

THE SCOTTISH SHEDDER

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE SMSA

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SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION

SCOTLAND'S LARGEST
MEN'S HEALTH & WELLBEING CHARITY

In Scotland, For Scotland



Helping young learners to grow

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SMSA—Scottish Government Funding Update

As most of our members and supporters will be aware—through SMSA communication channels and the wide reporting through our local and national media outlets and cross-party MSPs—our charity, the national support hub for Men's Sheds in Scotland, was once again under threat of closure due to the loss of our core funder, the Scottish Government, who has co-funded the association since 2016.

Following a revisit to our still open [38 degrees petition](#) to call on the new First Minister and Deputy First Minister to support men's health—we have now received over 5,500 signatures.

On the 14th May 2024, during [Scottish Parliament's Topical Questions](#) (available here on the SMSA YouTube channel), we welcomed Paul O'Kane MSP's question regarding the potential collapse of the SMSA. Huge cross-party support, including MSPs Liam McArthur and Alexander Stewart, to stress that we have

been here before and highlight the importance of our vital work to support Men's Sheds. We were delighted with the announcement, during Mental Health Awareness Week 2024, from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP that they will work with the SMSA to identify and provide funding for this financial year to support us in the months ahead.

Following this, the SMSA called for support for the Scottish Government to fully commit to funding the SMSA in the longer-term and increase funding from the £75,000 previously received to reflect the immense growth in the Scottish Men's Sheds movement. Support similar to that our Irish and Australian counterparts have with their governments to support men's health and wellbeing.

At the time of writing, SMSA's CEO, Treasurer and Chairman have met with SG and although the offer still currently stands at £75,000, the SMSA is hopeful for a more stable funding arrangement and a new way forward through discussions with a new Minister—the Minister for Equalities, Kaukab Stewart MSP.

The Scottish Shedder (the official FREE magazine of the SMSA) promotes the latest news from Men's Sheds across Scotland to showcase their successes and challenges—in addition to highlighting projects, opportunities and personal stories—to inform and inspire Men's Shed volunteers across Scotland. Each issue is sent digitally to over 3,900 Individual Member subscribers and supporters of the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement.

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Next Issue Deadline: Friday 19th July 2024

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TALKING SHEDS

by Jason Schroeder

What can I say about the last six weeks since we published the last Talking Sheds. Well, it has been all hands on deck and felt like hand-to-hand-combat with the Scottish Government (SG) to get them to rethink their lack of core funding to the SMSA and the critical issue we are facing in Scottish men's health.

I was asked to be a part of the expert witness panel at Scottish Parliament looking at the new ten year [Suicide Prevention Strategy](#) that we input into back in 2022. With men accounting for 75% of death by suicide in Scotland and, unfortunately Scotland having the highest rate of suicide in Europe and the UK, this new strategy is looking at prevention. SG has pledged to double the budget for this according to the Health Minister to £2.8 million by 2025/26.

Ironically, or should I say sadly, we know that Scottish Men's Sheds are the best route into intergenerational male wellbeing and therefore the go-to for a prevention strategy but to date have received no funding from this part of SG. [Click here to read](#) what was put on the record at this meeting in regards to my input thanks to Meghan Gallacher MSP.

Our Chairman, Treasurer and myself met with the new unit head of Equalities this week who reports to the new Minister for Equalities Kaukab Stewart MSP. Previously, we have been under Tom Arthur MSP and the Community Empowerment team since 2016. Scottish Sheds and ourselves have been moved to the Equalities section of government so all Men's Shed enquiries will now be directed to them.

Despite the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, who supports the Equality Minister announcing—after our campaign—that the SG would support the SMSA with funding and longer term strategic thinking and support the unit head unfortunately still brought the same initial seed funding offer of £75,000.

In 2016, we had five Sheds and were working to develop the movement further. We are now creating sustainability for 138 open Sheds and there are 65 proposed or developing Shed groups. We are the largest men's health charity created in under ten years and this says to me that they are still not serious that 45% of Scotland's population i.e. men need proper strategic health support which is what we do.

I have provided a lot of peer reviewed Scottish Men's Shed research in addition to the Social Return on Investment document, vetted by Scottish Government, to inform this new team in Equality to give them a chance to get to grips with what we do and the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement for their upcoming meeting with the Minister.

My hope is that, equipped with this information, the Minister will be briefed properly and seriously get on board with what we are requiring in regards to core funding and Shed Development as per our Manifesto as we see in Ireland and Australia.

Our [38 Degrees petition](#) to the First Minister, who has also pledged his financial support to the SMSA, remains open and with your support still being signed to show him the voice of the Scottish people. We are here for you and your route of change so please support your Sheds and men's health by [signing it](#).

Another exciting development for men's health in Scottish Government is a [discussion by the then First Minister Humza Yousaf](#) in February— which unfortunately we were not invited to and clearly again to me shows certain Ministers do not fully understand the Men's Sheds Movement's purpose. He said "I am committed to leading on this issue as I believe it's important to have a vision for masculinity that is uplifting and positive so the negative male role models we are all aware of can be challenged.

"If we can promote positive masculinity, then we address deep rooted inequalities in our society, and tackle the root cause of violence against women and girls, namely abusive behaviour perpetrated by men. We need to create the safe spaces for boys and men to come together to talk, without judgement about the challenges they face, the

anxieties they have and to talk about the positive male identity."

Is this not describing a Scottish Men's Shed? It's the first time in 15 years that I have heard a Scottish Minister actually look at men and the issues we face in our society today. Be rest assured I will be getting in touch with him and offering our skills and expertise in becoming the driving force behind creating this a reality across Scotland.

Our funding situation aside, it has been all go as usual at SMSA HQ working on our new website and database (launch coming soon), launching our [2024 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' Awards](#), as well as fine-tuning our new [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) and [Dual Social Prescribing Guidance](#) for our member Sheds.

We have also been working with new partner Morrison Construction (more on [page 8](#)) on another added benefit and reason to be a member of Scotland's largest men's health and wellbeing charity. If your Shed is not yet a member of us, then what are you waiting for? [Join as a Shed member today!](#) And, encourage your own Shed members to become individual members of us for free too and help us reach that 4,000 milestone that we have in our sights.

Last but certainly not least. We wish to express that although we very-much welcome the coverage and support from our local and national media outlets, sometimes they get it wrong or cause confusion as seen in recent coverage of SMSA's funding crisis.

We stress in our interviews and press releases that it is the SMSA and not Scottish Men's Sheds at threat of closure. We continually push this very important point—and that Men's Sheds are completely independent of us—but sometimes the media unfortunately does not contact us to check their facts first.

Jason Schroeder
SMSA Chief Executive Officer





**SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION**



Figures as at end of March 2024



158
SMSA SHED
MEMBERS

3,916

SMSA INDIVIDUAL
MEMBERS



138
OPEN SHEDS

65

DEVELOPING/
PROPOSED SHEDS



32
LOCAL AUTHORITY
AREAS

The 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' 2024 Awards are now open!

Applications are now being accepted for the sixth year of the SMSA 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' Awards.

The SMSA's awards programme exists to recognise, reward and promote the contribution Men's Sheds make to our communities across Scotland and the huge life-changing impact that they are having on the people that attend them.

With over 200 Sheds now open or developing across all 32 local authority areas, these awards celebrate and showcase the connections and camaraderie taking place to benefit men's health and wellbeing by combatting social isolation, loneliness and boredom.

All submissions will be 'blind' judged by the SMSA Board— meaning that all references to areas, partners, names etc have been removed by the SMSA team beforehand to ensure unbiased decisions and scoring by the SMSA Trustees.

Three shortlisted Sheds will then be announced and open to a public vote for three weeks before the winner is revealed at the SMSA Awards event and Shed gathering in early October.

Scottish Men's Sheds, that are members of the SMSA, can [apply online](#) before midnight on Sunday 4th August 2024.

[Apply](#)

UPDATE YOUR DETAILS WITH THE SMSA



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](#)



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy for Scottish Sheds

The Scottish Men's Sheds Movement recognises that in our society, power is unfortunately not held equally and that groups and individuals have been and continue to be discriminated against on the grounds of protected characteristics.

With this in mind, Men's Sheds aim is to provide an environment free from bullying and harassment, intimidation, or discrimination in any form which may affect the dignity of any of its members.

The SMSA has developed a new 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy' template for Scottish Men's Sheds, their



supporters and funders to recognise that any direct or indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation, including by association or perception, in the Shed is both **morally and legally unacceptable**.

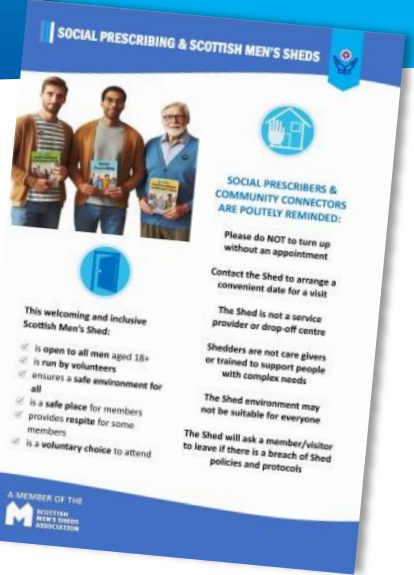
The new policy will be sent out to our member Sheds—along with 2024-25 membership certificates—in both hard copy format (for inclusion in your SMSA Membership Pack) and in digital format this month.

SMSA Dual Social Prescribing Guidance for Sheds

To impact positively on an individual and a referred Scottish Men's Shed, social prescribing (SP) requires a community-based partnership-working approach.

Social prescribing can save costs and reduce pressures on the health sector and benefit the referred person by connecting them with people/activities to support their practical, social and emotional needs to improve their overall health and wellbeing.

HOWEVER, in order for the referred individual and the signposted service to fully benefit from the SP process, the SMSA feels it is



important to address, through this guidance, both the opportunities and the challenges facing Scottish Men's Sheds.

This new SMSA guidance, in hand-out leaflet and poster format to display at the Shed and give to social prescribers, will be sent out to SMSA Shed Members in the post and digitally this month along with the 2024-25 member certificates.

Survey: The Impact of Scottish Men's Sheds

The SMSA's **survey**—devised to measure the impact of Scottish Men's Sheds—is an ongoing open consultation.

The survey will analyse Sheddors' personal experiences of the Shed model and ethos and evaluate some statements on the benefits to health and wellbeing.



This important research will not only support the SMSA to report on the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement but will also aid Scottish Sheds to share these findings with their local communities to attract and reach more men.

The statistics will also be key when applying for funds to promote the vital work taking place in Scottish Men's Sheds.

For the purpose of this vital project, the SMSA obtained a license from the internationally-recognised **Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale** to enable the measuring of mental wellbeing and the evaluation of a project which aims to improve mental wellbeing.

Please take 5-10 minutes to take 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.

Click here to take the survey

Glasgow Caledonian University secures funding for additional Men's Shed research

Glasgow Caledonian University's (GCU) Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health has secured funding for a co-design community project to develop realist programme theories around the impact of Men's Sheds on positive health and wellbeing of socially disadvantaged, working-age men.



The Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health previously led on the [Sheds for Sustainable Development Project](#) which focused on supporting Men's Sheds in Scotland to be both financially and socially sustainable.

Dr Danielle Hutcheon said: "We are delighted to announce that we have received this funding from the Chief Scientist Office (CSO) to conduct a one-year study of the health and wellbeing impacts of Men's Sheds on working age men from socially disadvantaged areas.

"The study will use a realist approach to explore 'what works, for whom, in what circumstances, and how'. More specifically, the study will be used to: understand how Men's Sheds can support positive behaviour change and health and wellbeing of men who may be involved in unhealthy lifestyle behaviours, socially-isolated and/or unemployed, and; how the Shed model can be tailored to address the needs of working age men in socially disadvantaged communities who might not already be engaged.

"The study will be led by Dr Julie Cowie, Senior Research fellow from the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health, and will commence in October 2024. The team will be in touch with the SMSA and Scottish Sheddors closer to the time with more information, but are very much looking forward to doing more important research to support the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement!"

New 'Men's Sheds' TG4 series follows a year in the life of ten Irish Men's Sheds

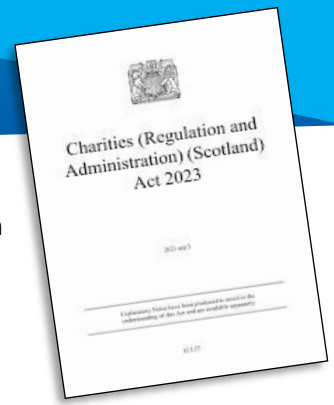
In a new four-part series made by Macha Media for TG4, with support from Northern Ireland Screen's Irish Language Broadcast Fund, 'Men's Sheds' covers a year in the life of ten Irish Men's Sheds as they open their doors and introduce us to their members.

Featuring Sheds in Donegal, Galway, Kerry, Armagh, Dundalk and Dublin, the programme highlights the characters who belong to the sheds and the wide range of activities they do, from woodworking in Dundalk, online learning in Gaoth Dobhair, working out in Cahersiveen, beekeeping in Falcarragh, and vegetable growing in Corr na Móna, amongst many others.



The series is an emotional rollercoaster which follows the personal stories of men across all four provinces, in rural and in urban centres alike. With heart-warming stories of post-covid reopening, caring for the environment and supporting local communities, as well as poignant personal accounts of issues around mental health, family life, cancer, loneliness and loss, this observational documentary series shines a light on the significant positive role played by the Men's Sheds for male health and well-being, especially in a society emerging from the Covid lockdowns.

So, turn on those subtitles (if you need them), grab yourself a brew and get watching with your fellow members at the Shed [here](#)! Enjoy!



Changes to Charity Law

On the 1st April 2024, the first of the changes to charity law contained in the Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Act 2023 came into effect.

OSCR has been working hard to make sure charities and the public get maximum benefit from the improvements these changes will bring.

Some of the main changes include:

- increased inquiry powers for OSCR
- power to remove charities from the Scottish Charity Register if they do not submit accounts and respond to OSCR
- requirement for charities to have a connection to Scotland

The 2023 Act has also made minor changes to simplify interactions between charities and OSCR and provide more flexibility. Of particular note, charities will no

longer be required to give OSCR 42 days' notice of changes which require their consent e.g. changes to charity name, purposes in the constitution or dissolution.

Additional measures will be introduced later in October 2024 and summer 2025.

This staged implementation should give charities and OSCR the time needed to prepare for these changes, which include:

- publication of charity annual reports and accounts
- a schedule of charity trustees
- publication of trustee names
- a record of charity mergers; and
- updates to the disqualification criteria for charity trustees.

You can read a summary of the changes on the [OSCR website](#).

Understanding Sheddors' learning style

Understanding the four predominant learning styles (VARK) —Visual, Auditory, Read/write and Kinaesthetic—is a model just as important in the environment of a Men's Shed as it is in a classroom to ensure we support, inspire and motivate our Shed members to learn at their best.

Visual

This type of learner is better able to retain information when it is presented to them in graphical form i.e. charts, graphs, tables, diagrams, symbols, films/animations and more. Visual learners really thrive with seeing the big picture. Examples of using this productively in the Shed may be to hold a brainstorming meeting offering members the chance to mind map and draw their flow of ideas on flipcharts.

Auditory

Auditory learners prefer to listen to information that is presented to them vocally such as a meeting or lecture. These learners work well in group settings where they get together to share information verbally and may also enjoy reading aloud to themselves. Examples of this are regular Shed member meetings and offering the Shed newsletter to members in [audio format](#) to listen to at their leisure, like Stonehaven & District Men's Shed.

Reading and writing

This type of learner learns primarily from the written word such as books, worksheets, presentations and other text resources. These learners tend to be keen note-takers and perform more efficiently when they can reference written text. Examples of this in a Shed environment include a Shed handbook, instruction manuals, safety posters on display and written policies, procedures and governance documentation.

Kinesthetic (learning through a physical activity)

This type of learning, also known as tactile learning, is where the individual wants to do, explore and discover.

The kinesthetic pathway is one of the three main pathways to the brain and these individuals would much prefer to get 'hands on' by performing a physical activity and seeing it in action themselves and engage all of their senses. If for example, you gave them an instruction sheet on a new piece of kit in the Shed, they can read the instructions but deep learning and retaining new information only occurs from the process of doing.



As we identified with our dyslexia article in the [last issue](#) (page 29) of The Scottish Shedder magazine—it is never a 'one size or method fits all'—everyone learns in different ways and it is essential to remember this when sharing information with Shed members.



NEW SMSA PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

The SMSA interviews Jim Johnstone, the Head of Communities & Social Impact, at a leading Scottish construction business regarding an exceptional partnership announcement with the SMSA set to support Scottish Men’s Sheds in the project locations in which they operate.

Jim Johnstone from [Morrison Construction](#) said: “Our vision is to be a people-orientated, progressive business, driven by our values to deliver lasting change for our stakeholders and the communities we operate in. We have lots in common with the Men’s Sheds ethos in that we wish to improve people’s lives by building the facilities and infrastructure that communities need as well as provide opportunities for people to learn, grow and progress.

“I met SMSA Development Officer Tim Green at a breakfast seminar hosted by the Highland Third Sector Interface and discussed that we already work with Sheds across our locations however, the current agreement is a bit loose. We wanted to formalise an offer of support with Sheds and work in partnership with the SMSA to reach more Sheds across Scotland.

“This quickly evolved into a discussion to work in partnership and I met with SMSA CEO Jason Schroeder to discuss a memorandum of understanding for superfluous building materials when our tasks and projects are completed.

“We plan to work with the SMSA and send through a list of our project locations at the end of every month and the team there can get this information out to Sheds in the surrounding area. These Sheds can then reach out to us and see what surplus materials we can donate to them.

“It is also not just about the materials that we can provide. Morrison Construction also offer our staff volunteer time where our personnel could share their skills and expertise with Sheds. This is two volunteer days a year—that is up to 1,200 volunteering days that we can offer to help charities and community groups. We can also offer talks and presentations on topics such as construction and health and safety.

“We are currently working on 30 projects across Scotland ranging from smaller builds to a multi-million pound community campus. Recently, we helped with a sports pavilion’s leaky roof. The community group was quoted £4,000 and our guys went in and fixed it for free in a day. We just want to support these vital groups in the communities we serve in any way that we can.”

SMSA CEO Jason Schroeder said: “This fantastic new partnership between the SMSA and Morrison Construction is an additional benefit of membership with the national association to help Sheds save money with a supply of raw materials in addition to reducing our carbon footprint and repurposing materials and keeping them out of landfill as well as access to their skills and expertise.

“We look forward to working with Jim and Morrison Construction going forward.”

Is your Shed near a Morrison Construction site?



If your Men’s Shed is in the vicinity of a Morrison Construction site below and you would like to discuss any requirements, please get in touch with the [SMSA](#) in the first instance to be put in touch with the main contact at that project location.

This information will also be sent out to our contacts though the regional Shed Network meetings.

Project	Location
East Calder Primary	East Calder, West Lothian
Earleston Primary	Earleston, Scottish Borders
Gala High School	Galashiels, Scottish Borders
Easthouses Primary	Easthouses, Midlothian
Whitecraigs Primary	Whitecraigs, East Lothian
Health Innovation Hub	Govan, Glasgow
Northern Meeting Park	Inverness, Highlands
Royal Dornoch Golf Club	Dornoch, Highlands



SMSA NEWS—DEVELOPMENT OFFICER UPDATE



From 'health by stealth' to 'health by design'

I have facilitated three [Mot4Men](#) workshops at Banff and Macduff, Forth Bridges and Inverness Men's Sheds. I am blown away by Shedd's openness in sharing their lived experience and health journeys.

There is so much knowledge in the groups that we have all learned from each other. Every Shed day is a school day.

With the aid of animations, posters and 3D models we have examined testicular, prostate, skin and bowel cancer where we discuss risk factors and symptoms that should act as flags to seeing our General Practitioner (GP).

While we all understand the pressures the NHS is under and how difficult it is to see your GP, undertaking the MOT4Men sessions puts participants in an informed position to articulate their symptoms and risk factors to expedite a medical consultation—either to put their mind at rest or start early on a treatment pathway with a much better chance of success and recovery.

We have looked at how a waist measurement of 37 inches and above carries health risks including high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

Shedders discussed the safe level of alcohol consumption of fourteen units per week and, with visual aids, went away with a more informed understanding of what is meant by a unit.

I have found that the majority of Shedd's I have spoken to, do not smoke but many have done in the past and positively shared their stories of how they gave up and the difference it has made to their health.

Shedders complete their 'MOT' and are issued advisories which might include getting their blood pressure measured and/or a GP visit but lifestyle and behavioral changes are also identified.

Future sessions are planned for Alford, Armadale, Bridge of Don, Stonehaven and Inverurie Sheds.

At the recent Fife Men's Shed Network Meeting, we had a taster session from Dunfermline's Chair Yoga and Mindfulness instructor looking at techniques to decrease blood pressure, inflammation, stress and anxiety through stretching, box breathing and visualisation.

[#mensshed](#) [#menshealth](#) [#menswellbeing](#)
[#headtotheshed](#) [#shedicine](#) [#mot4men](#)



Upcoming Regional Shed Network Meetings 2024

- **Moray**—Wednesday 12th June 2024 from 10am at Forres Men's Shed
- **Aberdeen City/Aberdeenshire**—Tuesday 18th June 2024 from 10am at Mintlaw Men's Shed
- **Perth and Kinross**—Tuesday 25th June 2024 from 11am at Comrie Men's Shed
- **Greater Glasgow and Clyde**—Thursday 4th July 2024 from 10.30am at Clydebank Men's Shed
- **Lothians**—Friday 26th July 2024 from 11am at Livingston Shed
- **Northern Isles**—TBC

If you wish to attend a regional Shed Network meeting in your area, please contact Tim Green, SMSA Development Officer on 07493361003 or email Dev1@scottishmsa.org.uk



SHED IN THE SPOTLIGHT—TROON MEN'S SHED



Troon Shed gains traction

Although it is early days for [Troon Men's Shed](#), the developing group is certainly making headway in their community to create a safe space for men to meet up for social and creative activities in Troon in Ayrshire to combat social isolation, boredom and loneliness.

Lee Renouf-Miller from Troon Men's Shed said: "From an acorn of an idea, and after encouragement from the Philosophy Cafe for Men in Troon, I joined the SMSA and saw the support available to start-up a Men's Shed. We have been overwhelmed by the tremendous support and backing received from our community so far—it is time to grow that oak tree and become Shedders!

"As I have started my own business and worked for Community Learning and Development in East Ayrshire, and age 65, I have useful experience but with health issues—both physical and mental—myself, I couldn't do it all on my own and made an appeal for others to join me as our [Facebook](#) page already has 200+ followers.

"In March, we were delighted to hold our first meeting and see it move away from just a concept. There was a great turnout and show of support. Over 30 men brought their enthusiasm for a Men's Shed in Troon. We asked attendees to complete a questionnaire with their contact details and if they would be interested in joining the Board or help

with distributing leaflets or be a social media admin—basically to identify their skills and experience and any ways they would be willing to help spread the word.

"At the meeting, we carried out a communal mapping exercise on flipchart paper and this was an extremely useful and productive task to collate all of our exciting ideas and vision for the future of our Shed. We formed a committee at our inaugural meeting on the 23rd April 2024 at the Walker Hall and recruited our office bearers (chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer) and ordinary committee members.

"We have applied for charitable status and can start approaching funders and we are constantly on the hunt for any suitable premises to include a fully-accessible workshop, social area, kitchen and toilets.

"Earlier this month, three of our new board members attended two Sheds—[Harbourside Men's Shed](#) and [Irvine Newtown Men's Shed](#) to experience an open Shed in action.

"At Harbourside, it was great to check out their facilities, fact-find, eat biscuits and hear about their woodworking, craft and model making activities. At Newtown we learned so much about how they got established—initially starting to meet for social chats in a former charity shop before moving to a medium size shop where they have full workshop facilities. They also have a large

garage store around the corner. They are open for three hours per day, six days per week and have 52 members with 10-15 attending each day. We were extremely envious of their fabulous set up and they wished us luck in our search for premises.

"We were also invited to attend the AGM of Troon Community Council and permitted the opportunity to give an update on our progress to date and received a warm response. We also attended the South Ayrshire Wellbeing Pledge on Friday 17th May 2024, along with our promotional materials from the SMSA, to promote the Shed at this event aimed to 'help communities in South Ayrshire start well, live well and age well'.

"We have received so much support from the community including an exceptional letter from The Micah Project in Troon—a volunteer-led charity aiming to reduce waste by providing simple solutions for families—supporting our vision and dedication to improve our community. Following this, we appealed for others to send in further letters of support that we can use in our applications to funders.

"It really is all coming together nicely and we are thoroughly enjoying the journey together. We can't wait to get established, so we can all 'Head to the Shed' one day very soon."

Support the Troon Shedders, follow and share their [Facebook](#) page and visit their [website](#) for more info.



Inverclyde Shed secures funding for triple growth

***Inverclyde Shed** is celebrating its first year in their new 'bigger and better' Shed premises with some more great news. The Shed has been awarded £20,000 from the National Lottery Community Fund Scotland Awards for All Programme to develop three of their key future projects.*



The first project that has secured funding is the Shed's micro mobile sawmill and training so that they can start processing high quality locally (wind) felled lumber to produce sustainable timber for community projects.

Secondly, they will develop their walled garden growing space as an educational hub for the public and pupils. The Shed recently facilitated a visit from St Andrews, St Ninians, St Columba's, Gourrock Primary and Binnie Street Children's Centre who attended to sow seeds, water the plants and learn more about growing.

Last but not least, the Shed will use the funding to develop their digital design capability and engagement with better access via equipment and software.

Bruce Newlands from Inverclyde Shed said: "After our first year in our new premises, we have developed the workshop and our gardens into self sustaining community facilities. We were ready to move forward with the next stage that will greatly enhance our capacity to 'meet, make, grow + share' and our Board is delighted to announce this new funding thanks to The National Lottery Community Fund Scotland."

And, the great news for The Inverclyde Shed does not stop there. The Shed has started to prepare its own column for the Greenock Telegraph, every fortnight to raise awareness and promote their news and projects.

Bruce said: "We've started writing a 400-500 word column for the local paper to go into more detail about our current projects, events, ideas etc. I will be co-ordinating it but other members will have an opportunity to input too. In our first column (below), we tried to better define our ethos of 'Meet Make Grow + Share'.

"I am aware of some other Sheds providing updates in their local newspapers, like Stonehaven Men's Shed, so there are definitely opportunities out there for Sheds and conversations to be had!"



MEET MAKE GROW + SHARE

This is the slogan of The Inverclyde Shed but what do we mean by it?

'MEET' is a key principle that sits behind the Shed, we meet to bring people together under a roof, in a garden or for a project. From people joining us as members to take part in our practical activities through to working with other organisations, schools, nurseries, and churches. We believe working together strengthens our community and a strong community helps everyone, it helps tackle one of the biggest issues facing our society today—loneliness.

'MAKE' is what we do but it isn't the core aim of the Shed, it's a by-product where our members use their skills and life experience to make things to help others. Some have had trades in their past lives, others have learned crafts and growing skills later in life. When they attend the

Shed, there is a wide range of activities from electronics to sewing, crafts to 3D printing, joinery to cooking, bee keeping to creative writing, gardening to model making. Making can take the form of an individual member making a plaque for their local sports club or a team of members installing a whole vegetable garden for a local school. The Shed provides a platform for ordinary people to help their communities, to 'pass it on' and give back to others that need help.

'GROW' for us has two meanings. Yes, we grow a lot of fruit and vegetables in our gardens which we share with our community, be it church groups or the local food pantry. However, for us it also means personal growth, connecting with others, learning new skills, being part of and contributing to the community which we are part of. We see members join us who have maybe been encouraged to come along by relatives or friends, we know that it can be difficult to step through

the door for the first time. What we see however is people who come along and transform their lives. They find a place that is welcoming and where they can be at ease, talk about issues on their terms, at their pace with peer support from genuine friends.

'SHARE' – it's this that we feel is at the heart of our ethos, where we can, we share what we do with others. We share our skills and life experiences with each other, whether that be the sorrow of grief or the pain of loneliness, by sharing with each other as friends, we not only ease the burden, but we also let ourselves find hope and worth.

In the end, it's hope that lies at the heart of the Shed, a hope of finding friendship, of meeting and working with other like-minded people from different backgrounds, a hope of being able to give something back to our community.



Penicuik Men's Shed hailed as 'haven'

[Midlothian MP Owen Thompson](#) has hailed a [Penicuik Men's Shed](#) for 'revolutionising community wellbeing' and being a 'sanctuary' for locals and a 'haven for camaraderie and craftsmanship' after paying the Shed a visit last month for a tour, a chat with the members and a game of scrabble.

Mr Thompson praised the impact the Shed has on its users' health and social lives. He said: "At this remarkable place, we discovered a community united by a shared passion for creation. Beyond the mere act of creation lies a deeper purpose – the enhancement of men's wellbeing.

"Through the provision of recreational facilities and engaging activities, the Penicuik Men's Shed serves as a sanctuary. This haven stands as a shining example of what can be achieved when communities come together. I have to salute the people here – they are the architects of a brighter tomorrow."

Progress at Penicuik Men's Shed

Since arriving at [The Glencorse Centre](#) on Firth Road in Auchendinny over a year ago, Penicuik Men's Shed has demolished the remnants of the former nursery building and recycled much of the material.

The Shed has prepared the base to receive their workshop and social cabins and received planning consent. The finished structure will comprise a skills workshop and a social space with a covered decked area.

The Shed has also recently applied for a building warrant. A crane will then hoist the cabins across, removing their unsightly side from view.

Once relocated, they will be clad in timber and screened from view to reduce impact on the site. The rest of the site will be landscaped by the Shedders to further improve the amenity.

New members are always welcome at Firth Road, Auchendinny, 10am-4pm on Fridays.





Kirkdale Shed's recruitment drive

Kirkdale Men's Shed is situated in an enviable location in an idyllic glen at the old water-powered Sawmill on Kirkdale Estate, with water running through it and close to the Cairn Holy burial monuments.

Following a recent reorganisation—with a new Chairman (Anthony Powell) and Treasurer (Mark Sherwood) appointed at the end of April—the

Kirkdale Shedders have started in earnest on some new woodwork projects and are looking to encourage more local men to head to their Shed.

New Shed Chairman Anthony Powell from Kirkdale Men's Shed said: "Although our Shed is on an 'off-grid' site, we do have generator-driven power and lighting.

"We have started making our first work bench and it is to be made out of Lawsons Cypress. There was a

large 12 x 12 inch timber on the seasoning racks that was kindly re-sawn by Barnkirk Sawmill into smaller workable pieces for us.

"Our Shed is open on Thursdays from 10am to 1pm and given the space we have and lack of suitable restroom facilities, we can comfortably accommodate ten regular members on site at any one time.

"We are hoping another few members will come along and join us."



Pictured: Kirkdale Shedders Andy and Tony using a thicknesser to plane the wood for their bench into a uniform size.

The bench will be substantial with 100mm square legs and a 50mm thick working surface.

A Scottish Men's Sheds Biker group?

Keen motorcyclist Jim McIntosh from Kinross & District Men's Shed reaches out to The Scottish Shedder readers to gauge interest in forming a biker group of Shedders across Scotland.

Jim said: "As a lifelong motorcyclist, I have owned over 70 motorbikes, been a member of several motorbike clubs and last year, had the experience of being a pit crew member for a Kinross-based racer at the Manx Grand Prix.

I am trained as an advanced rider (Institute of Advanced Motorists) and am also into restoration and currently working on a 1990 Yamaha Fzr1000 (pictured bottom right) that had been left in a Shed for over 26 years.

"I often think it would be great to meet other Shed

members with an interest in motorbikes to exchange stories and technical advice and go on group adventures, at a more sedate pace in comparison to some of the other clubs out there.

"There is potential for: **Shed get togethers**—to network with other motorcycling Shedders; **regional ride-outs**—regional Sheds could meet to ride to an agreed place of interest or motorbike related events; **charity events**—to raise funds for a worthy cause; **Shed motorbike show**—with prizes for best bike, furthest travelled, best custom-build, best brit bike or any other category suggested; **around the Sheds relay**—a road trip to visit other Sheds or just the ones with an interest in motorcycles; **a technical help forum/group**; and also **motorbike restoration projects**—either individual

Shed-based or with national participation.

"Kinross & District Men's Shed would also be happy to have an inaugural Motorbike show/get together in August or September this year.

"Of course, this would all require planning and consultation with road safety units within the local roads and policing departments.

Most Scottish road policing units are happy to deliver a talk and also potentially take small groups out for riding assessments to give advice and pointers.

"There is so much potential and it could be yet another string to add to the Scottish Shed Movement bow if there is enough interest. I do hope so and would love to hear from any interested Shedders."



Interested? Please contact the [SMSA](#) in the first instance to be put in touch with Jim McIntosh.

Bridge of Don Men's Shed helps young learners grow

An intergenerational gardening project between [Bridge of Don & District Men's Shed](#) and their 'neighbour', Forehill Primary School, has resulted in the Shed fully-funding a resource within the school grounds to connect generations and work together for mutual benefit to help young learners grow!

The Shed and the school—both based at Jesmond Drive in Bridge of Don, Aberdeen—joined forces after the idea evolved from their plans to incorporate a greenhouse for members around the same time the school, right next door, approached them to make planters for the pupils.

Shed Chairman John Smith said: "We decided to offer the school a polytunnel, with a supply of electricity from solar panels, and planters that we would fully-fund and build to offer a growing space for the pupils as well as offer up our advice and planting workshops. What we have achieved so far through this intergenerational community activity is nothing short of remarkable and the prospect of children learning all about horticulture and the food cycle is an exciting one."

The grand opening on Monday 27th May 2024 was well attended by members of the Shed, pupils, teachers and visitors including Jackie Dunbar MSP. The pupils sang [Celebrate](#)—a feel-good song created by Scottish charity, Fischy Music, and all about celebrating seasons for growth.

Speeches were delivered from Headteacher Ailsa Gowl, Shed Chairman John Smith and the Convenor of Education and Children's Services from Aberdeen City Council, Councillor Martin Greig who also cut the ribbon to mark it officially open.

Following the formalities, some primary 2 and 3 pupils remained to

roll up their sleeves and get dirty with a planting workshop with the Men's Shed members.

Head Teacher Ailsa Gowl said: "The opportunities for interdisciplinary learning are vast, ranging from construction skills, to food production, cooking, and numeracy skills required for budgeting the project. Many thanks to the Shed who funded and managed the build and maintenance of the polytunnel and planters."

John added: "This project is a fantastic example of community partnership and covers so many topics and challenges across the age spectrum.

"It is fantastic to see the delight on the kids' faces and the enthusiasm they have shown through the construction of the planters and the seeding and planting phases.

"With my wife being a retired teacher, I know just how difficult it is for teaching staff to deliver opportunities for children to learn about the importance of the environment and food production as well as the associated commercial aspects and this project provides real hands-on experience for these pupils.

"We are always striving to provide additional activities for our members and this project has been supported enthusiastically by our men. This is great testament to how Sheds can turn modest charitable donations into valuable projects that benefit the community and recycle materials that would otherwise go to landfill.

"Although the Shed has funded this project, we would also like to thank others who have supported us to get underway including: [NESCAN Seed Fund](#) for donating £400 for seeds and equipment; £1,000 from the Community Psychiatric Nurses Association; Aberdeen City Council Environmental Services for bark chips and compost; and [One Seed Forward](#) for seed donations.

"The project aim is to provide long-term benefit to the school, our Shed and our community and I am positive it will continue for many years. I have no doubt that many more ideas and opportunities will grow as this project develops."



Photo © Aberdeen City Council



Pictured (top to bottom): The grand opening; Bridge of Don Sheddors at the opening; Shed members with Jackie Dunbar MSP; the winning project logo designed by a pupil; and some security measures taken by Forehill Primary pupils to protect their joint project with the Shed.



Stonehouse Shed opens up their 'back yard'

Following 18 months of hard work from a dedicated Shed Team, [Stonehouse Men's Shed](#) officially opened up their 'back yard' on Saturday 25th May 2024—which will be a considerable new asset to the Shed members and local community.

Graham Curtis from Stonehouse Men's Shed said: "The back yard project was the vision of our trustee Robert Freel who was then joined by Stewart, John, Michael, Sammi and our resident painter, Davie.

"The team recovered almost nearly 450m² of wasteland and have transformed it in to a beautiful garden with fruit trees, plants, flowers, beehives, a natural wildlife area and a BBQ. E-Bikes will also shortly be stored there and available for community use.

"We were very lucky with the weather on the day of the opening—the sun was shining and we welcomed local MPs, councillors other South Lanarkshire Sheds, SMSA Chairman David Gardner together with friends and family.

"Funding for the project was generously provided by [OnPath Energy](#) and we started work, clearing the site, in June 2022.

"A design was submitted and the team admitted they under estimated the work that was needed. Over 50 bags of rubbish were removed along with metal signs, car axels, drums, clothes and a sofa!

"Paths were laid out with the reused wood chip and a natural beehive was created from the stump of a felled tree with our bee keeper Stewart building two further hives.

"A Pergola was also built along with water butts, a solar water feature and hut added. ..the back yard is also wheelchair accessible.

"Our thanks to Grace from Girls' Brigade Scotland for the teas/coffee and also local companies and Shed members wives for the donation of cakes, biscuits and juice.

"We were joined by Avondale Radio broadcasting music and also interviewing John McGhie our oldest member ..96 years young!!

"Gordon Thomson from [OnPath Energy](#) officially opened the garden after Rob shared the story of how the area had been developed. Music was provided by Tom and Albert together with our Shed Band 'Simply Shed' and almost £600 was raised from our tombola and through donations.

"Well done to the team for an amazing effort!"



Pictured (top to bottom): an aerial view of the 'back yard'; John McGhie (96) being interviewed by Avondale Radio; Graham, Gordon and Rob opening the back yard; and the beehive made from a tree stump.

Stonehaven and District Men's Shed's Alternative Energy Project

In September 2022, in view of the unprecedented increase in energy costs, [Stonehaven and District Men's Shed \(SDMS\)](#) decided to pursue the possibility of installing its own means of generating power and heat to address their carbon footprint and do their bit towards Scotland's target of reaching [net zero](#) by 2045.

The Shed's Vice-Chair Duncan Cursiter volunteered his services as Project Lead and the group got to work. Shed Chairman Bill Allan said: "We started off by visiting and corresponding with the [Alford](#) and [Aboyne](#) Sheds and community organisations to enquire how they were addressing their particular energy needs.

"We received very positive and encouraging feedback on both Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) and solar panels. Thereafter, approaches were made to several ASHP and Solar PV suppliers to determine suitable specifications, capacities of equipment and the cost involved—from which a budget figure was calculated. The decision was made to go for a 36-panel array of 14.58kW output, battery storage of 13.8kWh and six ASH pumps of total capacity 30kWh.

"A competitive tender scenario was achieved, and we then carried out an evaluation of each company's offer and decided who we wished to carry out the work. Meanwhile, a pre-planning application was submitted to the landlord, Aberdeenshire Council, in December 2022.

"In conjunction with this we sought funding and approaches were made to Scottish Government's [Community and Renewable Energy Scheme \(CARES\)](#) and the [Coastal Communities Challenge Fund \(CCCF\)](#) through Aberdeenshire Council. Eventually 80% grant funding was offered by CARES and the remaining 20% funding was offered by CCCF.

"An experienced agent, local company [Inspired Design and Development](#) (IDD), was appointed to manage Aberdeenshire Council's planning application, building warrant application and structural integrity survey.

"There was a requirement to carry out a Noise Impact Assessment to ensure that the external units of our ASHP equipment did not disturb our neighbours and this resulted in our having to fit timber screens and this work was carried out by Shed members.

"We also had to carry out an Electrical Installation Condition Report, produce an Environmental Performance Certificate, carry out a Fire Risk Assessment



and Asbestos and Legionnaires disease surveys amongst other requirements.

"We also implemented a structural integrity survey which identified that the building roof structure would not withstand wind/weight loading of the solar array in the configuration proposed, and we had to strengthen the roof purlins underneath where the roof panels were to be fitted. Existing electrical consumer units were unsuitable for the project's requirements so were upgraded accordingly.

"The ASHPs and associated internal equipment were installed during November 2023. The strengthening work to the roof was carried out just before Christmas 2023 and installation of the solar array, inverter and battery storage took place in February 2024.

"The project budget was £85,803. £62,711 at 80% was claimed from CARES and £13,138 at 20% claimed from CCCF. We were unable to claim £4,676 of other costs outwith the approved grants. The total project cost was £80,526.

"The ASHPs are functioning well. Comparisons are ongoing to determine efficiencies and savings over the previous old wall panel heaters, over winter. Early indications are proving that we have a more efficient heating system at a lower operating cost."



SMSA Trustees on their travels

SMSA Board Members are an invaluable asset to the national association—not just for their wealth of skills and experience with Men’s Sheds but they also assist our small staff team to also represent the charity regionally and nationally to reach more men, whilst waving the SMSA flag, and regularly visit or just pop-by Scottish Sheds.

On Thursday 14th March 2024, long-standing SMSA Trustee Charlie Miller visited [Inverclyde Shed](#) to say hello, get a wee tour of the impressive facilities at one of Scotland’s largest Sheds whilst also promoting and offering support from the SMSA.

Charlie said: “Finding the Shed was a whole lot easier than Google made it out to be and it could very well have been the wettest day of the whole of 2024 so far but I was greeted with that infamous Shed-tastic warm welcome on my arrival.

“Their Shed space is new and, as well reported, absolutely huge! You really have to see it to believe it. They have industrial sized 3D printers, pyrography and router beds as well as welding, micro wood turning, Raspberry Pi PC’s and Lego club on Saturdays—a possible game changer introduction to Sheds?—and their mezzanine is all set to become storage. The walls of the activity, office and kitchen rooms are covered in new wall units from Howden Kitchens and it looks amazing.

“I spent two lovely hours there with lots of Shedders passing by and chatting, the ‘Skelpies’ ukulele band was in session and a guitar band was being discussed as a new venture. Exciting times.

“If you have not yet checked out their Shed—or indeed your own local Men’s Shed—I would strongly

Aberchirder Men’s Sheds’ new initiatives are right on track

[Aberchirder & District Men’s Shed](#) has introduced three new projects to meet the needs of its community and members including the introduction of a model railway.

New Shed Chairman Alan Thomson said: “Our members had expressed a keen interest in introducing a model railway into the Shed activities so we are in the process of constructing an area to host this. We will provide a space for modellers to construct their own projects or assist with the railway as a group.

“In addition to this, our Shed’s kitchen has recently been renovated and over the last few weeks, we have been successfully delivering the ‘Foggie Friday’ free soup kitchen which is open for lunch every Friday from 11.30am—2.00pm. Funds have been supplied by the Community Fund and Community Learning & Development at Aberdeenshire Council.

“We are indebted to our visitors, amazing volunteer helpers and donations to make this a success in our community.

“The menu has been varied, healthy and seasonal featuring classic recipes including the popular broth and tattie

soup. The soup is completely free but donations to the Shed are welcome if guests are able to give.

“The Shed has also been hosting some coffee mornings and locals and visitors have the opportunity to enjoy a brew and some homebakes made by volunteers. The opportunity is there for our customers to find out more about the Shed and receive a tour if they wish.

“Each of these new initiatives raises our Shed’s profile in the community whilst also increases our offering to members and encourages others to join.”



Pictured: SMSA Trustee Charlie Miller being shown around Inverclyde Shed by Shed member Jim

recommend it or arrange a Shed-to-Shed visit through the [Scottish Community Alliance’s Community Learning Exchange](#) which offers up to £750 for peer-to-peer learning. This way you can develop new ideas from learning from people already on that journey instead of reinventing the wheel.”

The SMSA is always on the look out for enthusiastic, dedicated and visionary Shedders to join our existing [board members](#).

We are particularly keen to hear from individuals in the East and West Highlands, Edinburgh and Angus. The time commitment involved is quarterly Zoom meetings and an informal catch-up with Trustees, also on Zoom. Expenses are reimbursed for visits to Sheds and for representation at events. If this sounds like you, please do [get in touch](#).

Fire-hit Armadale Shed soon to be back in business!

It has been over a year now since a blaze broke out at [Armadale Shed](#) causing extensive damage to not only the premises, but also belongings, equipment, tools, machinery and the Shed members' beloved projects built up over the years. The Shed however is thankful that no-one was hurt on that fateful day in March 2023 and is now gearing up for a new fresh start with their 40+ strong membership.

Iain Glen from Armadale Shed said: "The Shed was formed in 2016 and we occupied a former council workshop which had lain empty for many years. With grants from various sources, the building was refitted to meet our needs and house a workshop area, kitchen/office space and fully accessible toilet facilities. We also had a steel container to the rear of the building to store our timber.

"From the start, Armadale Shed was open to both male and female members who work mainly, though not exclusively, with timber. We make a variety of products including garden furniture, planters, bird boxes, and a whole range of items turned on wood lathes. We are fortunate to have a fully qualified and experienced wood turning instructor as one of our members and he has passed on his vast knowledge of the art to his peers at the Shed.

"On Wednesday 29th March 2023, our Shed was busy as usual with about a dozen members working away, when smoke began to pour out of the enclosure which housed the two large dust extractors, followed moments later by flames.

"As the alarm sounded, everyone exited the building safely and in an orderly fashion. The nearest fire station is in the neighbouring town of Bathgate, a couple of miles away, but by the time the fire service arrived on site our beloved Shed was well alight.

"Several fire appliances arrived together with the police and an ambulance, though fortunately no-

one was hurt. Alas, by the time the fire was brought under control, a huge amount of damage had been done, although the structural integrity of the building was unharmed.

"It later transpired that every single electrical item we owned had to be scrapped as the heat had melted all the wiring as well as any non-metal parts. All the timber items which were in the workshop in the process of being made, were lost also.

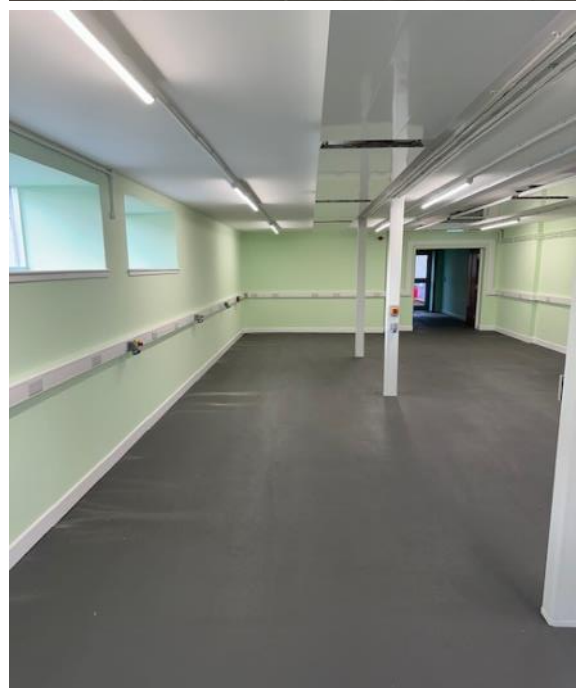
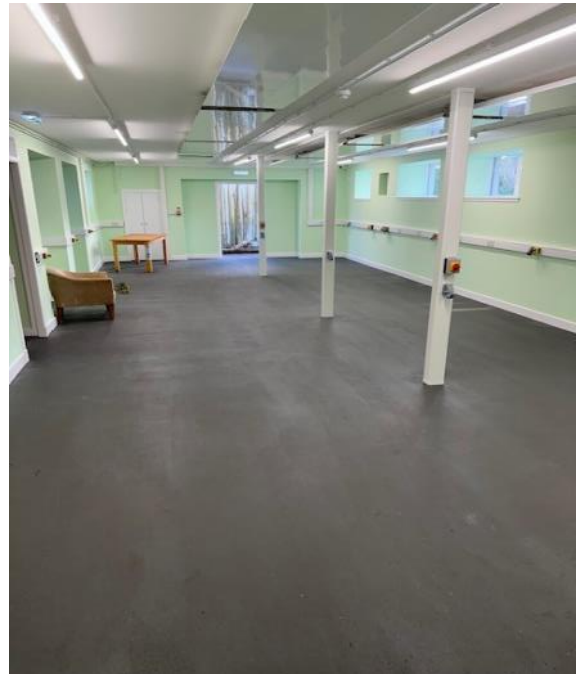
"Fortunately, the fire doors which separate the kitchen/office and the toilet area from the main workshop had done their job, and these areas were largely unharmed apart from some smoke and water damage.

"Our landlord, [Places for People](#), operates many housing developments in various parts of the country, and they were extremely sympathetic to our plight. They had insurance in place for the actual building, while we had insurance in place for the contents.

"The local community in Armadale has shown nothing but strong support as people recognised the importance of the facility. Not only do we make items which they can purchase for their use and enjoyment, but the camaraderie experienced by the members contributes greatly to their health and wellbeing.

"The community rallied together to rebuild what had been lost that day. Two schoolgirls from Armadale Academy, who had visited us just a matter of days before the fire as part of a school project, set up a 'Go Fund Me' page on Facebook which raised several thousand pounds for us. More money came from another local family (Armadale Illuminations) who install a huge display of Christmas decorations at their house and garden each year and invite people who come to see the decorations and make a donation. We also received donations from many local organisations, charities, schools, churches and community centres as well as individual members of the community.

"It has been a long and slow process to get the building cleared out and refitted, but we can now see light at the end of the tunnel. While there is still a bit of building work to be done, we have taken delivery of the first few new items of equipment — a saw bench, band saw, planer/thicknesser, wood lathes, etc. So, we are very much looking forward to being back in business very soon."



A new Shed, a new location and a fresh new start

St Andrews Men's Shed's ambitious relocation plans have come on leaps and bounds since The Scottish Shedder last reported back in our [January issue](#).

It has been full steam ahead after the Shed received planning permission to erect a large former steel barn from a farm—gifted by local housing developer, Scott Wallace of [Wallace Homes](#)—and move it up to Craigtoun Country Park to land secured for the next 20 years. The Shed appealed for their local community to get behind them and support them through donations and stepping up to volunteer their skills and expertise.

Shed Chairman Henry Paul: “We are delighted to report that fantastic progress has been made to move us up to the new site. The Shed build is coming along nicely and will be a huge improvement to our current premises and enable us to grow.

“It really has been a team effort. D-MAC Tanks & Construction Ltd installed the roofing and gable end sheeting. And, last month, Simon Scott of Fife Reclamation & Masonry Services donated several tonnes of aged oak timber and it was transferred by R & C Cameron Land Drainage & Plant Hire.

“This timber will certainly serve us well with members’ projects—watch this space for a lot of bowls to come (or totem poles)!

“And, the support just kept on coming. New Golf Club St Andrews donated £2,000 to our cause and the Old Course Hotel maintenance department held a charity golf day and donated £300—we are extremely grateful to each and every one of our supporters.

“We also received a fantastic £3,000 donation from the R&A towards the new build. We still need help with workshop concrete floor but I have no doubt that we will receive support to achieve this too.

“Being very keen on our coffee drinking and blethering time, we really needed somewhere at the new site to get together. Luckily, we had been gifted a redundant telescopic pool cover (pictured) and this new space gives us a dry ‘sitooterie’, a place for woodworking machines and a greenhouse to grow tomatoes and start plants for the garden project. Thanks go to Joanna, for thinking of us when disposing of the pool cover.”

“This new space, for our many enjoyable tea breaks, has been greatly appreciated by us all and we are hugely appreciative of all the ‘hands’ that made it happen.

“After an extremely busy few months, we downed tools to celebrate our eighth anniversary. To mark this special occasion, we had a [BBQ](#) at the new site to celebrate our amazing journey and accomplishments along the way.

“Who knew that a bunch of bodachs could work so well together. Hats off to all!”

If you would like to contribute to St Andrews Men's Shed's relocation, you can make a donation through their [Just Giving page](#).



My dyslexia story by Simon Fuller of Shotts Men's Shed

In the last issue of The Scottish Shedder magazine, we covered a feature on 'Empowering Shedders with dyslexia to reach their full potential'. This issue we expand on one Shedder's positive story on how they found a welcoming place of support and community at their local Men's Shed.

Simon Fuller (65) from Shotts Men's Shed said: "Growing up with dyslexia in 1960s/1970s Britain significantly impacted on my life. Like many from that generation, I severely struggled with education and even moved to a school for children with special educational needs but this did not help either. I could not read or write and was never once offered support on a one-to-one basis.

"This unfortunately continued into my adult life and evening lessons until I became depressed by the constant pressure and frustration. My working life was no different, I had difficulties learning new roles and responsibilities and could not cope with any task which involved paperwork, so was dismissed.

"After a major car accident, I became housebound but my caring wife Marion helped and encouraged me to try and do things to fill my days. This resulted in a passion for DIY and woodwork in my shed, working with electricians and concrete, and led to me converting our double house into one.

"Then one day, I heard about the Scottish Men's Shed Movement which originated in Australia over thirty years ago. Known for my woodwork skills, I was offered premises from Getting Better Together (GBT) Shotts to start-up a Men's Shed in our local area. The Shed was donated some timber to make a reindeer sleigh for the local community which I thoroughly enjoyed but when we had no wood left or tools available, I felt overwhelmed trying to set it all up on my own. Depression took over again and I gave up."

Then 72-years-young Royal Engineer Commando veteran Ray Elliott came on the scene. Ray took one look at the empty Shed, saw its huge potential to benefit the health and wellbeing of men in the local area, and using his 'gift of the gab' went scavenging to local factories, construction sites and companies to share the dream for the local Men's Shed and acquire some materials to get to work on some projects for the community. Ray spoke to GBT Shotts and asked them to reach out to Simon to invite him to come along on his return from holiday.

Ray said: "Simon arrived at the GBT workshop and stood in the doorway absolutely amazed. Shelving was up and workbenches, vices and timber were in place and I simply asked 'So, are we going to work together on this?' and that was the beginning of our friendship and teamworking.



Pictured (left to right): Ray Elliott and Simon Fuller broadcasting their Shed's radio show

"Simon and I quickly bonded working together in the Shed. The Scottish Men's Shed model is not all older guys in a wood workshop – Scottish Sheds are open to all men aged 18 or over from all walks of life and the most important part is the banter and camaraderie and forging friendships. Men with little or no interest in woodwork join for the social aspect and play games or take part in hobbies or just come in for a brew.

"Simon explained what happened with the shed and how his dyslexia can affect his mood and confidence. His frustrations led to him putting up a wall and the fight or flight response kicked in. As Simon opened up to me and shared his past experiences, I offered to take on the paperwork and dealing with customers – tasks that would overwhelm him especially when customers would ask for measurements of items. I would however always update Simon, so he was kept involved and informed on each project we worked on.

"Dyslexia has not stopped Simon from being a huge and valuable part of our Shed life. If unsure of anything, he just asks me to go over it again or I draw a plan and clear instructions for Simon to follow."

Simon said: "Connecting with my local Men's Shed has been a godsend. My fellow member Ray supports me to 'measure twice, cut once' and we work together as a team on everything. Being a perfectionist, I like to check and check again and am proud of the fabulous work I have created. I am also involved in the Shed's local radio show and have become confident with operating the slides, fading the music or talk out and preparing the music tracks. I even delivered the show independently when Ray was off ill. I really feel like a valued part of the Shed team and have a newfound purpose in life."

Check out the Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA) ['What is a Men's Shed?' animation](#) to find out what they are all about and find your local Men's Shed and 'head to the Shed' for a visit to see if it is for you through the SMSA map at <https://scottishmsa.org.uk/find-a-shed>.

Carluke Men's Shed is in celebration mode!

There have been quite a few reasons for the members of [Carluke Men's Shed \(CMS\)](#) to celebrate of late including the long-awaited milestone of their official opening day at their new premises.

Tom Kennedy, on behalf of CMS members, said: "In April, our members gathered in our social area to celebrate member Bob's 65th birthday. It is important for us to always make the effort to recognise our Shedders' birthdays.

"We received an unexpected guest visit from Susan Kelly from the Co-op who came bearing gifts. Lots of tea, coffee and goodies for the members to enjoy.

"Susan was given a tour of the Shed and was really impressed with our new premises and the happy atmosphere and banter amongst the guys.

"It wasn't the only visit we have had recently. Support workers Karen MacMillan and Sylvia Ross visited us to view our facilities first-hand and we look forward to keeping in touch with them and working together to benefit our community.

"My wife Wendy and I then 'walked-the-walk' at the Kiltwalk at Balloch, Loch Lomond on Sunday 28th April 2024.

"This is our fifth year doing this fundraiser together with monies going directly to the Shed. It was a lovely sunny day and we met and

spoke to so many people—and spread the word about Men's Sheds—before enjoying the Red Hot Chilli Pipers in the marquee afterwards.

"This month, the members ventured out for another bag-packing in the Tesco Carluke's Superstore to fundraise and shout from the rooftops about what our Shed has to offer. We are really grateful for the support from our Tesco Community Champion Liz Reynolds for all she does for us and arranging this event.

"It is crazy to think it is almost one year since we received the keys to Kilmory Road from South Lanarkshire Council—and what a year it has been. We are immensely proud of what has been achieved to make the new premises our own and meet our members' needs.

"Our Shed's official opening day took place earlier this month on Saturday 18th May 2024 from 10am to 2pm and we were delighted to welcome SMSA Chairman David Gardner and new SMSA Development Officer for the West Coast, Stewart Beck who came along to support us.

"We have been waiting nearly five years for this momentous day and it did not disappoint. Local Councillor Eileen Logan (Ward 1, Clydesdale West) is Older People's Champion in our locality and she kindly offered to cut the ribbon on the day. Eileen has been a staunch supporter since day one and we were delighted to have her there.

"It has been a great year so far. Our motto continues to be 'onwards and upwards'—always trying to have a positive attitude and have a smile on our faces and put a smile on the face of others. We have a rosy future at our Shed and will continue to help our local community."

Pictured (top to bottom): Carluke Men's Shed on Kilmory Road; Bob celebrating his 65th birthday at the Shed; Susan Kelly from the local Co-op popping by with goodies for the members; Tom and his wife Wendy at this year's Kiltwalk; the CMS opening day this month; and SMSA's David Gardner and Stewart Beck with CMS Chair John Lindsay and Treasurer Tom Kennedy at the opening.



Programme of Talks at Westhill & District Men's Shed

Throughout the autumn and winter months, [Westhill & District Men's Shed](#) hosted a number of interesting and informative one-hour evening talks on various topics for their members to enjoy.

The programme included talks by:

- North East Rider Volunteers Scotland (NERVS) - Aberdeen's local Blood Bike Group which provides free transportation services to Grampian Health Services
- CLAN Cancer Support
- Varanpunya Meditation Centre who offer mindfulness meditation to all
- Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) Aberdeen
- SensationAll—a charity in Westhill,

Aberdeenshire that provides support and activities for neurodiverse individuals and those with complex support needs. Individuals of all ages, all conditions and all members of the family in the North East of Scotland

- Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber Community Council presented to the Shedders on scams and fraud detection, prevention and what to do if scammed

Treasurer of Westhill Men's Shed Graham Stanley said: "Our talks attracted a good number of members and the feedback received has always been extremely positive and that members find them informative and interesting.

"While I have not yet finalised the dates of any further talks, we do already have interest shown for possibilities for future topics including Health and Wellbeing and Prostate Cancer to educate and inform our members.

"Our She Shed occasionally has speakers too and I would encourage other Sheds to introduce a talks programme—if they have not already done so—as it not only educates members on relevant topics but also raises awareness of what is happening in the local area and offers some mutual support."



Rosyth Men's Shed's plan to move to bigger premises

[Rosyth Men's Shed](#) has announced their ambitious and exciting plans to move to a bigger and better vacant site off King's Road.

The Shed's 40 members currently meet in the Centenary Orchard at the workshop in North Queensferry and this has served them well. A new larger Shed on the site on King's Road would enable them to have a larger space to meet and socialise and also incorporate a garden area with raised beds and a polytunnel to grow their own produce as well as welcome additional new members.

Shed Chairman Bruce Lumsden said: "The expansion plans are part of the Shed's vision to build our own Shed in the heart of our town which means so much to the committee and members.

"We have been making steady progress at the new site with the installation of a new fence and gate. Great support has been shown from the community including a



donation of £374 from Rosyth Parish Church towards our new HQ."

"We have also been kept very busy over the last few months with our project work including having a presence and market stall selling our wares at the Rosyth Community Market, marshalling at the Forth Ultra marathon, delivering workshop training and risk assessments to some younger members and sprucing up some classrooms at St John's Primary School (pictured above right). The members did a great job and received a generous donation from the Headmaster.

"It has not been all work and no play though as we had a great night out ten-pin bowling at Hollywood Bowl in Dunfermline together for a bit of bonding and friendly competition and you can check out our [video](#) from this on our Facebook page. All of our members, including 82-year old Tam and our less able Shedders were able to enjoy the game supported by Hollywood Bowl."

The Shed's current North Queensferry workshop is open Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10am—1pm.

CPR and defibrillator demos at the Pagoda

Milngavie and Bearsden Men's Shed member and First Responder, John, delivered cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and defibrillator demonstrations to his fellow Sheddies at their Shed, known as the 'Pagoda' - simple steps that could save a life within or outwith the Shed.



Shed Secretary Hamish Livingstone said: "The session was well attended and considerable enthusiasm was shown. We wish to express our sincere thanks to John and everyone that attended."

'Scotland's Most Mature Shedder' celebrates 101st Birthday

Last month, **Milngavie and Bearsden Men's Shed** member Tommy McGuinness celebrated his 101st birthday with his fellow Sheddies. Here is his story...

Tommy was born in Maryhill (before Maryhill became a district of Glasgow) on the 15th April 1923. He left school at 14 and first worked as a soap-boy in a barber shop, lathering customers before they were shaved. He supplemented his income by going round door-to-door in the evenings selling kindling wood.

He then managed to gain an engineering apprenticeship at Barr and Stroud where he became a very skilled engineer. Barr and Stroud is well known for optical engineering for military equipment and is famous for artillery sights, periscopes and now thermal imaging.

In 1945, Tommy was called up to serve in the RAF but he only spent two days in service. His commanding officer received a telephone call from the MD of Barr and Stroud to say that Tommy was in charge of the engineers making the sights for Spitfire aircraft and they urgently needed his return to sort out the problems they were now experiencing.

Tommy's passion was mountaineering and skiing. He was a trailblazer in both and is named in many publications on these subjects. When opportunities arose he travelled the world seeking new climbing challenges and was able to

use his engineering skills to quickly gain employment.

He met his wife, Pearl, in 1953 and they enjoyed 71 years of marriage before she passed away. They both enjoyed mountaineering and skiing.

Tommy was actively involved in mountain rescue and on one occasion recovered two bodies after spending 22 hours in blizzard conditions. This was when he first discovered that his sight was failing. Tommy completely lost his sight when he was in his 50s.

This however did not stop Tommy continuing to enjoy his skiing. He continued to ski in Europe and America wearing a "Blind Skier" jersey and being guided by Pearl using a radio. He had great trust in Pearl. He says that the main benefit of his jersey was that other skiers always guided him to the head of any queues and they always cheered him on.

Tommy now lives alone with visiting carers. Ralph, who is a Shed member, introduced Tommy to the Milngavie and Bearsden Men's Shed and regularly brings him along to the Shed and day outings.

Tommy enjoys the social side of the Shed thoroughly and keeps all his peers engaged with his entertaining and interesting stories.

Shed Secretary Hamish Livingstone said: "I was listening to him with interest one day when after about five minutes he said "are you still there?" We quickly realised the importance of assuring him that we are still there and engrossed in his story.



"Tommy enjoys the Shed and while he enjoys telling others about his life, he also enjoys the banter in the Shed. In the last year he has had a hip replacement and pacemaker fitted and recovered quickly from both to return.

"I asked Tommy the important question. What is the secret of your long life? I loved his answer, 'lots of White & McKay whisky and sex at high altitude', however, he did expand to acknowledge his good fortune to have had the support of such a loving wife who empowered him to have such a fulfilled life."

Tommy is the oldest member at his Shed but is Tommy Scotland's 'most mature' Shedder?

Does your Shed have an older member? If so, the [SMSA](#) would love to hear from you!

A PERSONAL STORY

The SMSA interviews 42-year-old Stuart Mackenzie who kindly offered his friends a lift to a meeting of their local Men's Shed ten years ago but had no urge to go himself and thought that DIY meant 'Don't Involve Yourself'. Fast forward to present day, and he has a mad passion for woodwork and is the Chairman of [Macmerry Men's Shed](#).

Stuart said: "I worked in the prison service (young offenders) for a few years when, in 2007, I woke up one morning and I had lost my sight. I still tried to get up and drive myself to work but my wife thankfully stopped me.

"That lasted for about two and a half weeks during which I was diagnosed with relapsing/remitting Multiple Sclerosis (MS).

"I got better and thought nothing more of it. Then in 2011, I suddenly lost my ability to talk which ended up lasting for about six weeks. I had to learn how to talk again and I also lost the feeling in my hands which, as a guitar player, was an interesting learning curve trying to continue playing.

"I ended up being medically retired in June 2013 as a result of my MS and spent about six months getting steadily fed up with daytime telly, so I looked into doing some kind of volunteering work.

"I began volunteering and ran a Sporting Memories Scotland group at my local community centre and it was at one of our get-togethers that I first heard about Men's Sheds. A few guys from the group wanted to go along to a meeting to find out more so I offered to give them a lift."

Stuart admitted that "At the time I could not join two bits of wood together if you paid me and was never interested in woodwork at school. Just ask my wife Lynda, about the horror story that was the flat pack chest of drawers I tried to put together in our first flat. My dad has never been good at DIY so I had no real interest in trying to learn myself, so I was happy just being a chauffeur for my pals that day.

"Before I knew it though, by just being at the meeting, I had inadvertently now become a member of the Shed. All the men were great and welcoming, to the point that I felt, seeing how I was the youngest there, I had somehow been adopted by 20 or so granddads.

"The Shed has an infectious nature and before I knew it, I was hooked and attending regularly. By just watching and helping out—and without realising it—I started to learn so much from my peers.



Stuart Mackenzie, Chair of Macmerry Men's Shed

"The Shed has an infectious nature."

"I began to absolutely love working with wood and started making garden benches, planters and even playhouses for my daughter and her friends in their respective gardens. Over time, my daughter Olivia's playhouse grew with her—in the end I had almost turned it into a two-storey house complete with a spiral staircase! Knowing my history with DIY, my wife still struggles to believe that I am ever asked to make, build and fix things.

"Working with young offenders in the prison service comes in handy when peace making with 15-25 guys in a Shed every day. There is always someone not having a good day—so it is certainly a useful transferrable skill! Saying that, the members are all great—all from different backgrounds that come together as a team. They are all so welcoming and inclusive.

"Being the youngest at the Shed, I initially worried that we would have nothing in common but the banter and friendships were almost instantaneous. We are all there to help and support each other.

"For someone that was unable to talk, I now never stop—I do love to blather a LOT! But also, I try not to dominate those all-important chats in the Shed and I always try to make time to listen to others.

Continued on next page...



A PERSONAL STORY (CONTINUED)

...continued from previous page

“In lockdown, we all missed the Shed so much. I was bored and craved the banter so we started holding video conference calls—checking in on each other and cheering each other up. In fact, we held a surprise birthday party video call for one of our members—he was delighted. Each of us had party hats on, balloons and banners on the walls behind us which made it a lot of fun for everyone involved.

“My wife says I fight against my health condition. Yes, the Shed does take up a lot of my time—more so now I am Chair—but it replaced work for me and gave me purpose. With my MS, I felt tired and run-down all of the time to the point of feeling useless but now, I want to get up and go, I want to better myself and do things for the guys at the Shed and the wider Shed community.

“My mental health really did receive a huge boost. In all honesty, there are so many people out there all with either physical or mental health issues that, I would say, going to a Shed could be just what you need. It is an amazing sight when you see a new member come into the Shed and all the guys greet them, chat away to them and within 10 minutes have made a new friend.

“Our Shed recently purchased a CNC machine and members have been familiarising themselves with this new piece of kit as well as learning computer skills whilst making intricate designs and this knowledge is being passed on to other interested members.

“Every Shed has got their own speciality, that could be specific to their area or something a member has learned in their personal or working life and can bequeath this to other Sheddors. One of our members Fred did stick dressing as a young boy and has passed his skills and knowledge of this on to his fellow members. Fred sadly passed away not that long ago but his memory lives on when the guys are doing this activity.

“I have been at the Shed for ten years now and last year took over the reins from our former Chairman David



Dickson who is now our Honorary President. We are a Shed run by its members, for its members and we have welcomed quite a few new guys recently ranging in age from their 40s to 80s. We have so much potential to grow the Shed, and it's great to see some younger guys, the next generation, joining—we are not just here for the retired after all.

“Future plans include the addition of two new cabins to the yard which we have secured funding for through the Community Health and Wellbeing Fund and National Lottery Community Fund. Two of our members were featured on BBC Radio 4 specifically talking about their experience of joining a Men's Shed. The producer of that show has asked us to launch a podcast about the Shed which would be produced by the BBC. This will afford the opportunity to promote the Shed and stories from the Sheddors to raise awareness but also teach skills around video editing and radio presenting. There was even talk of taking the show on the road to other Sheds to get their stories, which would be fantastic. This project is still in its infancy just now but it is a project that I feel would be worthwhile and hope to pursue.

“In the past, we have connected with the community— young and old—and we have exciting plans to step this up a gear and get a van full of tools and start up a 'Men's Shed on the Move!' and visit different places to spread the word. We can bring the Shed to communities and hopefully, as a result, they will then check out and join the actual Shed. We plan to hit the road to connect with schools, colleges and care homes etc in the surrounding area and really promote what we have to offer to ensure we are still around in 30+ years!

“To think that all of this started just by offering to give a couple of friends a lift to a Men's Shed. That, I feel, proves the totally infectious and positive results of the Shed effect.”



SHED PROJECTS

Sweet success at The Men of Leith Men's Shed

Amongst the diverse membership of [The Men of Leith Men's Shed](#) is none other than world champion Marmalade makers!

The Shed members gave marmalade making a go at one of their recent group talks and there's obviously some natural talent in the citrus preserve department as their entries into the recent Dalemain World Marmalade Awards and Festival only went and won Silver and Bronze awards!



2015 World Games winner is thriving at Arbroath Men's Shed

Kevin Trebilcock from Arbroath recently joined his local Men's Shed and during one of their many Shed chats, he just happened to share that he had competed in a global showpiece world event nine years ago.

Jim Christie from [Arbroath Men's Shed](#) said: "Kevin has been a member of the Shed for about six months now and is really enjoying the company and activities here.

"During one of our many conversations, he just happened to mention that in 2015, he represented Scotland/UK in the Special Olympics World Games in Los Angeles and had 'won a couple of medals' for badminton

and cycling and that they were 'lying in a drawer somewhere'.

"Well, of course, we asked him to bring them in to show them off to the other members and tell us more. He brought them in, and with a bit of help from a couple of other Sheddors, they are framed and displayed in his lounge at home.

Kevin said: "I am immensely proud of my achievements and it was great to sit and share my experience with my fellow members at the Shed. I am chuffed to bits that they helped me to display them so well in my home, especially for my grandson to see.

"If it wasn't for making the time to stop and chat in the Shed, my medals would still be hidden away in that drawer."

Inverclyde Shed's community growing space

[Inverclyde Shed](#) has completed their final growing space at The Larkfield Early Learning Centre.

Bruce Newlands from Inverclyde Shed said: "These spaces are intended to bring together bairns, families and schools through growing.

"The bairns were out helping plant the fruit trees this morning including two plum (Mirabelle Golden Coloured), four apple (Cox for Eating &

Elstar for cooking), three pear (Concorde, classic variety), two cherry (Groniasta sour cherry) and two peach trees (Red Heaven).

"They are all self fertile and hardy varieties so should crop in the first two years easily. The no dig bed is all ready for planting for an autumn harvest.

"In addition to this, our Shed's Shore Street garden is also thriving with broad beans, leeks, onions, garlic, asparagus, carrots, fennel, spinach, lettuce, apples, pears, plums and cherries too!"



SHED PROJECTS



Dumfries Shedder strums it up!

For Archie from [Dumfries Men's Shed](#)'s latest project, he made a fully working square electric guitar from scratch in the workshop—it has three strings and sounds pretty awesome! Well done, Archie!



Dunfermline Shed's latest partnership is a big hit with local readers

[Dunfermline Men's Shed](#) has outdone themselves with their latest joint partnership project designed to get the community reading more.

The Shed teamed up with [Friends of Pittencrieff Park](#) and Carnegie Library—with funding for materials received through the Fife Communities Climate Network—to create a



beautiful book swap box (which holds up to the 30 books) for everyone to enjoy.

The idea for the box came from a Trustee of Friends and they approached the Shed to see it come to fruition.

The idyllic location of the book box is on the wall next to the pond in the Italian Garden in the Park that the Shed is based. Members of the community can take a book, donate a book, read it in the park or take it home to enjoy at their leisure.



Forth Valley Shed creates memorial bench for widowed veteran member

[Forth Valley Men's Shed](#) (FVMS) has lovingly restored a bench for Shed member Joe Farrell (pictured front right), who is also a [Wee County Veteran](#), in memory of his late wife Margaret.

FVMS teamed up with Wee County Veterans to refurbish and present the bench which is now situated at the back of Joe's home.

FVMS has worked in partnership with the veterans' groups for the last few years creating many items for those who have served in the armed forces.

A recycled pallet seating solution for the Shed garden

With many Sheds having access to a steady supply of pallets or able to source these for free in our communities through the likes of Facebook Marketplace and Gumtree—why not try making this comfy deck chair to enjoy in the Shed garden during the summer months.

The chairs can retain their quirky pallet wood identity or be treated and painted and will only encourage Sheddors to grab a brew, take a seat and have a good old blether!

Craig Crowther at [Ayr and Prestwick Men's Shed](#) heard about the idea and nipped into the Shed to whip one up. He was unfortunately too shy to model it for the picture so member Nico stepped in.

Great work, Craig!



SHED PROJECTS



Stonehaven Men's Shed makes 'time to play' a priority

Stonehaven & District Men's Shed have been extremely busy with their latest [alternative energy project](#) but it has certainly not been all work and no play for the members.

Sometimes, you just have to 'down tools', grab a brew and have some fun! The Stonehaven Sheddors enjoyed their latest popular games mornings with members playing pool, darts, indoor golf and the cornhole bean bag toss game (pictured top).



And, 'Faither o' the Shed', Bill Emslie (pictured) also recently celebrated his 85th Birthday with his fellow Sheddors. As supporters of the Men's Sheds Movement already know, not only can socialising and the power of play reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness but it can also sharpen memory and cognitive skills, increase your sense of happiness and wellbeing and may even help us live longer! So, let's keep doing what we are doing and make the banter and brews a top priority.



The clock is ticking at Clyde Coast & Cumraes Men's Shed

Following a donation of an old coffee table to [Clyde Coast & Cumraes Men's Shed](#), member David Hardy transformed its top into this beautiful new clock and their members are extremely proud to see it hanging in their Shed!



Inverclyde Shed's spring honey is gonna be the bee's knees

[Inverclyde Shed's](#) three hive apiary is doing brilliantly this year with the queens laying so well that they have had to split one of the hives.

Bruce Newlands from Inverclyde Shed said: "The bees are bringing a lot of nectar, so we are extremely hopeful for a good spring honey harvest."

Check out the Shed's new video on their [You Tube channel](#).



Click to play

‘WHAT’S COOKING?’

“This soup is a firm favourite with many, since childhood, and was a huge hit at our Shed’s recent Tuesday lunch gathering—it is extremely comforting, healthy and filling.”



‘The Best Soup in the World’ Lentil and Ham Hough

From Sandy Welsh of Milngavie and Bearsden Men’s Shed

Ingredients	Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 large ham hough (ask your butcher to cut in half)• 3 or 4 handfuls of lentils (rinsed in cold water)• 2 ham stock cubes• 3 carrots (diced)• 1 large onion (diced)• Quarter of a cabbage (chopped)• 1 leek (chopped)• 1 large potato (diced)• Dried parsley (to add at the end)• Salt and pepper (to taste)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boil the ham hough in a pressure cooker with enough water for 45 minutes after it comes up to the boil.• Then add in the 3 or 4 handfuls of the lentils.• Add all the chopped vegetables.• Add the 2 ham stock cubes.• Close lid and cook for a further 30 minutes.• When cooked take the ham hough out, leave to cool slightly to be able to handle it, and pull the ham off in small pieces and discard the bone. Add the pieces of ham back into the pot.• Give it a good stir and taste. Add salt and pepper to taste then add the dried parsley.• If the soup is too thick for your liking—you can make up and add some additional stock.

Sandy said: “This really is, in my personal opinion of course, the best soup in the world. This recipe will make two large pots of soup from one large ham hough, hence asking your butcher to cut it in half for you. There will be plenty to feed a group of hungry Sheddors with a big bowl as well as seconds.

“This soup is a firm favourite with many, since childhood, and was a huge hit at our Shed’s recent Tuesday lunch gathering—it is extremely comforting, healthy and filling. Enjoy!”



New play *Men Don't Talk* by Clare Prenton explores masculinity, mental health and Men's Sheds, as part of Scottish tour this Autumn

Starring Scottish actor Billy Mack alongside Dougal Lee and Greg Powrie

Produced by Genesis Theatre Productions, *Men Don't Talk* is part of the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival and presented in partnership with the SMSA and Luminare

In a month where we marked Mental Health Awareness Week, and saw men's mental health charity, the SMSA, secure Scottish Government funding, Genesis Theatre Productions is proud to announce details about their new play *Men Don't Talk*.

This Autumn, UK-based theatre maker Clare Prenton presents her new play *Men Don't Talk* - a moving and poignant production that explores that very myth, as part of a Scottish tour that runs from Friday 18th October - Tuesday 19th November 2024.

Alongside being spotlighted in Scottish Parliament at Holyrood, *Men Don't Talk* will tour to Mull, Cumbernauld, the Borders, Peebles, Aberdeen, Orkney, Aberdeenshire, Paisley, Edinburgh and Cromarty, with further dates to be announced.

Starring stalwarts of Scottish theatre, actor Billy Mack is joined alongside Dougal Lee and Greg Powrie in a production that sees three men find banter, bird boxes and biscuits within a fictional men's shed that celebrates companionship, camaraderie ... and custard creams.

Inspired by real men's stories, *Men Don't Talk* was written by Prenton following cups of tea, cake and spirited conversations with real 'Shedders' who participate in community workshops.

Designed to provide opportunities to work together in a way that contributes to community development, the Scottish Men's Shed Association's overall aim is to support men coming together in a way that impacts positively on their health, wellbeing and education.

The moving production will invite audiences into a fictional men's shed to address the importance of men coming together to talk about their emotions, feelings, trials and tribulations to promote positive masculinity.

Presented as part of Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival, in partnership with Scottish Men's Shed Association and Luminare, *Men Don't Talk* has been praised in the Scottish Parliament for promoting the benefits of this growing mental health and wellbeing movement.

This comes in the same year as the Scottish Government held a vital round table with practitioners and leaders who are working to promote positive masculinity in their broader approach to achieving equality across Scotland's communities, and in a week that sees the Men's Sheds secure a year's funding in Scotland.

Talking about *Men Don't Talk*, writer and director Clare Prenton, said: "It's really gratifying and exciting to see a play that began with chats over a cuppa in my local Men's Shed grow into a full length play, touring Scotland. The message it aims to convey is that it's good for men to talk, and there are spaces for that across the shed network.

"It's been a privilege to partner with the SMSA, Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival (SMHAF) and Luminare to get this important message out there. If theatre can play a part in helping one man cross a threshold into a shed, then the play has played its small part in putting men's health, wellbeing and suicide prevention in the cultural conversation."

Producer of *Men Don't Talk* and Founder of Genesis Theatre Productions Michelle McKay, added: "I am delighted that the first show produced by Genesis Theatre Productions is such an important one. With the high rates of male suicides in Scotland, the tour aims to highlight the importance of expressing emotions, whilst educating, entertaining and raising awareness of spaces like Sheds."

SMSA Chief Executive Officer Jason Schroeder said: "As Scotland's largest and most successful men's health and wellbeing charity, the SMSA supports the play *Men Don't Talk* wholeheartedly, and we encourage everyone to see the play to get a deeper understanding about what they can do to support themselves and loved ones.

"To help create and raise the awareness of the plight men have found themselves in with the 'strong and silent' type generic cultural model, this play highlights the inherited situation and, more importantly, a new pathway now available through Scottish Men's Sheds to support the healthy change so desperately required for men in Scotland."

Andrew Eaton Lewis of the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival said: "We're delighted to include the Scottish tour of *Men Don't Talk*, as part of Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival's 2024 programme. Our festival theme this year is 'In/Visible', and we're interested in exploring which aspects of our mental health we keep hidden.

"Clare Prenton's play, in which a group of men defy the stigma surrounding male mental health to open up about difficult and painful experiences, is an important and valuable part of that conversation."

Developed by Producer Michelle McKay under her new company Genesis Theatre Productions, *Men Don't Talk* is supported by The National Lottery through Creative Scotland's Touring Fund and An Tobar and Mull Theatre.

For more information on the tour, please visit:

www.genestheatreproductions.co.uk



GET PROSTATE FFIT!



Join us for our next free 12 week exercise programme which kicks off with St Johnstone FC at McDiarmid Park in June!

Prostate Scotland and the SPFL Trust have teamed up to deliver Prostate FFIT (Football Fans In Training). It's specifically for men affected by prostate cancer. If you'd like to come along, improve your fitness and share your experiences with other men in a similar situation you can apply:

- online at spfltrust.org.uk/prostateffit
- call Elaine at Prostate Scotland on 07816 408429
- email info@prostatescotland.org.uk

Here's what our previous 'players' had to say:

It is a very relaxed and informal atmosphere, allowing men from all backgrounds to share and speak about a common problem, Prostate Cancer

It's changed my life - I feel fitter and 10 years younger

Smashing programme - added to my confidence and fitness



Prostate Scotland Registered Scottish Charity SC037494. SPFL Trust Registered Charity No. SC041121.

GLOBAL INTERGENERATIONAL WEEK 2024 UPDATE

Last month, was [Global Intergenerational Week \(24th-30th April 2024\)](#) - an annual campaign that brings together countries from across the globe, to celebrate the importance and value of intergenerational (IG) practice.

The campaign is led by [Generations Working Together \(Scotland\)](#), with an executive team comprising of [Linking Generations](#) (Northern Ireland), the [Beth Johnson Foundation & Apples and Honey Nightingale](#) (England) and [Bridging the Generations](#) (Wales). In 2024, 15 country representatives, from all over the globe, joined the global IG week campaign to showcase the work going on across their countries and to deliver and engage in informative webinars.

The theme of this year was intergenerational practice is not just nice but essential. With an ageing population and a significant proportion (25%) of younger generations saying they are lonely, there's never been a more important time to be talking, encouraging and supporting intergenerational practice.

Each day of the week-long campaign had a different theme:

- Day 1 (24/04) : Let's Raise Intergenerational Awareness
- Day 2 (25/04): Let's Build Intergenerational Partnerships
- Day 3 (26/04): Let's Combat Loneliness and Social Isolation
- Day 4 (27/04): Let's Celebrate Intergenerational Spaces and Communities
- Day 5 (28/04): Let's Break Down Age Barriers
- Day 6 (29/04): EU day – Solidarity between Generations
- Day 7 (30/04): Let's Build Intergenerational Workplaces

We were delighted to welcome support this year from WHO's Director General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who delivered a [video speech](#) tying the campaign to the [WHO](#) Campaign to Combat Ageism and stressing the importance of IG practice in combatting ageism.

Buildings in council areas in Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Spain and Australia were lit up pink in recognition of the campaign.

Throughout the week, webinars brought practitioners, academics and those with an interest in intergenerational practice together for meaningful and diverse conversations.

There was a [funding symposium](#) that provided charitable funders, in Scotland, the UK and the rest of the world, with a picture of where funding intergenerational work is, worldwide, and the reasons grant-makers elsewhere fund this approach and continue to fund it. Another webinar focussed on Generational Misunderstandings, exploring cultural and social misunderstandings between generations that can create barriers to intergenerational cohesion; and importantly, how we can navigate and overcome these.

On Saturday, there was a special Q&A with Director of [Lives Well Lived](#), Sky Bergman. Lives Well Lived celebrates the incredible wit, wisdom, and life experiences of older adults living full and meaningful lives. The [film](#) underscores the significance of fostering connections between the young and old, highlighting the immense value such relationships bring to our lives.

The week continued with a webinar on raising the quality of Intergenerational Practice with the team who are undertaking the lottery funded programme, [Creating Intergenerational Communities](#). There was an interactive and stimulating discussion about quality among participants.

The [benefits of applying an intergenerational approach to the workforce](#) completed our webinar series which brought new audiences to the topic of intergenerational workplaces.

We also held an [intergenerational learning roadshow](#) in Ayrshire during the week which attracted over 50 people who came to learn more about intergenerational practice. Carol Mochan MSP and Philipa Whitford MP opened the



Intergenerational Learning Roadshow in Ayrshire and spoke keenly of the value of IG practice, and its importance in reducing health inequalities and more. Vincent McWhirter from the Outdoor Partnership, Ayrshire, spoke about their intergenerational boat building project that won Generations Working Together's Excellence Award, citing skills development, mutual benefit, and strong knowledge exchange between generations as some of the benefits of adopting an intergenerational approach.

Interest also spread to the UK Parliament in Westminster where Marion Fellows MP put forward a [debate in Westminster Hall](#) on Global Intergenerational Week 2024 at the beginning of May 2024. Marion opened the debate with the importance of intergenerational work, underlining our central campaign message that although 'nice', intergenerational work is 'essential':

"Rather than reducing our ageing population to a strain on economic resources, we must use intergenerational opportunities as a powerful and cost-effective challenge to that narrative. Young and old people are often separated from each other due to age-segregated activities and living arrangements, changes in family patterns and the breakdown of traditional community structures." – Marion Fellows MP

This year saw huge growth in campaign reach and visibility, demonstrating growing awareness, and increased support for the intergenerational movement.

Together, let's celebrate the power of connection. Relationships between older and younger people are not just 'nice' but essential.

OPPORTUNITIES

More Shedder hands required on deck to help stop invasive American mink in their tracks

The [Scottish Invasive Species Initiative](#)—an exciting and ambitious eight-year partnership project set up to tackle invasive non-native species alongside rivers and watercourses in northern Scotland—is looking for help from Men’s Sheds in that region to help once again to build floating wooden mink rafts and tunnels.

The American mink is an invasive non-native species, which has devastating effects on native wildlife, particularly ground nesting birds and water voles - which are especially vulnerable to predation.

The SISI project has been tackling this invasive predator in northern Scotland since 2018 and so far has caught over 700 mink.

Mink rafts are an essential piece of kit but you can’t get simply buy these off the shelf. So, the SISI is keen to form partnerships with local Men’s Sheds in Northern Scotland to construct this essential equipment and help ensure the future success of the project. The floating rafts are used to monitor for American mink in local areas and when an animal is detected a live-capture trap is deployed on the raft to catch it.

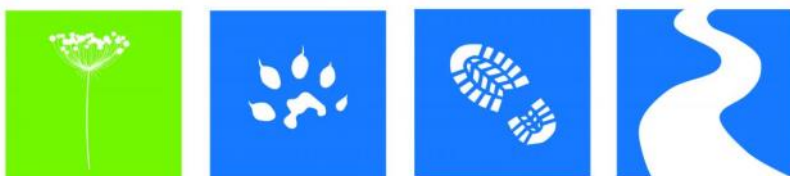
Some Scottish Men’s Sheds have already been involved in the project in the past including Stanley Men’s Shed and help is needed once again from Sheddors in or near the [project area](#) to construct new rafts.

The project covers Perthshire, Angus, Aberdeenshire, Moray, Inverness-shire, Wester Ross and West Sutherland.

The SISI will supply the materials and have them delivered to your Shed and you provide the construction talent to bring the units together. If you think your Shed might be interested in helping then the SISI would love to hear from you!

Contact: sisi@nature.scot

Project website: <https://www.invasivespecies.scot>



Scottish Invasive Species Initiative

THE SCOTTISH SHEDDER | MAY 2024

Scotland Reducing Gambling Harm



What are gambling harms?

Gambling harms are harms caused by gambling. They include:

- Loss of money
- Negative impact on work and study
- Relationship problems
- Poor mental health and wellbeing
- Substance use eg. alcohol, drugs
- Homelessness



To effectively reduce gambling harm, Scotland needs effective policies and laws. For these to work in practice, they must be informed and driven by those who know what it is like to be harmed by gambling.

What needs to change?



People don't understand it. Mental health and addiction go hand in hand. It should be a public health issue. It should be about protecting our children and grandchildren. It should stop seeing the broken as people with 'illness' but recognise the cause of this misery as resting with the unregulated supply of addictive products.

- Person with experience of gambling harm

Join the Scottish Gambling Harm Lived Experience Forum and use your expertise to shape action and reduce harm!

<https://tinyurl.com/gamblingharmforum>

@ScotRGH



ALLIANCE
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE
ALLIANCE SCOTLAND
people at the centre

OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS



The ACVC Hub

The SMSA chats to 1st Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusilier (1RRF) veteran Allen Clarke at the award-winning ACVC Hub to find out more about the hub that he set up for veterans like himself who are looking for a safe place to relax and partake in arts & crafts.

ACVC Hub CEO and Founder Allen (pictured top right) said: "After struggling for many years myself with mental health issues, I searched and found self-help and therapy through my love of art.

"As I met more and more veterans, I invited them to join me and saw the impact that it was making to them too almost immediately. Over time, I looked for suitable premises to offer this service to others and opened up the ACVC Hub for many veterans who have lost their way in life and need support to get balance back.

"The arts and craft woodwork hub was set up for both male and female veterans suffering from mental health issues and their family members, those feeling socially isolated and wishing to enjoy their passion for the arts and/or learn new skills as well as socialise with other veterans.

"I set up the charity to offer a place for veterans to go to relax, learn new skills and indulge in therapeutic arts, model making, pottery, pyrography, woodburning, woodwork and painting as well as information sharing like our regular and popular history talks and even days out in the wilderness together to learn some bushcraft skills. Works created by the crafters are showcased and some are also available to purchase with funds going towards the running of the charity.

"We work in partnership with many organisations including [Blesma](#), the Veterans and Community Hub, [Combat Stress](#), [Veterans First Point](#), [Helping Heroes](#), [Haven at Vanguard](#), [Walking with the Wounded](#), [Scottish Potters Association](#) and the [Scottish Veterans Residences](#) to name but a few to reach as many veterans as possible and learn more about the crafts.

"I reached out and connected with the SMSA and am delighted to have the opportunity to promote the hub to veterans within the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement. Although we are based in Glasgow, everyone is welcome to come along and I am always here on the days we are open so please come along, have a chat and check out the place."

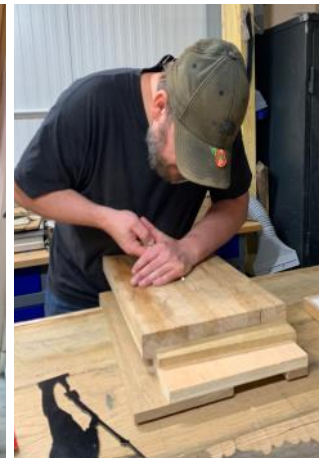
The Hub, located at Unit 4a, Moorpark Industrial Estate, Orton Place, Ibrox, Glasgow, G51 2HF, is open Tuesdays to Thursdays from 10.30am-3.00pm. All welcome. For more information on the ACVC Hub, please visit their [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#). You can also call 07842884003 or email acvchub@outlook.com.

Mondays: Private bookings available to charities and community groups

Tuesdays: Arts & Crafts 10.30am to 3.00pm

Wednesdays: Woodwork & Arts & Crafts 10.30am to 3.00pm

Thursdays: Arts & Crafts 10.30am to 3.00pm



The SMSA acknowledges and express our sincere thanks to our partners and funders for their support in 2024 for the development and growth of the Men's Shed Movement in Scotland:



Support the SMSA

Want to help make a difference? There are many ways to support the Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA) and 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

The 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 aims and vision for the people of Scotland. The Association'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.

Follow the SMSA at

