewhere, I've been out and about Stirling, Kirkintilloch, South Ayrshire, East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire—each visit reinforcing just how strong and varied the Shed movement is becoming across the region.

In North Ayrshire, I was invited to a Health Check-In event for men held at Fullarton Connexions in Irvine, in partnership with NHS Ayrshire & Arran. It was particularly encouraging to see the growing recognition within the NHS of the vital role Men's Sheds play in supporting men's health and wellbeing.

Some excellent connections were made on the day, including speaking with a Stroke Consultant who kindly took a number of SMSA leaflets to share with patients.

And, off the back of that event, NHS colleagues were also able to attend the most recent Shed-Wise delivery at Clyde Coast & Cumbraes Men's Shed in Largs, where—following my presentation—staff were on hand to carry out health checks with participants.

This is a really positive development with potential to be rolled out further across other Sheds. More of the same please, Ayrshire & Arran—your shire needs you!

All in all, it's shaping up to be a very encouraging spring across the West Coast—full of momentum, new beginnings, and plenty more to come.

Stewart Beck
SMSA West Coast Development Officer
07765929973
dev2@scottishmsa.org.uk





Nairn



Lochcarron Tree House



Kinlochleven

When I visit Sheds, I often ask what being part of one really means to the Shedders. Some of the answers stay with me. One of my recent favourites came from Lybster: "Men's Sheds are like a mental health defibrillator." — Michael, Lybster Men's Shed

And from the Kyle of Sutherland Shed in Ardgay, a reflection that says a lot about rural life today: "The pub's gone, the bank's gone, the petrol station's closed. Before this Shed opened, the only people I spoke to were the Amazon delivery driver and the Aldi checkout staff." —

I'll be gathering more 'crackin' quotes' in the coming months. They really can capture the essence of the Sheds, what they're about, how they change lives, how they give a sense of purpose, improve health and create bonds.

Highland East

The Nairn Shed hosted a regional Shed network meeting in February with 22 Shedders from Spey, Maryburgh, Black Isle, Dingwall, Nairn and Ardersier. Lots of discussion and craic. And a bit of Shed envy on the workshops tour!

Jimmy talked about his visit to some amazing Australian Sheds. There was also some questions asked about why the Scottish Government can't do for Sheds what the Aussies do.

A bit further east, men from Ardersier approached me about setting up a Shed there. A public meeting has been arranged for later in April, and a couple of potential venues have been identified.

Highland North East

The Lybster Shed, amongst other activities, now have their own band (pictured right). They are also planning, through a heritage fund, to run chair making courses. Did you know that each area up in the north has their own chair style? Caithness, Orkney, Shetland, Sutherland...and more.

The success of the Lybster Shed has generated further interest in Caithness. The Watten Helps Out project have been in touch and are interested in a Shed at Watten. Also, I will be hosting a public meeting in May at the Thurso Development Trust premises.

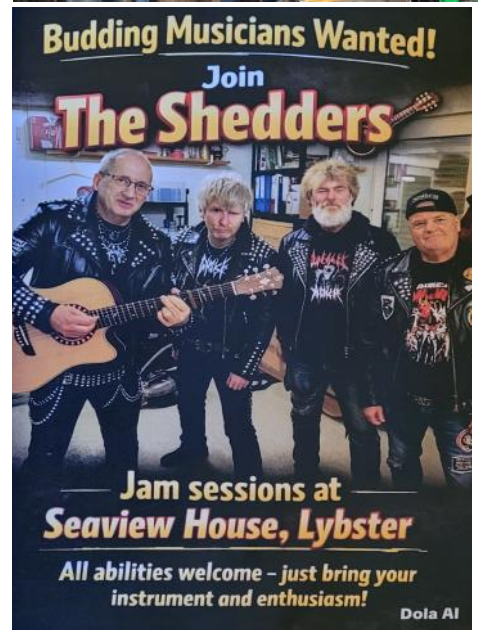
Highland North West

In the wild west the new Lochinver Shedders are meeting in the Assynt Leisure and Learning Centre with 15 men regularly attending. The centre is chuffed that the Men's Shed is the largest group using the facilities. The hunt for their own premises continues.

And out in Lewis a new Shed is in development. They have a steering group, have purchased land and are waiting for planning permission. I've been invited to visit and give a talk about the SMSA and all things Sheds.

I visited the Lochcarron Shedders and I found them at the Smithy Hub Treehouse conducting repairs for this amazing community resource. See photo above.

"We don't do too bad for a bunch of pensioners. A few creaks here and there but we do okay," says Gordy the Shed chair.



Highland South

The Fort William Shedders hosted a network meeting at the Caol Centre with 20 Shedders from Kilchoan, Fort William, Mallaig, Kinlochleven and Fort Augustus attending. While in the area I popped in on the Kinlochleven Shed and enjoyed the banter and hilarity.

Tony, the chair commented – "the tools and the crafting are great, but this is what makes a Shed. It's the craic, the friendships, the mutual support that keeps us well."

Ross Murray
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Development Officer
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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' is the SMSA's roundup of all of relevant funding, consultations, connections and opportunities open to Scottish Men's Sheds that are members of the SMSA.



Newton Stewart Men's Shed: A Shed for today, a legacy for tomorrow

The SMSA chats to Lex Muir, Chairman of [Newton Stewart Men's Shed](#), about the milestone of securing ownership of their very own Shed, reflecting on the group's journey since 2019 and sharing plans to ensure it thrives for future generations.

When Lex Muir first thought about starting a Men's Shed in Newton Stewart, his motivation was personal. "I was slightly selfish," he admits. "I saw family members getting older and becoming increasingly isolated and thought... surely there is something out there for men."

Living in a small rural community, Lex recognised how easily men could drift into loneliness once work or family routines changed. Inspired by the Men's Shed movement, he decided to see if there was interest locally. In mid-2019 he put out the word and organised a meeting at the town's golf club.

The response was encouraging. "We had a good turnout, enough interest to form a small committee," he recalls. "At that stage we had no premises at all, so we started meeting in a local community place called The Hut. We had talks and social gatherings and bonded while we tried to figure out our next steps."

Finding a Shed Home

From those early meetings, the group began searching for a permanent base. After considering several options, a promising opportunity emerged at The Pavilion at Minnigaff Playing Fields. The building, previously used as a sports facility, included changing rooms, toilets, a kitchen and a social space—it was a solid start attracting around 30 members.

Like many community groups, however, the pandemic interrupted progress. "When Covid arrived, everything had to stop," Lex explains. "It took nearly a year before we could get going again. But when we held another public meeting, it was clear the interest was still there."

A Long Journey to Ownership

While the Shed continued to operate, the committee pursued a bigger ambition—taking ownership of the Pavilion through a community asset transfer.

The process however was far from quick. "It took over two years and a lot of negotiation," says Lex. "The council were supportive, but it's still a very lengthy process."

Thanks to persistence—and the support of a helpful local legal contact who assisted with much of the work—Newton Stewart Men's Shed secured a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) from Dumfries & Galloway Council for the pavilion and land at Kirroughtree Avenue in Minnigaff on the 23rd January 2026.

The Shed now owns the Pavilion, along with the old putting green and surrounding area and the members have lots of plans to develop the site.

"It's a huge milestone for us," Lex says. "It opens up all sorts of possibilities for the future." Plans include developing the putting green into a nature-friendly community garden, creating a space that benefits both Shed members and the wider community.

Community at the Heart

Although practical projects are part of Shed life, Lex says the biggest impact has always been the social element. "The feedback we get from members is always about the friendships and the social side."

The Shed hosts weekly social evenings where members play dominoes, chat and share stories. There's also an annual barbecue for members and neighbours, helping maintain strong relationships with the surrounding community. "We're very aware we're part of the local area, so we try to keep excellent relations with everyone."

Shed Secretary Martin Day produces a monthly newsletter, affectionately titled "Right Said Shed," keeping everyone up to date with activities and news.

Making a Difference Locally

Newton Stewart Men's Shed is actively involved in supporting the local community. Members of Newton Stewart Men's Shed have been busy both in the workshop and out in the community, taking on practical projects while also raising funds for good causes.

Members have built planters for nearby villages, constructed seating areas, and carried out small projects for community organisations such as the Newton Stewart Initiative to name but a few.

Recently, members carried out repairs to the walkway and fishing platform at Blairmount Park, helping keep the popular local spot safe for everyone. They've also built bird boxes, furniture and equipment for local groups, including drum stands for an African drumming group.

Continued on next page...



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The Shed is also extremely active at community events, setting up stalls at local Christmas fairs and markets in venues such as the McMillan Hall and The Vibe, offering handmade decorations, gifts and bespoke wooden items.

Alongside coffee mornings, shows and musical evenings, one particularly meaningful partnership emerged after a tragic incident involving one of their members—Peem Frame. Peem was a highly respected member of the Shed and his community who took ill during a Shed cycle group outing last summer and required assistance from the Scottish Charity Air Ambulance.

“The fundraising quiz at Creebridge House Hotel was held in memory of our much-missed member Peem, raising funds for the Scottish Charity Air Ambulance and we will continue to maintain a connection with the service.” says Lex.

Members have also enjoyed learning new skills, including a festive wreath-making session led by Forteviot Flowers, wood-turning, fly-tying and trying out community cycling sessions with the Galloway Hillbillies at Minnigaff Playing Fields—proving that the Shed continues to be a diverse hub for creativity, friendship and knowledge exchange.

Importantly, the Shed operates with a clear principle. “We never do anything that would take work away from a local business,” Lex explains. “Our aim is always to support the community, not compete with or upset anyone.”

The group even has its own Shed band. “One of our members is 82 and plays a fantastic harmonica. I play in the band as well—though probably not very well!”

The band performs at fundraising events during the year. Proceeds help fund the Shed’s activities and even contribute towards the members’ annual Christmas celebration. “That’s always a brilliant day,” Lex says.

“We bring in a caterer, one of our members plays accordion, and we sing, have quizzes and have a lovely meal together as one big family. It’s a great way to round off the year.”

Each year, Newton Stewart Men’s Shed carries out a survey of its members to check that the Shed is meeting their needs and expectations. The feedback from these surveys is always very gratifying, showing that members value the community, skills development, and activities the Shed provides.

“In addition to our annual survey, we have a suggestion box in our social area. It’s great to ensure that everyone’s voices are heard and that the Shed keeps evolving to match what members need. It really feels like our ideas make a difference.”

At the same time, the results highlight any areas for improvement or ideas for new initiatives and activities, helping the committee plan future projects and events that keep the Shed vibrant, inclusive, and responsive to what the members want whilst maintaining the ethos of what a Men’s Shed is all about.

This ongoing dialogue ensures that the Shed continues to grow in a way that truly benefits everyone involved.

Looking Ahead

Now, with a 50-strong membership, ownership of the building secured, future funding opportunities emerging and all but one of the original Trustees still in place—Secretary Martin Day, Treasurer Paddy Moore and Chairman Lex—supported by committee members Ian Petrie and Keith Montgomery, the Shed is now planning significant improvements. These include refurbishing the Pavilion, upgrading windows and doors, and building a new workshop to expand the range of activities available to members.

“The goal is simple: ensure the Shed continues to thrive long into the future. It is the committee’s ambition to future-proof the Shed premises for the next generation.” adds Lex.

With strong membership, deep community ties and ambitious plans ahead, Newton Stewart Men’s Shed looks set to remain a valued part of the town for many decades to come.



“The goal is simple: ensure the Shed continues to thrive long into the future.”

Innovation at The Shed Bayview

The Shed Bayview in Leven is a Shed that keeps evolving. It is fast becoming a diverse hub for creativity, learning and innovation. Based at the Bayview Stadium locality hub, the group has been expanding its activities thanks to funding from the National Lottery Community Fund—and the results are opening up even more exciting opportunities for members.

Ken Whyte, Chair of The Shed Bayview, said: “Two years ago, we secured £10,000 from [The National Lottery Community Fund’s Awards for All Scotland programme](#) to establish a craft centre. The space worked well and naturally attracted traditional crafts such as knitting, sewing and crochet.

In recent times, more and more members have wanted to broaden the offering and create our dream of a hobby hut to ensure there is always something for everyone—especially during the colder months on the Fife coast, when outdoor activities become more difficult.

“The Shed re-applied for additional funding (£9,000) from Awards for All under the title “Expanding Opportunities”. The aim was simple: build on what was already working while introducing new activities that would appeal to a wider range of members.

“One of the most exciting additions is a laser engraver and etcher. Members are already learning how to use the machine to create personalised items such as coasters, engraved frames and keepsakes. The equipment also opens the door to producing custom-branded items for the Shed—everything from wooden pieces to printed merchandise like T-shirts. It’s a practical way to combine creativity with skills development while producing items members can be proud of and also raise funds for the Shed.”

The group has also ordered a 3D printer, which will allow members to explore design and manufacturing in a completely new way. Although the first unit arrived damaged and had to be returned, the Shed expects a replacement shortly. Importantly, the team is taking a thoughtful approach—ensuring everyone becomes confident with the equipment already in place before moving on to the next piece of kit.

Computers and specialist software have been installed so members can design projects for the engraver and the printer. Supplies such as basswood and vinyl have been purchased, allowing Sheddors to experiment with different materials and ideas.

The expansion hasn’t been limited to digital technology. Model making has also become another popular activity, with members exploring everything from traditional kits to modern Lego sets. One standout example is a detailed World War II Lancaster bomber kit made entirely from Lego, which impressed everyone with its intricate design—no paint required, just patience and precision. It’s the kind of project that encourages conversation with members gathering around the table to share tips and stories as they build.

Model railways are another growing interest. Members bring along their trains to carry out “MOTs”, repairs and upgrades, with practical problem-solving.

A key part of the Shed’s approach is collaboration. Members bring different skills and experiences, and everyone contributes what they can. The wider community is also involved. Other groups using the hub have shown interest in the equipment and projects, with opportunities for shared learning and cross-group activities. People who may initially feel unsure about using new tools are encouraged to get involved, often discovering new talents along the way.

Outside the Shed, the green-fingered members have a spring in their step developing the garden space. Two large polytunnels are being set up to grow plants and vegetables. With seeds and compost aplenty, the project is popular with members keen to try their hand at gardening, learn new skills and perhaps even grow plants to take home for their own gardens.

Ken expressed: “The support that our Shed has received from the National Lottery Community Fund has been crucial in turning these ideas into reality. The application process was straightforward and supportive, with funding arriving quickly after approval.”

What’s happening at The Shed Bayview is a great example of how Scottish Men’s Sheds continue to evolve. By mixing traditional activities with new modern technologies, gardening and model building, the group has created a space where members can learn, create and enjoy each other’s company all year round.



A roof with a view: Intergenerational skills in action at Ayr and Prestwick Men’s Shed

Ayr and Prestwick Men’s Shed proudly joined Prestwick Academy for the official launch of its Future Roofing programme, led by His Majesty’s Lord-Lieutenant of Ayrshire and Arran, Sheriff Iona Sara McDonald OBE.

The Shed was delighted to “raise the roof” and celebrate the initiative alongside students, staff, and local industry partners on Friday 27th February 2026.

The Future Roofing programme builds on the successful trial of the National 5 qualification in Creative Industries Roof Slating. Since September, Andy Kerr, Operations Director at KRB Group (Ayr) Ltd, an NFRC Member, has led delivery of the course to Prestwick Academy pupils.

At the event, Shed Chairman Frank Tanner presented a giant wishing well, handcrafted in the Shed workshop, to the Lord-Lieutenant. The well will be donated to The Hansel Village, where it will serve as both a creative feature and a fundraiser for the community.

The project perfectly showcases intergenerational collaboration. Prestwick Academy students, under the guidance of Andy Kerr and the Ayrshire Construction Training Group, will complete the wishing well’s final construction. As part of their National 5 Creative Industries qualification, the students will tile the roof themselves—adding the finishing touches to a project built on skills shared across generations.

Adding a personal touch, Shed member Ronnie Russell presented the Lord-Lieutenant with a handmade wooden pen, also crafted in the Shed Workshop, as a keepsake from a day that brought their community together.



From Pews to Workbenches: Places of worship retained for new community use

Community ownership is opening up opportunities for Men’s Sheds across Scotland—helping protect valued spaces like former places of worship, create new opportunities for connection, and breathe new life into local communities—retaining key assets for generations to come.

Latest research from the [Development Trusts Association Scotland \(DTAS\)](#) shows that last year, COSS had a record of 320 new enquiries from groups considering their options in relation to community ownership—an increase of 300% since 2024.

Across the country, more and more buildings are now in community ownership, from libraries and community centres to former schools, toilet blocks, police stations and post offices.

For Sheds, this growing movement is particularly relevant. Much of the increase is being driven by the transfer of former places of worship—spaces that often sit at the heart of communities and could offer ideal homes for Shed activities.

Shetland, for example, currently has six churches of the 23 identified for closure having moved into community ownership.

However, taking on a building is not without its challenges. Groups can face complex legal processes, funding gaps and competition from commercial buyers when trying to secure local assets.

The [DTAS’s Community Ownership Support Service \(COSS\)](#), which works in partnership with the SMSA, aims to support community groups through the process and their Scotland-wide New Futures Programme focusses on former places of worship.

The New Futures Programme aims to prevent these valued buildings from falling out of use by enabling them to be transformed into sustainable community spaces—creating new opportunities for organisations, such

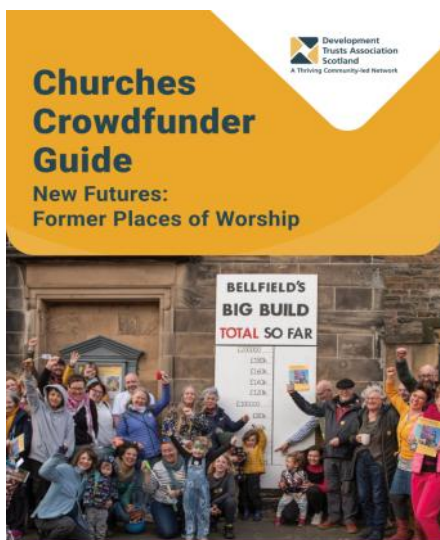
as Men’s Sheds, to secure long-term homes and strengthen local services.

Linda Gillespie, Head of Community Ownership at DTAS, said: “We’re seeing a marked increase in communities stepping forward to take control of local buildings, especially former places of worship. These buildings have long been at the heart of local life and, without action, risk sitting empty or being lost altogether.

“Community ownership is helping to protect essential services, create jobs and breathe new life into towns and villages. But the process is still too complex and competitive for many groups. Without the right support, there is a real danger that communities will lose out to private developers or lose these valued local assets.”

With more Sheds exploring their own premises or long-term homes, this trend highlights both the opportunity and the need for the right support.

In response to growing demand, DTAS has produced a new [Churches Crowdfunder Guide](#). This guide is for community groups in Scotland who are considering taking ownership of a former place of worship. While the guide focuses on church assets, the advice and real-life examples can also support groups planning a crowdfunding campaign to acquire or renovate any community asset.



A new chapter for Moffat and District Men's Shed

Moffat and District Men's Shed is standing on the cusp of something special as it begins an exciting new chapter following its relocation to the town centre. The move to their new premises at 3 Church Place, right beside the local church, marks a significant step forward for the Shed and its growing community of members.

The welcoming atmosphere of the new facility was evident from the outset of SMSA Development Officer Stewart Beck's recent visit. Stewart was greeted by Shedders celebrating member Hector's birthday, complete with cake and good humour, a fitting example of the camaraderie that lies at the heart of the Shed!

The new building provides a fantastic environment for members featuring a comfortable social space where Shedders can gather for conversation and connection, alongside a well-equipped workshop that opens up a wealth of creative possibilities. With room to expand ideas and projects, the Shed is perfectly positioned for the future.

Membership continues to grow, and the group is increasingly engaging with the wider community through commissions and collaborative work. Activity at the Shed is buzzing, with members involved in a wide range of projects—from intergenerational initiatives and stained glass work to laser engraving. There are even plans underway for "Meditation Fridays", offering another opportunity for members to relax, reflect and support wellbeing.

There is also talk of reviving one of the town's memorable community events: **Shedfest D&G**. Those who attended the previous Shedfest at Moffat Town Hall in 2019 will remember a lively celebration that brought Shedders together to showcase their work,

share stories and highlight the wellbeing benefits of Men's Sheds. With the neighbouring church offering an excellent events venue, the possibility of a new Shedfest—perhaps in Spring 2027—is already generating excitement.

The Shed is also proud to be taking part in this year's **Moffat Creatives Art Trail**, an event that sees artists and makers across the town opening their studios and exhibiting their work. Visitors are invited to follow the trail through Moffat and enjoy the remarkable creativity the town has to offer.

The move to the new premises has been supported by the local community. A special thanks goes to 360 Degree Flooring Ltd, who arranged for their apprentices to install the flooring in the Shed's new community space as part of their community initiative.

And the good news doesn't stop there. Like many other Sheds, Moffat Men's Shed had been feeling the strain of rising costs, so members were thrilled to secure a £10,000 grant in February from the Annandale and Nithsdale Community Benefit Company. Dick Monaghan from the Shed said: "This funding will cover the workshop's running costs for the next two years, giving us real peace of mind and allowing us to keep supporting our community."

Dick added: "With our new premises, more space and workshop running costs secured for two years, we are now in a great position to attract more new members to help and enjoy the Shed. Anyone interested in finding out more about what we do and about the whole Men's Shed ethos, just drop into the Shed on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays between 11am & 2pm. The kettle is always on!"

With a new home, expanding membership and ambitious plans ahead, Moffat and District Men's Shed is clearly building something special at its new base in the heart of the town.





Banff & Macduff Men's Shed receives King's Award for Voluntary Service in formal Lord-Lieutenant presentation

Banff & Macduff Men's Shed officially received its *King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS)* presentation on Friday 20th March 2026, when the *Lord-Lieutenant of Banffshire*, Mr Andrew Simpson presented the group with its certificate and commemorative crystal.

The award—widely regarded as the highest honour given to local volunteer groups in the UK—is granted for life and recognises the Shed's outstanding contribution to community life, wellbeing, and peer support since its formation in 2018.

The presentation event brought together members, community representatives, and guests to celebrate the Shed's continued role as a safe, welcoming space where men can connect, share skills, and support one another.

Shed Chairman Bob Copland said: "This is a very proud moment for all our members. We never set out looking for recognition, but it means a great deal that we were nominated and see the effort, friendship and support within the Shed acknowledged in this way. The most important thing for us is still the same—making sure every man who walks through the door feels welcome, valued, and part of something."

SMSA CEO Jason Schroeder, who attended the presentation, added: "Banff & Macduff Men's Shed continues to set an exceptional example of what the Shed movement is all about. This award reflects years of dedication, kindness and community impact. Everyone involved should feel incredibly proud of what they've achieved."

More information about the award can be found via the official KAVS website at <https://kavs.dcms.gov.uk>

The next round is expected to open again in autumn 2026 ahead of the 2027 awards cycle.

Larkhall Men's Shed triumphs with 'Stall of the Fayre' win

Larkhall Men's Shed has been open for two years now and continues to explore new ways to engage with the local community.

At Christmas time, the Shed participated in the Larkhall Christmas Fayre—their first-ever stall at such an event. Despite appalling weather on the day, the venture was a resounding success.

The stall's impact was recognised when the Shed was awarded 'Stall of the Fayre', delighting all of its members.

Every item on the stall was proudly crafted by Shed members, with many pieces enhanced using the group's newly-purchased etcher. The achievement showcased the creativity and teamwork of the members while making a positive impression and raising awareness of the Shed offering to the wider community.



Photos from the day capture the pride of the Larkhall Shedders in trying something new—and excelling at it.



The vital impact of Biggar Men's Shed

Biggar and District Men's Shed (BDMS) is a key part of local life and a vital lifeline and support for members across the area. The group came together to buy a former primary school and transform it into a shared home on School Road, Elsrickle—turning a redundant building into a thriving community space. While the workshops are full of tools and the workbenches show the marks of many successful projects, the Shed's real impact is its focus on improving health, wellbeing, and connection.

The global Men's Shed movement was founded on a simple observation: men often don't talk face-to-face; they talk shoulder-to-shoulder. While many find direct conversation daunting, camaraderie flows naturally through shared activity. By providing a space to "furtle," the Shed creates a low-pressure environment where conversation becomes a natural byproduct of manual projects.

A Community Lifeline

For many, the Shed is a crucial antidote to the "silent epidemic" of social isolation. Life changes such as retirement, bereavement, or health issues can leave individuals feeling cast adrift from the social structures they once relied upon. Without a "water cooler" to gather around, the risk of loneliness is high.

The BDMS bridges this gap. It provides a sense of purpose and a community that values the skills members have spent decades honing. Here, a retired engineer might teach a former accountant how to use a band-saw, while a veteran shares stories over a brew and a blether. This intergenerational exchange ensures that traditional skills are preserved rather than forgotten.

Projects with Purpose

The impact of the Shed extends far beyond its four walls. Members

frequently engage in projects that benefit the wider Biggar area and beyond. Recent initiatives highlight the Shed's evolving reach:

- **Community Support:** Building bespoke planters and playground equipment for local schools and community councils to enhance village entrances and exits.
- **Humanitarian Aid:** Producing trench candles and cookers for troops in Ukraine, transported by a local humanitarian aid charity.
- **Restoration:** A dedicated motorcycle refurbishment and resale group.
- **Innovation:** The "Welding Shack," where metal items are upcycled for sale, and a new metalworking projects can be developed.
- **3D Printing** The Shed now has the capability to print item in 3D.
- **The Stick Club:** Where local farmers and shepherds meet to craft traditional crooks and walking sticks.

There is a profound sense of civic pride in walking down Biggar High Street and seeing a community noticeboard or planter that you helped build with your own hands.

The Power of the Brew & Blether

While the tools are a major draw, many members believe the most important piece of equipment is the kettle. The social area, centred around a wood burner, is the heart of the operation. It is here that the most significant work happens: checking in on a friend, sharing a laugh over a botched measurement, and offering quiet support during difficult times.

In an era of increasing mental health awareness, the Shed acts as a grass roots hub. It requires no formal referral—only showing up. This informal peer support makes it accessible to those who might otherwise be wary of traditional services.

Preserving Heritage and Sustainability

In a world of disposable goods, the

Shed celebrates a "make do and mend" mentality. In line with their Reuse, Refurbish, Recycle ethos, members take pride in restoring old tools and upcycling timber.

Their motorcycle project has been a true winter highlight, with four successful refurbishments already providing a welcome boost to the Shed's funds. Their latest challenge arrived via a partnership with Albert Cousen from the Stonehouse Shed, who suggested they take on his BSA Bantam.

Albert promised the bike was "nearly whole," save for one minor detail. He wasn't joking: we have the frame, wheels, tank, mudguards, original number plate and even the chrome work—but it is currently lacking the engine!

Undeterred, the BDMS Chapter swung into action to hunt for a donor motor. **Success!** We've tracked down the missing heart of the Bantam. A fellow enthusiast has since contacted us and is taking the entire set provided by Albert to pair with his engine, ensuring this classic finally gets back on the road.

A Call to Join the Ranks

The beauty of the Shed lies in its inclusivity. You do not need to be a master film-maker or craftsman to join; many members arrive with no prior experience. They come for the company and stay for the craft.

The Shed is a testament to the fact that productivity is about the strength of social bonds. Whether you want to learn a new skill, share an old one, or simply enjoy a change of scenery, there is a seat around the fire and a mug in the cupboard for you.

Biggar and District Men's Shed welcomes visitors and new members from all walks of life. Stop by during opening hours for a tour and a chat, and help build a stronger Biggar, one project at a time.



Steaming ahead in Clackmannanshire

Ian Lamb is well known to readers of the Hornby and Bachmann Collectors' Club magazines for his extensive work covering both real and model railways. In the [October 2025 issue](#) of The Scottish Shedder, he explored the growing popularity of railway modelling as a Men's Shed activity, a trend also on display at the SMSA Gathering in Perth, where Nairn Shed showcased an impressive layout. During the event, Ian connected with Shedders and offered both guidance and donated model railway items to help groups interested in starting their own layouts. One of those to take up the opportunity was Jon Searle from The Wee County Men's Shed.

Ian said: "Currently, Jon provides the 'electronic section' of the Wee County Men's Shed in Tillicoultry, which evolved from the donation of model railway items. For quite a while there was nowhere on site suitable to set up a layout. The mezzanine where the layout is now located had been used as a store."

He explained how the new space was developed: "With the help of a fellow Shed member who had woodworking skills, a safety barrier, staircase and boxed-in pipework were added to provide safe and easy access."

Ian continued: "A professional electrician was appointed to extend the Shed power distribution system into the new work area. Some old school desks were re-purposed to make the base for the model railway track, which was laid, wired and successfully operated by a small train just to prove everything worked. Included in this work were the two work benches and their facilities."

He also noted how the project quickly expanded beyond modelling: "Of course all this activity did not go unnoticed and Shed members began to bring Jon various electrical items to test and, if possible, repair. Most of the electrical items on sale have been at least tested and in many cases repaired by Jon."

Ian added that this hands-on approach led to further innovation: "Using some spare parts that had been given, he developed a system to operate track points, which led to the design of a simple electronic circuit which can be easily modified to control other parts of a future model."

For the past month or so, Jon has been working with the Shed's 3D printing section to produce a prototype illuminated 3D image using some simple electronics, a 3D printed frame, and an image copied from a photo. This is now working and members are moving towards producing similar units for sale.

There are ideas for other projects which can be developed for sale to help with their Shed's running costs. The model railway is an important Shed resource to be gradually developed.

Ian explains that taking the first step is often the biggest hurdle in railway modelling: "Getting started is often the biggest problem because of the variety of gauges and models available, hence the need to chat—and ideally meet up at your Shed—to discuss what kind of model layout your members would be interested in creating."

Ian also highlighted the support he is able to offer to Sheds keen to get involved: "I have loads of brand new and second-hand '00' scale track, points etc, that I'm prepared to donate to any Shed genuinely interested in giving the railway modelling opportunity to their members, especially for those wanting to construct their own 'special' layout."

He added that ready-made options are also available: "Also freely available are some existing layouts that have come my way, enabling a Shed group to simply obtain locos and rolling stock. Usually members provide the latter themselves."

Interested in some advice to start or improve your Shed's model railway project?

The opportunity that the Wee County Men's Shed took in support of their model railway project is still available to any Shed who would like to establish a model railway group.

So, if you think you have the space (even for a basic diorama) please get in touch with me and I'll be only too happy to meet up with you and look at the possibilities, helping to avoid any mistakes. ianlambyct@gmail.com.



Pedal Power at Men's Shed Dalry

At [Men's Shed Dalry](#), the wheels are always in motion—literally. The Shed's bike maintenance team, led by Velotech Gold-qualified Shedders "The Two Bobs", has been tuning, tightening, and turning tired bikes into trusty steeds, while the Shed's cycle group keeps members pedalling together, forging friendships one spoke at a time.

The Two Bobs are legendary. Since the Shed opened in 2022, these two wheel wizards have met on Mondays and Wednesdays to restore over 300 donated bicycles, giving countless people a sustainable, healthy, and fun way to get about. The duo also provide a Dr. Bike clinic to the community on Wednesday evenings, carrying out free repairs and keeping everyone safe to enjoy a sustainable and healthy pastime.

Joining the bike team recently was new member Caiden, who immediately got stuck in. One of his first tasks was a special honour—presenting the Bobs with their Velotech Gold Award—a bike maintenance qualification for anyone needing to repair bicycles in a professional context or for serious enthusiasts. With a combined 125 years of bicycle maintenance experience, the team has plenty to teach.

The Two Bobs are always ticking off jobs on their "to-do" list. Last month, the Velotech bike mechanics serviced a number of bikes for the local school and nursery, with eight already delivered to Gateside Primary.

For the Shed, cycling isn't just about bike maintenance—it's about pedal-powering their health and wellbeing. Low-impact and suitable for all ages, cycling keeps the men fit and energised.

Every Friday—rain, hail or shine—the group pedals around Dalry and beyond for a social spin, stopping for coffee and a catch-up along the way.

Last summer, good weather inspired the group to venture further afield, exploring the Falkirk Wheel, the Kelpies, and Scotland's central canals. And while this winter brought its challenges, the Friday ride keeps rolling with very few cancellations—proof that determination and a love of cycling are built into the group's gears.

SMSA Development Officer Stewart Beck often joins the Dalry lads for their Friday adventure. If you'd like to get involved, the group sets off every Friday at 10am from the Coach House in Dalry—helmets must be worn.

Whether you're a seasoned cyclist or just starting out, the cycle group is ready to share skills, swap stories, and crack a few jokes along the way.



A Shed Adventure from Dalkeith to Japan

In May, three members of Dalkeith Men's Shed—recipient of the Bronze Award for 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year 2025'—will embark on a journey they could never have imagined when they first stepped through the Shed doors. On the 26th May 2026, John Bell, Chris Smith and Mike Wignall will travel from Scotland to Japan, heading first to Tokyo before continuing on to Sapporo in Hokkaido. Their destination: a three-day international Men's Shed summit in Pokkekotan, blending cultural exchange, shared learning and a bit of well-earned adventure.

This exciting journey follows on from a previous visit to Japan by Dalkeith Men's Shed Vice-Chairman Duncan Seymour, whose experience helped spark the connection. Travelling over 6,000 miles to visit the Pokke Kotan Men's Shed in Sapporo, Duncan described receiving a "warm and friendly welcome" and was struck by how the Japanese Sheddors faced many of the same challenges around isolation and community as those in Scotland. His visit laid the groundwork for ongoing collaboration, ultimately leading to this year's summit and a return trip.

This latest visit is being made possible through support from the [Daiwa Foundation](#), which funds cultural exchange between the UK and Japan. Against stiff competition and a 15% success rate, the Dalkeith group secured backing for the project—a huge achievement in itself—and have since been working hard to shape a meaningful and memorable experience.

A short introduction to the emerging Men's Shed movement in Japan can be seen in this [YouTube video](#). Still in its early stages, beginning in 2022, the movement is supported by the Japan Science and Technology Agency through its [RISTEX programme](#), exploring how community initiatives can help tackle loneliness and isolation—particularly in an ageing population.

Through this initiative, researchers and community leaders have been working together to introduce the Men's Shed concept and explore how it can be adapted to Japanese communities.

Japan has one of the world's most rapidly ageing populations, with

nearly a third of its citizens now aged over 65. As communities evolve and traditional social structures change, loneliness and isolation have become increasing concerns. Sheds offer a simple but effective response. Rather than focusing on formal services, Sheds create informal environments where men can connect naturally while working "shoulder to shoulder" on shared projects.

There are currently only a handful of Sheds (five) operating across Japan, but interest is growing, supported by the [Japan Community Sheds Association](#) (JCSA). The Dalkeith Sheddors will play a small yet hugely significant role in that story.

The summit itself is designed around three key themes. The first day will focus on personal stories—how each man came to the Shed, what it means to them, and how their Shed operates back home.

While Scottish Sheds often pride themselves on informality, their Japanese counterparts are keen to understand everything from governance structures to

funding models. It's a chance to share honest experiences and show that there is no single "right" way to run a Shed.

Day two turns to skill-sharing and hands-on activity. The Scottish visitors will take part in traditional Japanese experiences such as bamboo carving and soba noodle making, while also offering a taste of Scotland in return.

Plans include a light-hearted take on a Burns Supper, complete with poetry and storytelling—though customs regulations mean traditional haggis won't be making the journey, with a vegetarian version stepping in instead and will be just as fine!

The day will conclude with a unique whisky-tasting video conference linking Japan and Dalkeith. Back home, the Dalkeith Sheddors will sample Japanese whisky, while the three Dalkeith Sheddors in Japan will enjoy Scottish whisky alongside their Japanese hosts — a symbolic shared dram connecting two cultures across the world.

As Japanese and Scottish Sheddors gather on opposite sides of the world,



John Bell, Chris Smith and Mike Wignall

they'll share stories and open the floor to conversation—bringing the global Shed community together in real time.

The final day will focus on culture and learning. The group will hear from local experts about the history and heritage of Hokkaido, including its indigenous communities, alongside visits to a sake brewery and a Japanese whisky distillery. In return, the Dalkeith team are preparing to showcase Scottish culture through music—including, of course, 'I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)' by The Proclaimers, performed by the twins' lookalike John Bell—alongside storytelling and an exploration of the rich, and sometimes darker, history of their local area.

Beyond the structured programme, there will also be time to explore, connect and simply enjoy the experience. For two of the Sheddors, this is their first visit to Japan—a country long admired but never before within reach.

What stands out most is the spirit behind the trip. Chris and Mike, in particular, bring curiosity, enthusiasm and a genuine desire to connect—qualities that lie at the very core of the Men's Shed movement. As John Bell puts it, he "couldn't have handpicked two better people to share the experience with".

From a simple idea in a Midlothian workshop to an international exchange the other side of the world, this journey reflects the power of Men's Sheds to open doors—sometimes in ways no one expects.

While the Japanese Men's Shed movement is still in its infancy, its foundations are clearly taking shape. For Dalkeith Men's Shed, it's more than just a trip. It's the start of something much bigger.



Meet Marti and his 'Dalry Dugs'

Dalry Shedder Marti is known as something of a local character in his town — thanks to his unique animal planter creations and the many donations he has made to community groups for people of all ages to enjoy.

Dalry Men's Shed is full of characters, with members from different backgrounds and generations coming together under one roof. In the few short years since the Shed opened, the men have built an extraordinary bond and created a community where, at the drop of a hat, someone will step forward to help wherever they can. One of the Sheddors who has generously offered his time and skills in Dalry is Marti.

If ever there was a larger-than-life yet down-to-earth character, Marti fits the bill perfectly. He has been selfless in volunteering his extensive knowledge of carpentry for the benefit of the Dalry Shed and the local community. Marti has also been hugely influential thanks to his uncanny ability to take an idea from his creative mind, move it to the drawing board, and bring it to fruition.

One of his favourite pastimes is working away in his own shed at the bottom of his garden. In his workshop, Marti can lift a simple piece of wood and see in it a design or purpose that his hands can bring to life.

In recent years, Marti suffered a stroke that left him with limited use of one arm and reduced coordination. It makes his craftsmanship even more astonishing to witness. Marti admits: "Each day presents new challenges, even down to something as simple as concentrating while holding a cup of coffee."

"Because of the stroke, I was forced to give up my bespoke carpentry business and, with it, my livelihood."

"It would have been easy to sit at home feeling defeated after my stroke. Instead, I chose a different path."

Yet, it doesn't stop me at the Shed. I love working alongside the others and helping out wherever I can."

One of the ways he channels that creativity is by designing and building planters inspired by beloved family pets. Send Marti a photograph of your dog and, before long, he has a blueprint and is off and running.

The most recent one he made was for fellow Shedder Scott and his dog, Poppy (pictured below left). One evening, Marti arrived at the Shed with the planter tucked under his good arm.

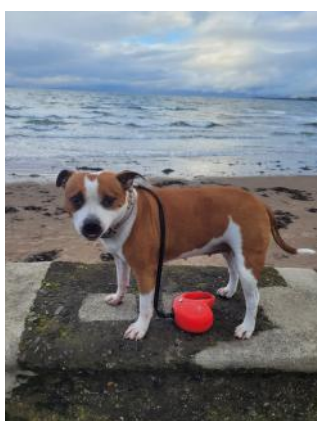
Marti added: "The Shed has given me and the men of Dalry a place to go, where we can reconnect with others. It would have been easy to sit at home feeling defeated after my stroke. Instead, I chose a different path."

This statement is testament to his character that he refused to believe his skills were no longer of use. The Men's Shed has given him a renewed focus—a place where he can look after his health and wellbeing, a place where he can work to his capabilities, at his own pace, and in his own time, and share his skills with others.

Marti added: "I'm just grateful I found what I love to do when I was young and had the courage to stick at it, constantly pushing the boundaries of what can be achieved creatively. The Shed has given me a fantastic place to share, create and build ideas into reality."

"Our Shed is blessed with a very mixed group of skills and lifestyles, where everyone has their own story to tell, their own experiences to share and their own knowledge to pass on. It's a great mental salvation and creative outlet for many of us—a place to feel valued and worthwhile as we give back and help build a fantastic local community that we can all be proud of."

"We don't deal in problems—we create solutions."





Three years ago, James Wibrew from Aberdeenshire was just 43 when his life took an unexpected turn with a bowel cancer diagnosis. Running his own tree surgery and gardening business, he was used to the physical demands of climbing trees and wielding chainsaws. But over time, he began to notice an unusual heaviness in his body. Mornings became a struggle; getting up those trees felt harder than it should. Fatigue crept in like an unwelcome shadow, sapping his strength and energy.

“At first, I brushed it off as exhaustion, the natural toll of running my own business and the financial burden I was under,” he says. But then came the alarming signs. Blood in his stools—a symptom that set off alarm bells in the back of his mind. He knew he couldn’t ignore it forever.

He didn’t immediately tell his wife. “I didn’t want to ruin her Christmas,” he recalls, the weight of secrecy heavy on his shoulders. The family was already walking a tightrope of financial stress after redundancies from the oil and gas industry and his wife’s two maternity leaves followed by her redundancy also. “We were just keeping our heads above water,” he says.

The history was there, looming over him. “My father battled bowel cancer and my grandfather had lost his life to it.” That knowledge pushed him to finally make an appointment with his GP in early January. The tests were swift, but the wait interminable.

When the diagnosis came, it hit like a thunderbolt. The C Word—Cancer. Despite his delays however, it had been caught early enough to offer a real chance with treatment, but hearing the words still felt surreal.

After the call, he turned to his wife, trying to soften the blow with a wry understatement: “I’ve got a wee bit of cancer.” She broke down, and he stepped into his strong, silent protector role. His wife had always urged him to open up more, to share what he was really feeling, but that wasn’t the way he was. The surgery in May 2023 was followed by yet another blow: cancer had been found in the tumour’s lymph

“I’ve got a wee bit of cancer.”

nodes. Treatment began swiftly. James entered a trial for pill-form chemotherapy through an American study. The care was exceptional, and he knew he was receiving cutting-edge treatment. But the process was brutal in ways that only he could see and feel—to others he looked just the same. Fatigue, nausea, and the mental toll of daily pills however, wore him down.

He suffered quietly, masking the severity of his symptoms so well that his wife (Michelle Wibrew, SMSA Communications Officer) thought he was coping. She even encouraged him to keep up with daily chores unaware of how drained he truly felt. “It’s just what some men do—we keep things to ourselves,” he says.

Then came another devastating blow. Tests revealed cancer in his lymph nodes. The words “Stage 3” reverberated. The thought of leaving three young girls without a father was unbearable. Anxiety gnawed at him, and stress crept into every corner of his life, infiltrating relationship with family and friends.

They had both made the decision not to tell the children—to get through it and tell them when they are older. Trying to shield their daughters from the reality of his illness felt like an impossible burden.

His daughters sensed the change. “Why is Daddy grumpy, Mummy?” they would ask. James longed to collapse on the couch and give in to despair, but the needs of his family—two lively, demanding little girls and one older teenager—wouldn’t allow it. He felt he had to keep going, to play, to throw them in the air, to be ‘strong’ Daddy even when he felt anything but.

Financial strain and the physical inability to keep his business afloat forced James to close the company he had built up from nothing. A deep depression took hold lingering for two long years—as letters from debtors came through the letterbox. He describes it as a fog of guilt, resentment, and helplessness.

Continued on next page...



“Don’t ignore the warning signs”

...continued from previous page

Life became a monotonous struggle of hospital visits, treatments, and emotional isolation. He withdrew from friends, from activities he had once loved, and from himself.

Yet, slowly, something shifted. He woke up one day and made a conscious decision: to reclaim his life. He started exercising, talking to his wife, reconnecting with friends, and taking steps to restore his mental and physical health. The carnivore diet became a strong tool for transformation, helping him shed weight and regain a sense of control. With renewed focus, he made his health and his family his priority.

Years on, James attends annual check-ups, all clear of cancer. The scars—physical and emotional—remain, but they are badges of survival. His relationship with his wife has grown stronger than ever, fortified by shared struggles and hard-won resilience.

He looks back at the journey with gratitude and a sense of perspective, knowing just how precious life is, and how much strength can be found even in the darkest moments.

“Despite everything, we’ve come out the other side stronger,” James reflects. “Thankfully, I still have my family, our home, and I’m working again. I can’t help but think about what the alternative could have been—my children without their father, my wife widowed, losing our family home. We are truly blessed to still be here and still smiling.”

“And if there’s one thing I would urge other men to do,” James continues, “it’s don’t make the mistakes I made. Don’t try to shield your family, or your friends, from what you’re feeling—they want to know if you are going through something and they want to support you.

“Don’t hide your symptoms, thinking you’re protecting them—you’re only carrying the burden alone, and it only makes it harder in the long run. Talk about it at home, share it with your pals in the Shed, anyone you trust to open up to. If something doesn’t feel right with your health, go make that appointment straight away. Don’t wait.

“Don’t ignore the warning signs. I wish I had acted sooner, and I know it could make all the difference. Your life—and the lives of the people who love you—could depend on it.”

To help raise awareness of bowel screening and encourage participation with the programme, Public Health Scotland (PHS) has developed a new [how to complete your home test](#) video.

This video is a step-by-step guide on how to complete and return the kit – with the aim of highlighting the ease of the process and addressing any potential barriers. The video is signposted by QR code on the recently updated [national bowel screening invitation letter](#) sent to all those eligible for bowel screening and is prominent on www.nhsinform.scot/bowelscreening.

In addition to this, PHS has developed a new [what you need to know about your colonoscopy appointment](#) video. This video is aimed at those people who are invited to a colonoscopy appointment because they need further investigation after their bowel screening test. There is also a [FAQs video](#) that supports the colonoscopy appointment video.

All videos are [available to download](#) via the PHS Marketing Resource Centre or are available to watch on the [PHS YouTube channel](#).



Together we are beating cancer

Bowel screening could save your life.



cruk.org/bowelscreeningscotland

Passing it on: A father, a son, and the power of the Shed

At Kirkcaldy & District Men's Shed, it's not unusual to find friendship, laughter and shared skills, but for the Duncan family—it's also a place that strengthened their bond in ways neither expected. Together, they represent a powerful example of how the Shed movement is connecting generations and changing lives for the better.

Iain Duncan (38) and his dad, Nigel (64), are both regulars at Kirkcaldy & District Men's Shed, tucked within Ravenscraig Park. What started as a simple step through Shed doors has grown into something much deeper: a shared journey, a renewed bond, and a real reflection of how the next generation of Shedders is finding its place.

Iain said: "I attend the Shed with my dad, Nigel, who's the treasurer. Our Shed's core purpose is community, connection, and improving lives."

"There's a misconception that it's only for retired people, but younger people experience isolation too. That's how I ended up here."

Like many, Iain found the COVID-19 lockdowns especially tough. When the call centre where he worked closed as a result of the pandemic, he lost much of his confidence and found it difficult to return to employment. "I stopped going out, I was isolating myself," he recalls. "I also went to Andy's Man Club, but I couldn't get out the car. It just wasn't for me at that point."

"Thankfully, my girlfriend encouraged me to try the local Men's Shed! Walking into the Shed felt different. I came here and it was fantastic. Shed member Billy took me under his wing straight away."

"I'd never done woodworking before, but I learned it here. It built my confidence. Even just coming in and chatting—it's been massive. I needed that after everything."

Over time, that confidence has grown into purpose. The Shed's projects range from handcrafted community items to restoration work and wildlife initiatives.

"We've worked with groups all over, building and supplying items made by our members. It's all about giving back," Iain says. "We even refurbished benches at Kirkcaldy Crematorium—we're really proud of that. And now we're making huts for the Burntisland Hedgehog Haven."

But for Iain, the impact goes far beyond the workshop. "This place means everything to me. It is where I got my confidence back—so the people who love me got me back too. It gave me a reason to get up in the morning. I've been coming for two years now."

For his dad Nigel, watching that transformation has been deeply emotional. "To see him struggle the way he did was unbelievably difficult," he says. "The decline was worrying. Both me and my wife will always be thankful to the Shed for getting our Iain back to how he was before. For that alone, I'm forever grateful to have this place for the men in our community."

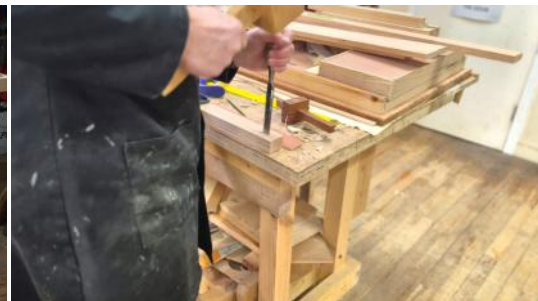
Nigel himself found a new chapter at the Shed who retired after 38 years as a paramedic with the Scottish Ambulance Service. "I've always been a social person," he laughs. "To be honest, I talk more than I work most days! But that's the beauty of it—it's about being around people."

Together, father and son are part of a growing wave of Shedders that spans generations—proving that the Shed isn't just a space, but a lifeline that evolves with the community it serves.

"I'd definitely say to anyone feeling a bit lost—just head along to your local Shed and check it out," Iain adds. "It's a community... actually, it's a family. Everyone looks out for each other. If someone's a bit quiet, we notice. We ask how they are. And we're always willing to pass on skills."

Nigel agrees, acknowledging that first step can feel daunting. "It can be scary just showing up," he says. "But we don't bite. All it takes is a hello." And sometimes, that simple hello can change everything—not just for one person, but for generations to come.





From scrap wood to viking checkmate!

Clyde Coast & Cumbraes Shedder David Hardy has combined craftsmanship, creativity and a touch of Norse inspiration to create a striking new chess project set to take pride of place at this year's Largs Viking Festival.

Built as a tournament-size chess table measuring 600mm square, the handcrafted piece has been made almost entirely from scrap materials gathered around the Shed, showing what can be achieved through skill, patience and resourcefulness.

What began as an idea in the early stages of planning has become a finished piece that members are rightly proud of.

Adding to its unique character, the board is paired with a beautifully detailed set of Viking-style chess pieces sourced from a specialist maker in Thurso.

The handcrafted set, featuring distinctive Norse-inspired figures, brings the project to life and ties it perfectly to the festival theme.

The completed chess set will be offered as first prize in the Shed's annual raffle at the [Clyde Coast & Cumbraes Men's Shed](#) stall during the [Largs Viking Festival](#), with tickets costing just £1.

For one lucky winner, it will be a chance to take home a remarkable handmade creation—and for the Shed, another opportunity to showcase the talent and ingenuity within the movement.



Inverness Shed goes back to nature

Over the past few months, [Inverness Men's Shed](#) has been hard at work crafting a range of nesting and roosting boxes for local wildlife. Their projects have included bat boxes, tawny owl boxes, and a prototype swift box, all made for the High Life Highland rangers.

High Life Highland ranger John Orr shared his thanks, saying: "I'd like to give a big thank you to the Inverness Men's Shed for their hard work and skill in producing over 30 bat boxes and several tawny owl boxes for the High Life Highland Countryside Ranger Service this spring.

"The boxes will provide summer roosts for bats right across the Highland as part of the Rangers' Nocturnal Creatures Project – Shining a Light on Nature at Night.

"The project will be encouraging people to find out more about our nocturnal wildlife through school projects, moth trapping, bat walks, citizens' science and helping these night-time creatures by creating 'Moon Gardens' and installing roosting and nesting boxes for bats and owls.

"So thank you once again Inverness Men's Shed – we are very appreciative of your efforts and I'm sure the bats and owls will be too!"

Fort William Men's Shed supports local schools with bat box project

Recently-appointed Shed Chairman Donald Reid shares how [Fort William Men's Shed](#) worked in partnership with the [High Life Highland Countryside Rangers](#) and local schools to help protect bats in the community.

The High Life Highland Ranger Service team are dedicated to protecting the Highlands' natural environment and helping communities and visitors connect with the outdoors. From guided walks and wildlife events to conservation projects and outdoor access advice, the team works across the region to promote nature, heritage, and sustainability.

Lochaber Countryside Ranger Fiona MacLean approached Fort William Shed with a project in mind aimed at engaging local schools across Lochaber. "Fiona was hoping the pupils could assemble 25 bat boxes from kits," Donald explained, "and she asked if we could organise the wood into the kits for them. She even produced a beautifully illustrated plan (below) showing exactly what was required."

The project, however, came with a wee challenge. "First, the wood had to be untreated, which isn't easy to source because most sawmills supply treated timber," Donald noted.

After some discussions with the local sawmill manager, the team was able to secure several long planks of untreated wood, despite the unusual widths required. "We collected the timber and brought it back to the Shed—there were even a few extra lengths than expected," Donald said.

The Shed members then set to work, cutting and assembling the boxes. "We completed all 25 boxes, with wood left over," he shared. When Fiona learned that there was extra timber leftover, she was delighted. "That would be wonderful," she said, as she could distribute additional boxes across the Highlands to support even more school projects."

"Here's hoping the pupils really go batty with excitement over their new conservation project!" said Donald.



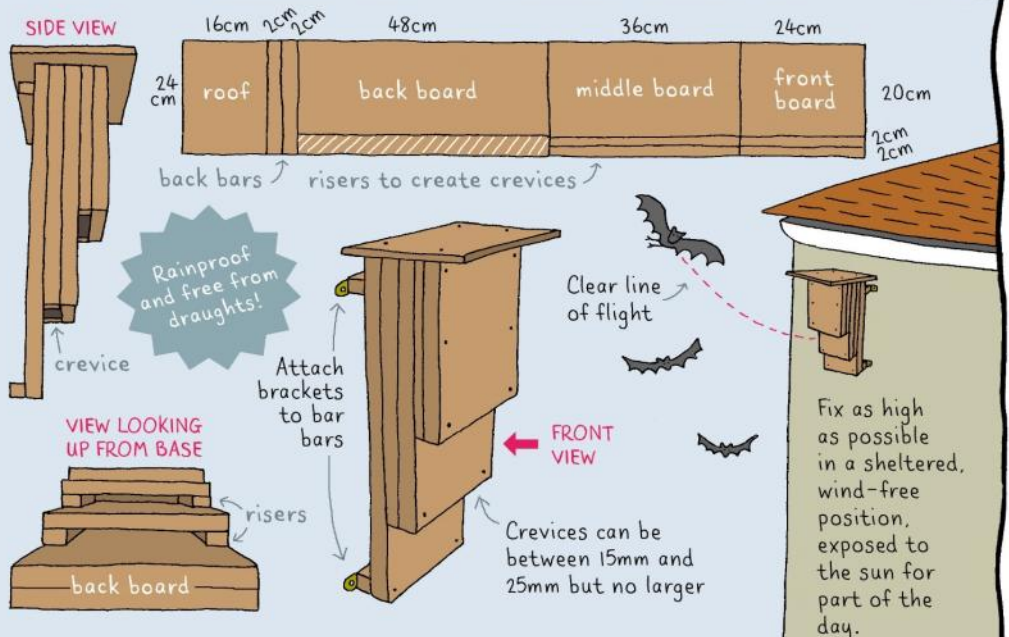
How to make a bat box



You will need

- an adult to help you
- untreated, rough-sawn timber
- tape measure and pencil
- saw
- hammer and nails

Do not use wood stain or preservative on your box



It is illegal to disturb bats without a license - do not inspect boxes if you think bats are using them. Look for droppings below to check for occupancy.

Illustration: Corinne Welch © Copyright Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts 2015

The North

Bart Schrijver's acclaimed, international hit drama follows two friends who meet up after a decade to hike Scotland's West Highland Way and Cape Wrath Trail.

The film follows former best friends and roommates Chris (Bart Harder) and Lluís (Carles Pulido), who meet up after a decade to hike Scotland's West Highland Way and Cape Wrath Trail.

Having taken the same 350-mile walk in their youth, the pair hope to rekindle their once-strong friendship by spending 30 days together in the majestic, raw beauty of the Scottish Highlands.

But while Chris remains preoccupied with work and life back at home, Lluís is determined to finish the trail to prove he can still do it. Amidst the sweeping landscapes, harsh weather and chance encounters with other hikers, the solitude and silence of the trek force the pair to confront truths about themselves and their friendship – and find out what it truly means to stand still and listen.

Shot entirely on the route of the walk, and in chronological order, *The North* is a beautiful ode to friendship and the healing power of nature. It's not only a poignant and powerful drama, but also perhaps the definitive hiking film, allowing us to take in the stunning majesty of the Highlands shoulder-to-shoulder with Lluís and Chris as they reconnect with each other and with nature.

This feels like a great one for Sheddors to get together and head along to see, sharing the experience of a film that really celebrates connection, reflection, and the outdoors. <https://tullstories.co.uk/films/the-north>

Prostate FFIT

Following the amazing success of the first **Prostate Football Fans In Training (FFIT)** in Dundee in 2025, Prostate Scotland is delighted that Dundee FC Community Trust has agreed to host another programme this year at the Gardyne Campus.

This unique exercise programme is based on the hugely successful Football Fans in Training delivered by football clubs across Scotland in conjunction with the SPFL Trust.

FFIT has been running now for over three years with programmes also at Aberdeen, Hearts, Kilmarnock, Rangers and St Johnstone. It's open to all men affected by prostate cancer and is a great opportunity to meet men in a similar situation, share experiences and improve fitness levels.

Starting on **Monday 25th May 2026 at 11am**, the **free** programme will run for **13 weeks**. There are just **16 places available** and men can register at <https://spfltrust.org.uk/prostateffit>. Any queries, call on 07816 408429.



ALDEBURGH ALDEBURGH CINEMA	GLASGOW GLASGOW FILM THEATRE (+ Q&A)	LONDON PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL
ALNWICK ALNWICK PLAYHOUSE	GLASGOW GROSVENOR PICTURE THEATRE	LOUTH PARKWAY CINEMA
AMBLESIDE ZEFFIRELLIS	GLASGOW SHOWCASE COATBRIDGE	MONTROSE MONTROSE PLAYHOUSE
BEVERLEY PARKWAY CINEMA	GLASGOW SHOWCASE PAISLEY	NEWBURY CORN EXCHANGE
BRADFORD NATIONAL SCIENCE AND MEDIA MUSEUM	HEXHAM FORUM CINEMA	NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE TYNESIDE CINEMA
BURY ST. EDMUNDS ABBEYGATE CINEMA	HUNTLY THE CINEMA AT NO.30	NEWMARKET KINGS CINEMA
CAMPBELTOWN CAMPBELTOWN PICTURE HOUSE	ILKLEY ILKLEY CINEMA	PENRITH RHEGED
CLEETHORPES PARKWAY CINEMA	INVERNESS EDEN COURT	PERTH PERTH PLAYHOUSE ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE
CORBY SAVOY CINEMAS	KENDAL BREWERY ARTS CENTRE	RICHMOND STATION CINEMA
CROMARTY CROMARTY CINEMA	KESWICK ALHAMBRA CINEMA	ROMFORD LUMIERE CINEMA
DUBLIN LIGHT HOUSE	LANCASTER DUKES	SALTASH SALTASH CINEMA
EDINBURGH DOMINION CINEMA	LEICESTER PHOENIX	SHEFFIELD SHOWROOM (+ Q&A)
EDINBURGH FILMHOUSE (+ Q&A)	LERWICK MAREEL	WELWYN GARDEN CITY CAMPUS WEST CINEMA
ELGIN MORAY PLAYHOUSE	LONDON CASTLE CINEMA	WETHERBY WETHERBY CINEMA
EXETER PHOENIX	LONDON CROUCH END PICTUREHOUSE	WORKINGTON PARKWAY CINEMA
FORT WILLIAM HIGHLAND CINEMA	LONDON HACKNEY PICTUREHOUSE	
	LONDON PHOENIX CINEMA	

Watch in Cinemas from Friday 24 April



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Scots urged to attend bowel cancer screening as campaign launches to help save lives

A new campaign encouraging people to sign up for life-saving bowel cancer screening has been launched in Scotland by Cancer Research UK.

New analysis from the charity has revealed that around a third of Scots (34%)* invited for bowel cancer screening don't take part with men (63%) less likely to participate than women (68%).

Bowel cancer is the fourth most common cancer in Scotland, with around 4,200 new cases every year—that's 11 every day, the charity said. Starting in April, bowel cancer awareness month, the charity's six-week Scotland-wide campaign, "Don't Ignore it" will run across TV, radio, cinema, social media, newspapers and posters. It includes a TV advert voiced by TV star Ross King MBE.

Cancer Research UK's chief executive, Michelle Mitchell said: "Bowel screening saves lives but we know there can be things that put people off taking part such as not realising it is for those without symptoms, or being frightened of what the test might find.

"The programme aims to prevent bowel cancer or find it at an early stage when treatment is more likely to be successful so it's really important people don't ignore their invite."

In Scotland, people aged 50 to 74 who are registered with a GP receive an NHS bowel screening kit through the post every two years. The screening test, called the FIT (faecal immunochemical test), looks for tiny traces of blood in the sample of poo which can be a sign of bowel cancer.

New data shows around 1 in 10 Scots were put off from screening as they were frightened about the results. The top reason (12%) people gave was that they had no symptoms. Around 1 in 10 said the test was messy or they forgot, while 7% were embarrassed.

While cancer screening is for people with no symptoms, Cancer Research UK advises that people who are experiencing symptoms speak to their doctor and don't wait to be invited for screening. Symptoms of bowel cancer can include a change in bowel habits such as needing to poo more often, looser poo or constipation, bleeding from the bottom or blood in poo, tummy pain or a lump and unexplained weight loss.

Screening is finding cancers early and, reassuringly, most cancers found through Scotland's bowel screening programme were diagnosed at an early stage, when treatment is more likely to be successful. Cancer Research UK hopes the new campaign will encourage more people to participate.

Running this April and May, the new campaign uses a [powerful TV advert](#) that features the voice of TV star Ross King. Ross King said: "I'm proud to support this health initiative for Scotland. Life is busy. It can feel easy to put off returning the home bowel screening test when it arrives through the post but you owe it to yourself to send it back. It could save your life."

People from Scotland whose cancers were diagnosed via bowel screening are at the heart of Cancer Research UK's new campaign. Among those featured is dad of two Ian Anderson (pictured above) of Newton Mearns, East Renfrewshire who says the bowel screening kit helped save his life. A video featuring bowel cancer survivor Ian Anderson at Partick Thistle Football club in Glasgow can be viewed [here](#).

Following treatment, Ian is back where he belongs on the stands at Firhill cheering on Partick Thistle Football Club, his favourite team who he has supported since the age of 11. Ian, who was diagnosed with bowel cancer in September 2017 aged 56, will forever be grateful for the bowel screening kit which meant the disease was detected early.

Ian, 65, said: "The bowel screening test is a little bit of kit that helped save my life. It can spot cancer early, is simple and straightforward and you can complete it in your own home.

"Of course it was a shock at first after completing and sending the kit away when a letter came back advising me I needed more tests. Later, after more tests including a colonoscopy at the Victoria Hospital in Glasgow, the doctor told me it was cancer. I thought, how do I cope with this and how do I tell people that I love that I have cancer? My family mean the world to me and it was difficult in the early days. But actually, being diagnosed with cancer was the first step on the road to my recovery and the medical staff were great."

Ian was referred to the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow where on 13 October 2017, he had a six and a half hour surgery to remove the tumour. It was a nerve



wracking wait for Ian's wife Cathy, 67, and the rest of the family. But the operation was a success and the entire tumour was removed.

This was followed by a six-month course of chemotherapy tablets. Football friends arranged for a 'good luck Ian' message to go out across the tannoy at a Partick Thistle versus Motherwell game during Ian's treatment. On 18 May 2018, Ian rang a bell at the Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Centre in Glasgow to mark the end of his treatment. He remains cancer free.

Ian said: "I'm doing the best things and life has never been busier. I love spending time with the family including the grandkids, walking in the country and I've even taken up cooking for relaxation. I travel all over the country continuing to watch my football team Partick Thistle play. The football club celebrates its 150th anniversary this year and I'm proud to have been a supporter since 1971.

"To anyone who received a home bowel screening kit and is hesitating, I'd say do the test and post it back. It will most likely not need any further investigation. But if cancer is found, spotting it early can make all the difference. My cancer was caught early so I'm still here today."

For more information, please visit cruk.org/bowelscreeningscotland


Possible bowel cancer symptoms

 Blood in your poo or bleeding from your bottom

 Change in your bowel habits

 Unexpected weight loss

 A pain or lump in your tummy

 Feeling more tired or breathless than usual

National Smile Month 2026








Celebrating 50 Years of Healthier Smiles



What is National Smile Month?

National Smile Month is the UK's biggest oral health campaign, dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of good oral hygiene and healthy smiles. This year National Smile Month runs from the **11th May to 11th June 2026**.

Fun Dental Facts

-  Tooth enamel is the hardest substance in the human body (similar make up to a diamond). Despite being incredibly strong, enamel can't repair itself—making good brushing habits essential
-  Humans are the only species that smiles socially. Animals may show teeth, but it's usually fear-based—humans are unique in smiling to communicate happiness and connection
-  The average person spends 38.5 days brushing their teeth in a lifetime. That's over a month of your life spent brushing!
-  Smiling boosts your brain's reward system. Smiling activates areas of the brain linked to happiness and wellbeing—even a fake smile can have a positive effect, so turn that frown upside down!
-  Everyone has a unique tongue print! Just like fingerprints, no two tongue prints are the same!
-  Saliva is amazing! Your mouth makes up to 100,000 gallons a lifetime, that's enough to fill two swimming pools! Saliva helps fight bacteria, protect teeth and start digestion
-  People didn't smile in old photographs. In the past, smiling was associated with madness or drunkenness—plus, poor dental health made many reluctant to show their teeth. Smiling only became normal with better dentistry and photography

Myth Busters

MYTHS	VS	FACTS
The more you brush, the healthier your teeth		Over brushing can damage gums and enamel—twice daily is best
Chocolate causes more cavities than other sweets		Surprisingly, some chocolate—especially dark chocolate—can help neutralise acids and may be less harmful than sticky or sugary snacks
If my gums bleed, I should stop brushing		Bleeding gums are often a sign of gum inflammation or a sign of gum disease, which is often associated with older people, but will affect all ages. Continue to brush gently and clean the gum line
No pain/white teeth means no problems		No pain, doesn't always mean that there are no problems in our mouths, many cavities will not cause immediate discomfort in the early stages. This is also true for teeth colour, whiter teeth does not necessarily mean they are in better condition
I have dentures, I don't need a dentist		The dentist will still check your gums and for signs of oral cancer

Saving babies' lives. Supporting bereaved families.

sands.org.uk



Men can experience profound grief following the loss of a pregnancy or baby, yet many find it difficult to talk about their feelings or seek support. Organisations and charities such as Sands recognise that men often grieve differently and may struggle to find spaces where they feel comfortable opening up. Providing dedicated support for fathers, partners and other men affected by baby loss is an important step in helping them process their grief and connect with others who understand their experience.

Sands, the UK's leading baby loss charity, is determined to support anyone affected by pregnancy loss or the death of a baby and carries out vital work to improve maternity safety through targeted research, campaigning for change, working with the government and reducing inequalities in healthcare to save babies' lives.

For more than 40 years, Sands has been there for anyone affected by pregnancy and baby loss to offer understanding and comfort through its freephone helpline, closed Facebook groups, online meetings, and resources and locally through a UK-wide network of around 100 support groups.

Sands' Bereavement Support Services Co-ordinator for Scotland Joanne Robison said: "Sands is here to support you for as long as you need. Whether you're a dad, brother, uncle, grandparent, friend or colleague there is [information and support available tailored for men](#)."

Support available for men affected by pregnancy or baby loss:

- [Bereavement Support Book](#) – a detailed guide providing practical advice and information about grief and the emotional impact of pregnancy and baby loss. It is also available in several translated languages.
- [Sands Facebook Support Group](#) – a private Facebook community where bereaved fathers, partners and other men can share experiences and support each other.
- [Sands online community forum](#) – a 24/7 moderated space where people affected by baby loss can connect and talk with others who understand.
- [Online support meetings](#) – regular virtual meetings that provide a safe and confidential environment for people to talk about their experiences. Some sessions are specifically for men.
- [Sands United FC](#) – community football clubs where bereaved dads and family members can come together through sport and peer support.
- Talking to children about baby loss—You may find that you are the one who has to break the news to wider family and friends as well as any siblings at home. Sands has information about talking to children of different ages within the [Bereavement Support book](#) and also within in their [Support for Siblings](#) section that can help.
- [Support for those bereaved longer ago](#) – information and support for people whose loss may have happened many years earlier but who still need help or answers.

The dedicated charity understands it may be hard to know where to begin, but their team is always there to help. You can call the Helpline on 0808 164 3332 or via email on helpline@sands.org.uk and visit the [Sands website](#).



“When a baby dies, fathers and partners are often expected to be the ‘strong’ one and take on a supportive role. Their own grief can be overlooked, so it’s vital that their emotional needs are recognised and understood. The stress on couples when a baby dies can be huge. It is very difficult to give support and understanding to someone else when you are so sad and in need of support yourself.

“Grief is very individual and you and your partner may not feel or need the same things at the same time. You may also have different ways of expressing and dealing with your feelings. It’s important not to make assumptions about gender stereotypes, but some men do find that they need different ways to seek support.”

Jen Cotes, Director of Bereavement Support Services at Sands





**SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION**

Help **WAVE THE FLAG** for the SMSA and Scottish Men's Sheds Movement

There are many ways to support our vital work

Make a direct donation to the Association:



Donate while you shop online, at no extra cost to yourself:



Fundraising and social media events

You can raise funds for the SMSA through fundraising and social media events like [Facebook Birthday Fundraisers!](#)

Legacy donation

Become a guardian for future generations of Shedders by leaving a gift in your will to the Association. Start a conversation with the SMSA to discuss the difference this could make

SMSA is a registered Scottish charity (SC045139), its [Board of Trustees](#)—all volunteers that receive no remuneration for their time and efforts—passionately believe in the SMSA's vision for the people of Scotland. The charity's small [staff team](#) of passionate individuals work to promote and support the growth of the grassroots movement across Scotland. From speaking to hundreds of individuals requiring support to start their own Men's Shed; creating pathways and documentation specific to Scottish law; and lobbying policymakers on men's health and wellbeing.

SCOTTISH MEN'S SHEDS ASSOCIATION
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In Scotland, For Scotland

