

THE SCOTTISH SHEDDER

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE SMSA

Edition 39 | July 2024



SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION

SCOTLAND'S LARGEST
MEN'S HEALTH & WELLBEING CHARITY

In Scotland, For Scotland

Youngsters learn, grow and explore at Scottish Men's Sheds



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Only **ONE WEEK REMAINS** for your Shed to apply for 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' 2024!

This is the final week to apply for the 2024 SMSA 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' Awards.

The awards programme exists to recognise, reward and promote the contribution 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



The Scottish Shedder (the official FREE magazine of the Scottish Men's Sheds Association) promotes news from Men's Sheds across Scotland to showcase their successes (and challenges)—in addition to highlighting funding opportunities, DIY projects, recipes and much more—to inform and inspire. Each six-weekly issue is sent digitally to over 4,000 Individual Member subscribers and supporters of the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement.

Contribute to The Scottish Shedder

We want to hear all about your Shed, its latest developments and exciting projects and are therefore asking for your contributions for the next issue (September 2024) by Friday 13th September 2024. We urge you to maximise the potential to raise the profile of your Shed and the Men's Sheds Movement in Scotland. Email Michelle Wibrew, SMSA Communications & PR Officer, at comms@scottishmsa.org.uk

Subscribe to The Scottish Shedder

To subscribe to receive 'The Scottish Shedder', you must become an Individual Member of the SMSA. It is FREE to join at www.scottishmsa.org.uk/join-smsa

Past issues

Archived editions available in the [SMSA online library](#) (log-in required)

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Support the Men's Sheds Movement in Scotland, follow the SMSA at:



TALKING SHEDS

by Jason Schroeder

I am delighted to kick off this edition's Talking Sheds with some fantastic news! Thanks to the 5,500+ individuals who signed our [38 Degrees Call for Men's Health Support](#) and the MSP's and MP's who got behind us, our campaign to reverse the Scottish Government's (SG) decision to stop financially supporting the SMSA was a success!

This is however, the third time that we have been in this situation and unfortunately had to take such measures and once again, we did not receive the amount we require. This temporary funding 'bandage' will essentially, with reduced staff and resources, allow us to stay open for another six months to continue until the end of this financial year.

We have also been moved to a new portfolio within SG which means a new team of civil servants and Ministers to work with. Anything to do with Men's Sheds will now be directed to and through the [Equality, Inclusion & Human Rights Directorate](#) portfolio. I have met with the new team twice now and we did a deep dive in a recent three-hour meeting looking at the SMSA's financial health, our development plans for the next three years and the positive multi-level impact we have on society.

I really hope that this time, with this new team fully aware of the vital work we do which supports SG's wellbeing over arching vision for Scotland, that in the coming months as they discuss and plan for the 2025-2026 budget, that we will finally get the required funding to meet the needs of our members and Scotland's most successful men's health movement.

This leads me nicely on to our membership of the SMSA and this month we celebrated our 4,000th member!

With our small charity about to celebrate its first decade, later in the year, and to have become the largest member-led male health charity in Scotland with now over 4,000 individual members, we keep saying it—but, you just can't keep a good thing down!

A big thank you to all the Shedders who have joined the SMSA and continue to encourage others in their Shed to also join and keep connected and updated with the national movement which we coordinate.

We also have a new Development Officer team structure in place. Stewart Beck on the West Coast joins us three days a week up until October (reducing to two days a week following that) and Tim Green continues on the East Coast two days a week—more on [page 6](#).

Unfortunately, the Borders Shed Development Officer Ross Hall who was funded by their council has not had his post renewed this year so that large region has lost a great asset and put more pressure on us. We have tried to mitigate the impact of this by having two officers on either side of the country to travel to face-to-face Shed and developing group visits.

The movement continues to grow but with reduced funding and a reduction in officers, this has stalled our development plans and therefore the success and speed of growth of the movement which is already impacting on various Sheds. My hope is that the new Equalities team will become the linchpin in achieving our three-year development strategy with the continued support of our existing seven funders making up the required balance.

While delivering Stewart all of his IT equipment which is required these days on the West coast, I managed to visit some the Sheds over there. I had some really deep and meaningful conversations covering a range of topics which Men's Sheds uniquely deliver on and saw some inspirational ideas which we will share with you all. So do make the most of our partnership with [Scottish Community Alliance's Community Learning Exchange](#).

I urge you to apply for this funding to visit other Sheds and see how they might be doing something differently to how you do it and inspire you to change for the better. Together, we all benefit.

I am delighted to say that this issue is absolutely jam-packed with intergenerational stories! I am so happy and it is one of my original dreams when starting this, that one day, community places would be created where intergenerational experiences could happen with men at its core. You guys have made this come

true and it is so vitally important for a healthy cultural legacy. If you wish to share your story in the Shedder, please get in touch with our [SMSA Communications Officer, Michelle](#).

Speaking of promoting stories, we have also been busy expanding our reach and raising awareness of Men's Sheds and their impact and benefits in numerous partners' magazines. We featured in the Dyslexia Scotland [Summer 2024 magazine](#) as well as the latest summer issue of [The Geographer](#) magazine.

To mark International Men's Day this year, the SMSA is facilitating a Shed [Open Doors Day!](#) On the 19th November each year, we celebrate the positive value that men bring to the world, their families and communities. So, what better way to mark this day than encourage members of the public, social prescribers, our funders and partners to come along to the Shed, with the doors swung open, to show them around, tell them all about it and answer any questions they may have. [Find out all about this new SMSA initiative and how to register your Shed here.](#) Participating Shed's details will then be added to the website and promoted in the local and national media and on social media—and through your own Shed—to encourage people to attend. And, this could become an annual thing!

It's that time of year again and you only have one week left to apply for the SMSA Scottish Men's Shed of the Year awards! Don't be shy guys as I know many of you are. You go quietly about making thousands of lives better but these awards are to showcase the Men's Sheds Movement which can help with your funding, spreads the word amongst the public for new Shed membership and inspires others to start new Sheds. We have made the process as painless as possible for you but do enter and tell us your story.

Last year, showed us all that new Sheds who have not been established for very long can become contenders and actually win it—so [PLEASE get your entries in](#) so your Shed and the movement can benefit in so many ways. I look forward to reading your applications and them keeping me inspired as well. Best of luck to you all.

Jason Schroeder
SMSA Chief
Executive Officer



Scottish Men's Shed Open Doors Day



SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION

International Men's Day
Tuesday 19th November 2024

Men's Shed

REGISTER
YOUR SHED'S
INTEREST ON
THE SMSA
WEBSITE

All
Welcome!

To mark International Men's Day this year, participating Scottish Men's Sheds will open their doors for unique group tours to potential new members, partners and social prescribers to see what Sheds are all about!

Scottish Men's Sheds, that are SMSA Shed Members, can register their interest at www.scottishmsa.org.uk/doorsopen

There have been some changes in your development team at your national support hub. As a result of funding cuts and demand across the whole of Scotland, the SMSA has restructured its staffing and implemented two part-time Development Officers to represent the East and West coast respectively to benefit Scottish Men's Sheds and our support coverage to them to ensure we meet our members' needs.

Development Officer Tim Green now works two days a week and we welcome our new Development Officer Stewart Beck (pictured right) to the team currently working three days a week to visit as many Sheds as possible until October 2024 when he will go down to two days.

Tim Green will cover Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, Angus, Borders, City of Edinburgh, Clackmannanshire, Fife, Dundee, East Lothian, Midlothian, Moray, Orkney, Shetland and West Lothian.

Whilst, Stewart Beck covers Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Falkirk, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire, South Ayrshire, Stirling and West Dunbartonshire.

We are delighted to have Stewart join our small team. During a 33-year career with North Ayrshire Council, Stewart has worked in several areas including youth work, where he was a Development Officer for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Further to this, Stewart developed an interest in adult learning and obtained his BA in Community Education from Strathclyde University in 2003. Taking on the role of Community Education Worker in his local authority area, he worked closely with community groups and individuals on personal development and capacity building programmes, leading to his involvement in Men's Sheds in North Ayrshire, which he considers to be the most fulfilling and

rewarding part of his career.

In his spare time, Stewart loves to spend time in the mountains and is a keen cyclist and Ride Leader, still involved as a veteran in amateur racing, although somewhat more slowly now! Amongst other hobbies, he enjoys scale model building, reading and learning about history, and is an avid music listener.

Taking on the role of Development Officer with the SMSA has now enabled him to focus on the parts of his old job that he enjoyed the most, broadening his horizons and supporting the development of Men's Sheds across the west of Scotland. Having witnessed first-hand the difference that Sheds can make in men's lives, Stewart is committed to ensuring that men everywhere have access to a Shed nearby in their own localities.

Stewart said: "I have a huge area to cover from Dumfries & Galloway to as far north as Oban, but I intend to visit every Shed at least once, and hopefully twice, three times...regularly. So, my approach has been to work from South to North, with the occasional diversion, like going 'over the water' the other day to drop in on Dunoon Shed—which I had heard a lot of good things about and was not disappointed.

"Many of the Sheds in this part of the world are thriving, vibrant and busy with the sounds and smells of wood and machinery, but also, they are havens of banter, biscuits, over-worked kettles, innovation and invention. The chat in the social areas is where things are really happening like supportive conversations and the forging of friendships.

"I arrived at Dunoon to meet their Trustees. Assisted by money from the Scottish Land Fund, they saw the opportunity to transform the former industrial premises (Dunoon Mug Factory) into a flourishing community shed that enhances the wellbeing of local people with time on their hands.

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“Within this friendly and welcoming environment, model railway enthusiasts and woolly hat makers rub shoulders with car mechanics and picture framers, whilst skilled carpenters and crafters trade baw banter and laughs with gardeners and sound engineers.

“This truly is a varied shed, with the community at its heart, and is the go-to place for machinery repairs and bespoke commissions.

“At Dumfries Men’s Shed, members were excited by their plans to enlarge the size of their social/dining area, giving them more opportunity to address loneliness and social isolation amongst Shedders, and enabling them to feel more connected and part of something truly valuable and worthwhile, in the most important part of the Shed.

“Shed Chairperson, Aldo impressed me with his willingness to engage with Shedders who have additional support needs, and the rewards he gets from being able to support and encourage them in a range of disciplines, including woodwork and music production. Additionally, he told me of local musicians’ plans to raise money for the Shed through music gigs in local pubs and bledhered with me for ages in the Shed’s dedicated music room. Quality conversation. Open-ended. Till my next visit, Aldo.

“Castle Douglas Men’s Shed, a newly-created SCIO in an ideal town-centre location, is hugely respected in the local area as a result of engaging in a range of projects that enhance civic pride in this busy rural town. Bike repair and maintenance, wood turning, projects for local schools and engineering designs are all carried out with a can-do attitude. Selling products at local events such as “Midge-Killers” and “Haggis Traps” demonstrate the good-natured humour and invention that permeates a shed with a “nothing’s impossible” mantra.

“The friendly reception and inclusive approach are ensuring that new Shedders are welcomed into the fold on a weekly basis. And with new Shedders comes a wealth of new skills, knowledge and experience that can enhance and develop existing

and new enterprises, ensuring that this Shed builds on the solid foundation and good reputation it has clearly built in Castle Douglas. Onwards and upwards guys!

“Rhins Men’s Shed, located in a former village hall in the village of Stoneykirk, to the south of Stranraer, is a fiercely independent Shed that has established a solid track record of partnership working with local artists on bespoke projects and with local schools on educational playground installations. Again, the kettle is always on, and I had a great conversation in the tearoom with Chair, Donald, on a wealth of topics from sustainability to asset transfer and everything in between. Home-made sausage rolls, washed down with copious amounts of tea and laughter, gave us the chance to establish a relationship that will ensure that the SMSA can provide valuable ongoing support, and that will give me a great excuse to get back down to the Rhins again very soon.

“Girvan Men’s Shed, based across two portable cabins within the grounds of Girvan FC, is a Shed that specialises in men’s mental health. This humble set-up disguises a quite brilliant shed that is reaching and providing valuable mental health support to its members and making useful community connections. One member described the support he receives as ‘Manna from Heaven’.

“Moreover, the Shed oversees a community garden project nearby that is helping people in recovery to make a valuable contribution to the local community. To ensure sustainability they are selling products at community events and are linking with Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Project based in Girvan, particularly on bike recycling conservation, learning and sustainable development goals.

“With a wealth of resources available on our website, I was able to signpost the group to one of our model SCIO constitutions that will enable them to adopt a governance

structure that will open the doors to greater funding streams. I have also signposted the group to the [Scottish Community Alliance’s Learning Exchange funding](#) to facilitate future Shed visits and the exchange of ideas, learning, development, and forge mutually supportive relationships with other Sheds.

“Sheds are hugely diverse, and this job is enabling me to discover an abundance of initiatives, some of which are peculiar to the geographic areas they are situated in. One such project can be found at Glenkens Men’s Shed in Balmaclellan, where Shedders there are playing a significant role in the conservation of red squirrel by working with the D&G Pine Marten Group to construct Pine Marten boxes. Specifically designed to house Pine Martens, these wooden boxes ensure that these animals that predate on Grey Squirrels are given the conditions to thrive, and to ensure the protection and conservation of a native species.

“But that’s not all. Alongside the manufacture of innovative wooden and metal products, soap-box derby vehicles and poetry composition, in the car park sits an electric vehicle charging point, something I’ve yet to come across in any other Shed I’ve visited. There may be others, but I’ve just not discovered them yet. I stand ready to be informed of others.

“These two initiatives seem to me to be unique in the area and demonstrate a willingness to embrace conservation and make a positive impact on the environment. Great effort guys.

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159

SMSA SHED MEMBERS

4,002

SMSA INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

138

OPEN SHEDS

65

DEVELOPING/ PROPOSED SHEDS

32

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

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“On the way home from Balmaclellan, I called in to visit Ayr & Prestwick Men’s Shed. They have only been in their current premises for a year, but it looked to me as if they’d been there forever with their well-kitted out workshop. I spoke to a skilled woodworker who had just completed a planting table for a greenhouse. I later saw a photo on their Facebook page of a delighted customer with her new table.

“Another part of this Shed that really impressed me was their laser printing and 3D printing area. The range and diversity of their products was huge, from figurines and coasters to phone stands and everything in between. These are selling like the proverbial hot-cakes.

“As I said earlier, I’ve been working my way from the South to North on my visits, with some exceptions, based on the [Find A Shed](#) section on the SMSA website. One of those exceptions was a Shed that I noticed in a nearby town to where I live, which is classified as ‘In Development’.

“Stewarton Men’s Shed, temporarily housed in a local Church and with plans for a new-build on adjacent land, has dynamic plans to address employability and has already accessed funding to make this a reality. They plan to have me back there to do a presentation on sheds at a public meeting. The men there really impressed me with their positive attitude, and I look forward to seeing their dreams becoming reality in the coming months and years.

“In summary, I’ve been fortunate to be the recipient of the kindness and hospitality of some amazing Sheds. I truly can’t believe how fortunate I am to do this job and this is only the beginning. Bring it on!”

Regional Shed Network Meetings

The SMSA attends Regional Shed Network Meetings across Scotland to connect, support, share and learn

For upcoming meetings, please visit

www.scottishmsa.org.uk/events

SMSA Development Officer Tim Green Update

Tim said: “Over the last few months, quite a few Sheds have been asking for advice about alcohol around the same time as I have been delivered MOT4Men sessions where we examine the health risks of drinking over the recommended 14 units a week—six pints of beer (4% ABV), six medium size glasses of wine, (13.4% ABV) or seven double measures of spirits (40%)—and discuss the difficulties of achieving this when drinking is so culturally pervasive. Questions include:

- What do we do if someone attending the Shed is suspected of being intoxicated, particularly if they are in the workshop area with machinery and equipment?
- Can Sheddors learn to brew their own beer, cider or wine at the Shed?
- Is it appropriate to hold meetings on licensed premises?
- If we hold a social event in the Shed or its surroundings can we serve alcohol for example: quiz nights, race nights, Burns Suppers, barbecues, Christmas parties and lunch clubs?
- Is it appropriate to hold video conferencing where participants are drinking in their own homes?
- Social events away from the Shed are less problematical but are they inclusive for all if alcohol is involved?
- Can we, like other organisations, raise funds at galas, highland games, shows and festivals by holding a bottle stall including alcoholic drinks?
- Should we approach companies involved in alcohol production and distribution for projects, funding or sponsorship?

Men’s Sheds are not a temperance movement but want to be inclusive safe spaces for all men to experience an environment that promotes their health and wellbeing by offering an alternative to risky behaviours and loneliness and isolation.

Office bearers, trustees and members will make their own decisions how they respond to these questions but it might be useful to think about:

- the safety of the individual and the safety of other members;
- what you are communicating to the general public particularly prospective new members looking for an alcohol-free safe space;
- does your Shed do all it can to attract and retain those men who potentially could gain the most from attending their local Men’s Shed?
- how would men known or unknown struggling with alcohol addiction feel if they open a fridge or come along to an event where they are exposed to alcohol?
- can no or low alcohol alternatives be adopted to maintain the integrity of your activities, social events or fund raising?

The SMSA is currently working on a template alcohol and drugs policy for Scottish Men’s Sheds to use which will be issued to all SMSA Shed Members in due course.

CONNECTING GENERATIONS THROUGH MEN'S SHEDS

Encouraging activities that connect our generations can bring long-term mutual benefits to all involved by building meaningful relationships and opportunities for learning. The SMSA delves into these intergenerational activities, ranging from gardening projects to woodwork and Duke of Edinburgh awards to work experience, to share a wee snapshot of what is taking place in many of our local Scottish Men's Sheds to help the young thrive from the wisdom and experience of 'Shedders' and the Shed members themselves feel 'young at heart again' and also learn through this engagement.

Over the last three years alone, The Wood Foundation reports that 19 Scottish Men's Sheds have been selected by teams of pupils from their local schools to partner up to benefit from the promotional opportunities (and since the programme began, 16 Sheds in total have gone on to win and receive a financial boost of £3,000) as part of the [Youth Philanthropy Initiative Scotland](#)—a programme which aims to empower young people to make a difference in their communities while developing a range of skills. Too many Sheds to mention have also undertaken projects to improve the facilities, playgrounds and play equipment at their local schools to benefit the young learners and teachers. [Rosyth Men's Shed's](#) most recent project involved sprucing up some classrooms at St John's Primary School much to the delight of the pupils.

The Inverclyde Shed recently received National Lottery Community Fund Awards for All funding to develop a growing space at The Larkfield Early Learning Centre as an educational hub for the public and local pupils and also manages two successful community gardens. The Shed recently facilitated school visits 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. Bruce Newlands from Inverclyde Shed said: "We

are creating these growing spaces to bring communities - bairns, families and schools - together through growing!" Read more about Inverclyde Shed's intergenerational projects [here](#).

Bridge of Don & District Men's Shed's recent initiative this summer has been helping young local learners in Aberdeen grow. The intergeneration gardening project between the Shed and Forehill Primary School, saw the Shed fully-funding a resource within the school grounds.

The partnership idea evolved from their plans to incorporate a greenhouse for members around the same time that the school, right next door to the Shed, 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 generated from solar panels, and planters that we would supply and build to offer a growing space for the pupils as well as offer up our advice through hands-on planting workshops. What we have achieved so far through this community activity is nothing short of remarkable and the prospect of children learning all about horticulture, construction skills, solar energy, food production, cooking and budgeting is an exciting one."

This month, Alford & District Men's Shed ran a course on household skills for over 80 school leavers—teaching them basic skills—see [full article here](#).

Outside of the classroom, Sheds are connecting with many after-school groups including the Boys Brigade, Girlguiding and Scouts. In March, Clyde Coast and Cumbræes Men's Shed were delighted to host two visits from the Boys Brigade to share their skills, knowledge and wisdom with the next generation all whilst showing them what a Men's Shed is all about and they look forward to receiving the young men's membership applications in a few years' time.

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Photo © Aberdeen City Council





CONNECTING GENERATIONS THROUGH MEN'S SHEDS

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The young ladies of Kinellar Rainbows had an unforgettable experience getting muddy and learning at Inverurie & District Men's Shed's community allotments last month—receiving a guided tour to learn all about what was being grown at the Shed's 40+ community allotments and had the opportunity to ask lots of questions before planting pumpkin plants. [Click here for the full story.](#)

Sixteen-year-old Casper Steen Nielsen from Aberchirder carried out 78 hours of volunteering at his local Men's Shed to achieve his Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. Jim Paterson from Aberchirder & District Men Shed said: "Casper is doing something rewarding for his community whilst learning new skills in carpentry— something that he is very interested in. Casper created a beautiful bird box and planters for his bronze award. His confidence grew in just a few weeks and he has already mastered his design for his Gold award—a lovely wooden garden patio love seat with table.

"The experience is also broadening his aspirations as he explores the future pathways open to him as he leaves school next summer. We hope that he will return when he is 18 to join the Shed.

Casper, who has also been able to share his computing skills and knowledge with his fellow Sheddies, said: "Jim has really helped mentor me, and I am really enjoying it. I am extremely thankful to him and the other members for this opportunity and their time."

In partnership with Police Scotland and Mintlaw Academy, **Mintlaw & District Men's Shed** worked with 11 pupils from the local Academy to get them involved in their Shed restoration project in a bid to further reduce the level of anti-social behaviour and vandalism in the area.

Constable Melanie Hislop from Peterhead Police Station said: "We're pleased to have played a part in bringing this scheme to fruition alongside the Shed and academy. The pupils are enjoying it immensely and learning valuable skills along the way. The lighter nights and school holidays unfortunately bring about an increase in anti-social behaviour in the area but we hope that by getting young people involved in the making, building and restoration of items then we will see a reduction in incidents and young people taking pride in being a part of their community."

SMSA CEO Jason Schroeder said: "It can be particularly challenging for people in our communities to find ways to stay connected to others in healthy environments, especially as we get older, or when circumstances or health conditions force us to give up work or hobbies.

"Men's Sheds are open to adult men of all ages (over the age of 18) and backgrounds with time on their hands and offer this safe space for generations to connect, mentor and learn from each other whilst forming stronger intergenerational communities and instilling an invaluable sense of purpose and better quality of life for all involved."



SHED IN THE SPOTLIGHT



As Inverurie & District Men's Shed (IDMS) marks their tenth year with a gathering of faces old and new to celebrate a decade of community, connections and camaraderie, their Chairman Alex Smith reflects on the highs and the lows of what has been achieved in that time and also shares their exciting plans for expansion to meet the needs and further grow their already 150-strong membership.

IDMS Chairman Alex Smith said: “Back in 2014, two Inverurie residents—Archie Peebles (now an SMSA Trustee) and Graeme Shepherd—visited the first-ever Men’s Shed in Scotland in Westhill, Aberdeenshire and this started us on our journey.

“The Shed visit was soon followed by a meeting with Aberdeenshire Council where a committee was formed and IDMS was born. Initially, the group met at Inverurie Community Centre (pictured above) and with help from the SMSA and the council, a permanent home was found at an industrial unit in Harlaw Way, along with an area for a polytunnel.

“During our first year and through grants and donations, we raised £51,000 which was used to purchase machinery and equipment for the workshop as well as two portable cabins to make into a social area. A grant from Grampian Health Board (now NHS Grampian) also allowed us to purchase a polytunnel and whilst the new Shed was being kitted out, we met in the polytunnel.

“Unfortunately, the polytunnel kept being extensively vandalised and had to be abandoned in 2017 and we

were on the lookout for a new site for it. After searching throughout Inverurie, one of our Trustees, the late Alistair Smith was introduced to George Ross (J G Ross Bakers) who had a field available. At 3.5 acres this was big enough not only for a polytunnel but also for allotments. A 15-year lease was signed in 2019, and we were ready to go.

“In the midst of the pandemic, three Shedders—Graeme Shepherd, Henry Wilson and Murray Main—formed a bubble and set about creating allotment spaces on the site as well as 40 allotments, which are available not only for Shed members but also for the use of local residents.

“The team also planted fruit trees and bushes to create an orchard on site as well as an area of 1.5 acres, called The Howe Farm, as a co-operative to help local low-income families grow their own vegetables. Many of the ‘farmers’ at The Howe knew nothing about growing fruit and vegetables, but under the close guidance of the Shed, this has turned out to be a very successful venture.

“There doesn’t seem to be anything this fertile piece of land cannot produce and we are seeing an abundance of tatties, onions, carrots, cabbage, turnips, peas and beans and the more exotic fennel, okra, courgette, asparagus, sweetcorn and garlic. The fruit trees are already well established having managed to survive being ravaged by local deer and our clever bird-scarer, with dangling shiny CD’s, has also proven to be effective.

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Photo by Griselda McGregor

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“Our new larger polytunnel boasts rows and rows of seedlings just waiting to be graduated to the great outdoors. Member and visitors alike, all agree there is a feeling of wellbeing whether they are actively gardening or just enjoying being out in the fresh air.

“Our excess produce from the land is sold at the entrance gate and at Inverurie Farmers’ Market to raise funds for the Shed and produce is also donated to our local food banks.

“Visitors to the allotments are welcomed by our dedication plaque at the main entrance which is engraved with the words ‘Alistair’s Dream’. It is thanks to Alistair Smith’s vision and determination that we now have this area to benefit our members and our wider community.

“Our Shed premises at Harlaw Way have certainly served us well over the last decade—offering a wide variety of activities over the years for our members including metalwork, woodwork, crafts and a cosy social area with wood burning stove to play chess, backgammon, draughts, shuv ha’penny and other board and card games.

“On reopening post-covid however, we quickly noticed that we were struggling to attract members back. So, to help us determine what we could do to attract a greater level of participation from members, we undertook a members’ survey. From the responses, many of our members stressed that the current premises were simply not big enough to meet everyone’s needs.

“The size of our Shed really does limit the number of Shedders we can safely accommodate at any one time, in both the workshop and the social area. It also limits the size and number of community and personal hobby projects that we can take on.

“Being a huge barrier to the growth of our Shed, we decided to actively seek an alternative site through Aberdeenshire Council and are currently pursuing a building adjoining to our current premises. We have just

submitted a Community Asset Transfer request which we hope will be looked upon favourably.

“Until then, we are making the best of what we have. Last October, Storm Babet unfortunately took off the roof of our social area and the heavy rain caused severe damage. It has been a very long wait for better weather conditions and for the damaged areas to dry out to even attempt the extensive, not to mention expensive, repairs but we made do and many members met at the allotments for hot soup and chinwags to get them through.

“A very generous donation was made by Michael Howden, the owner of StationGym83 in Kemnay. The money was raised by Michael and his friends through [The Sundown Cycle](#) fully covered the cost of all of our repairs. It was a mammoth task and took a long time to get back to normal, but repairs were completed just in time for our 10th anniversary celebrations.

“We held an open day at the Shed to mark the milestone and it was a great day with an excellent turnout. Our visitors and guests were treated to a tour of the workshop and social area before a lovely buffet lunch provided by Graeme Shepherd, Henry and Gwen Wilson, Bill Stewart and Shantilal Fernando. We then informed our guests of our future expansion plans and great support was shown.

“We are now officially in the community asset transfer process and all of our many letters of support have been submitted. We would like to thank the many supporters of our application including the SMSA, Inverurie Events, Friends of Inverurie Hospital, Douglas Lumsden MSP, Harriet Cross MP, Evolving Inverurie as well as over 500 positive comments received through our social media.

“We are extremely grateful to the SMSA, Aberdeenshire Council, local businesses, organisations and residents for their continued support for our Shed over the last 10 years and long may it continue.”

Follow IDMS’s progress, through their [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page, as they enter this next stage of their journey.

communities and offer discounts, as always trying to deliver the best possible prices to get the workshop kitted out to meet members' needs.



Axminster at Armadale

The SMSA caught up with Axminster's UK Business-to-Business Technical Consultant Mark Bloomfield following his visit to Armadale Shed to offer face-to-face advice on new machinery and equipment for their renovated workshop, following a devastating fire last year, and deliver training to their members in time for re-opening.

Mark said: "I cover the North of England and Scotland as the store manager in our Newcastle store and now as technical consultant and getting on the road to visit customers.

"I have worked for Axminster for over ten years and have had the pleasure of working with many Sheds in my local area and firmly believe in the Men's Shed ethos and what is being achieved in their communities. Getting involved in a very small way personally is something I'm very proud of and really enjoy.

"I was invited to Armadale Shed to assist with getting their new workshop fitted out following their fire last year which destroyed their workshop.

"I received a very warm welcome and we discussed the machinery they had in mind, and how this would fit in the workshop.

"From Axminster Tools' perspective, we value what the Sheds do in each of their

"As part of the visit, we arranged a training session with the Armadale members on safe practices in the workshop, set up of machines and answered any questions that they had. Certainly, part of my role is to try and ensure safe practices from extraction to machinery layout keeping everyone happy and healthy when using the workshop and I am more than happy to visit any Scottish Sheds to offer help and advice.

"Armadale Shed now looks fantastic and is a huge credit to everyone involved in bringing it back to life.

"I have visited quite a few Sheds on my travels around Scotland now from Inverness and Aberdeen to Perth and Glasgow and have always been welcomed with a cuppa and see the variation of what they host at each one—they are all unique. I am looking forward to a return visit to Armadale as well as other Sheds when I'm next up in Scotland."

Armadale Shed Chairman Ian Smith said: "We would like to thank the Axminster team for taking the time to impart their knowledge. Our members found the familiarisation course enlightening. From the start Mark was very helpful in guiding us through the various machines we required and is always available by phone to answer any questions."

SMSA Shed Members can contact Mark at Axminster by [email](mailto:admin@scottishmsa.org.uk) or call him on 07581 192294.



EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNT TO SMSA SHED MEMBERS

10% OFF with Axminster Tools*

1 APPLY...



To access savings, email admin@scottishmsa.org.uk in the first instance to set up an exclusive SMSA/Axminster account. The SMSA will provide you with a link to the online application form.

2 SHOP...



Once the Shed's application is submitted and approved, the Axminster team will create a Shed account which entitles most Shed purchases to the discount. *All 10% discounted ordering must be done via email or over the phone (does not apply to online orders). *Click [here](#) for exemptions.

3 SAVE...



Whilst the 10% discount applies to the 'Shed', if the Shed is happy to manage orders from members, then those orders can be placed through the Shed account so they can benefit too!

As a benefit of SMSA Shed Membership, Sheds are entitled to a 10% discount through the national association's partnership with Axminster, a market leader in the tools and machinery industry.

The SMSA aims to support Scottish Men's Shed to sustainability. This membership benefit saves Sheds money when buying new or replacing machines from one of the UK's biggest tool providers.

Lowther & District Men's Shed set to reach new heights

Lowther & District Men's Shed (L&DMS) may be heading downhill with their Shed building to the rural village of Leadhills but their plans are certainly on the up and up!

Shed Chairman Bob Lowdon said: "L&DMS was formed in early 2023 by a resident identifying the needs of local men in this relatively remote area of Scotland, many of whom live alone and become quite lonely especially during the long winter months.

"Having identified the former ski hut that was no longer being used, contact was made with the Shed's Trustees and it was agreed that we could take over ownership of the building approx. 1,180ft square.

"After a great deal of background work, L&DMS nominated a local contractor who started dismantling and transporting the hut from its site—2,300ft above sea level down—to a new site on Ramsay Road, right in the centre of Leadhills Village.

"Funding was put in place with help from the community-led Local Development Fund and the South Lanarkshire's Seniors Together project and the dismantling work began on the 17th June 2024. Our 25-year lease with the landowners, Hopetoun Estates, was signed the same day at a coffee & cakes reception held at the new site followed by a visit up to the building one last time. The event was very well attended by our members and supporters and we also welcomed Shedders from both South Lanarkshire and Dumfries & Galloway.

"After all the hard work that has gone into this project, it is hoped that by the end of 2024 we will have the building erected ready for internal finishings and kitting it out to meet our needs. The building will be divided into two areas—a workshop area to house woodwork and metalwork machinery and a community hub for social gatherings which can be used by other clubs and community groups in the Lowther Hills area.

"Our Shed is open to serve the Wanlockhead, Leadhills, Elvanfoot, Daar, Crawford, Abington and Crawfordjohn areas and has already gained almost 70 members."

Please visit the Shed's [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page to follow progress.

Pictured (top to bottom): the ski hut building on Lowther hill; the Shed members on their last visit to the former ski lodge; inside the ski hut; the new site on Ramsay Road, and signing the lease at the open day in June 2024



Third sector unites to create suicide prevention toolkit

A new Suicide Prevention Toolkit has been developed through a collaboration of Third Sector organisations in North Ayrshire including valuable inputs from two Men's Sheds from the area—[Men's Shed Dalry](#) and [Three Towns Men's Shed](#).

The Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund in North Ayrshire has been co-ordinated and administered by Arran CVS and The Ayrshire Community Trust as the Third Sector Interface (TSI). As a result of their hard work and networking, a number of the funded groups including two local Men's Sheds came together in October 2022.

These groups identified that whilst suicide prevention was an overall part of the funding requirement, many groups were unclear about their role and had little information about it. One of the first steps was the delivery of online and face-to-face suicide prevention training open to all groups that were funded or had applied to the fund – this was extremely productive and well attended.

Following this, a consultation with all groups took place and a plan agreed to develop a community-based suicide prevention toolkit. The groups were then invited to be represented on a working group to take it forward. The group was co-ordinated by the TSI and supported by the Suicide Prevention lead of the North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and NHS Ayrshire and Arran Public Health but it was the group itself who set the agenda and took ownership of the process and decision making.

Over the past 18 months this group of North Ayrshire third sector organisations has grown and developed a real confidence and understanding of suicide and suicide prevention and their role within it. This group has:

- undertaken suicide prevention training/ awareness raising
- shared personal stories
- developed a comprehensive suicide prevention toolkit with their knowledge and learning
- presented the toolkit at a North Ayrshire Suicide Prevention event in 2023 to a wide audience of agencies and services (to an overwhelming response)
- used their knowledge to support others
- created a supportive and pro-active group
- removed the stigma and taboo of suicide in their day-to-day community work

“We should all be better informed and this tool allows services to spread that message to more people more effectively”

“This has been a gathering of a great group of folk from all different backgrounds and professions, working together to help save lives”

Gus McLafferty from Men's Shed Dalry said: “In response to the demand from the third sector to help support people in our communities who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts, several organisations joined forces to formulate this valuable toolkit.

“Discussions and consultation began almost two years ago between North Ayrshire Council, Arran CVS, North Ayrshire HSCP and The Ayrshire Community Trust. These groups also brought together a Think Tank of local organisations including our Shed and Three Towns Men's Shed and we have been working on it ever since—united for suicide prevention.

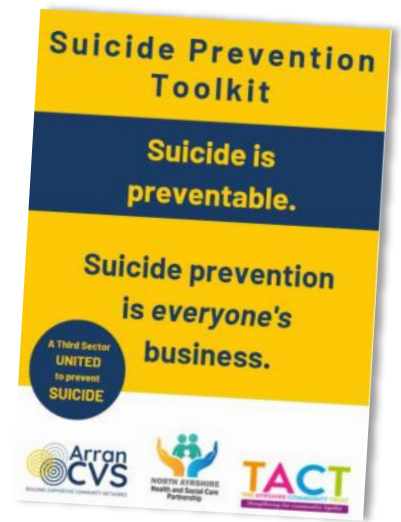
“It is important to share this document far and wide—it is not just for our region—suicide is everyone's business. The key things to look out for are in this document—the common triggers, myth busting, breaking the stigma, opening up and talking about suicide, conversation starters if you are concerned for someone and how to support the individual and seek help if you are out of your depth.

“One of our members, 38-year-old [Scott McInnes](#)—who at age 18 was involved in a car accident which left him suffering from epileptic seizures and not wanting to leave his house—made two attempts on his life before coming to the Men's Shed.

“With our Shed's involvement in this document and men being four times more likely to die by suicide, we know that it would be extremely useful to share this toolkit with our fellow Men's Sheds to utilise this resource, raise awareness rather than reinventing the wheel and potentially save lives.”

The next steps are to share the toolkit widely and reach more organisations and groups. The toolkit is available to [download from the Arran CVS website](#) and printed copies for the North Ayrshire area will be made available thanks to funding from the Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund at the upcoming launch event.

The launch event for the toolkit is planned for Autumn 2024 to bring together people from across all sectors to share this valuable resource and raise awareness its key messages and embed this across our communities.



Download the toolkit

“It gives people the knowledge and confidence to speak about this and make a huge difference. That is invaluable and absolutely vital”

“The toolkit will help by continuing to reduce the stigma and taboos surrounding this subject matter”

“What an unforgettable intergenerational experience for these young ladies.”



© Scottish Men's Sheds Association



Aberdeenshire youngsters 'grow and explore' at Shed allotments

When SMSA's Communications & PR Officer heard that her youngest daughter's Rainbows group was looking for a local place to visit as part of the girls' Grow and Explore badge, she knew just the place.

SMSA's Michelle Wibrew quickly got in touch with Kinellar Rainbows Leader Sue Woolley to recommend an intergenerational visit to Inverurie

& District Men's Shed's community allotments on Old Port Road before reaching out to Inverurie Shedder Graeme Shepherd who is part of the team at their Shed's allotments.

With everyone in agreement, the girls gathered at the site, on Monday 3rd June 2024, where they got muddy and planting whilst learning all about the produce being grown in the 40+ community allotments—belonging to locals including the primary school—and orchard.

Rainbows Leader Sue Woolley said: “The Girlguiding Scotland ‘Out and About Challenge 2024’ is all about promoting outdoor activities and learning about farming, agriculture and sustainability.

“The girls thoroughly enjoyed this hands-on experience in the great outdoors and learned so much about the fresh healthy produce being grown right on their doorstep.

“We wish to express our sincere thanks to Graeme for his time and sharing his knowledge with us and letting the girls—and our leaders and parent helpers—plant their own pumpkins.

“The pot of gold at the end of the rainbow came when Graeme invited the girls to return in October to see how much their pumpkins have grown and they can't wait. What an unforgettable intergenerational experience for these young ladies.”





The McPhunn Misfits' 'Rust to Rome' banger car rally fundraiser for Strachur Shed



Over the years, we have heard of many fun and unique ways to fundraise for Men's Sheds but this is one we have not seen before! The [McPhunn Misfits](#) took on the Rust 2 Rome challenge—to drive from Edinburgh to Rome via the Swiss Alps in a rusty old banger—which caught our eye and we cheered them on from the sidelines!

[Rust 2 Rome](#), the official banger rally, is an adventure of a lifetime—as a car and its passengers take to the road on a 4,500 mile journey through Europe.

Sounds easy, however Rust 2 Rome pushes its drivers and their cars to the limits from start to finish as the car has to cost less than £1,000 and be driven across very challenging 'not for the faint hearted' roads like those only seen in movies like the Italian Job and James Bond.

The journey however delivers some of the most unbelievable and breathtaking sights that you will ever see, such as the Roman Coliseum at sunset.

The McPhunn Misfits', Graham McKirdy and Gordon McDonald, departed from Edinburgh for their fortnight of fun and fundraising to Rome on Sunday 30th June 2024—for their two chosen charities, Strachur Community Shed and the Ardentiny Outdoor Centre.

Strachur Community Shed is in the process of gaining building control approval for a new purpose-built unit to get the Shed fully operational and this funding is vital to get them up and running.

Gordon McDonald said: "Stachur is a fairly remote village with an increasing aging population and as such, it can be a very lonely place for some. The purpose of the Shed is to bring people together, young and old, to meet up in a safe environment.

"Within the Shed, as well as it being a social meeting place, there will also be activities for those that want to work on projects (community and personal) and carry out repairs on items such as bikes and sewing machines.

"Our Shed is a fledgling Shed but these donations will fund the construction of a permanent bespoke building, within the heart of the village.

"The preparation of our 'banger' for the journey entailed many repairs and servicing. As well as a full service, we replaced the timing belt and one of the car door locks which liked to lock then unlock itself for no known reason! Our trusty chariot—a 2003 Volvo V70 with over 135,000 miles on the clock—did not let us down though.

"We have seen some amazing sites, including walking over 10 miles around Venice, when we had some bonus down time, to check it out. It was amazing and we have had the opportunity to drive some iconic (and some [quite scary](#)) roads via the Swiss Alps.

"We also drove up to San Bernardino Pass and Susten pass. The height from ground level is 2,550m high—over 2,000ft higher than Ben Nevis. The temperature at the base of the path was 32 degrees which is pretty hot in a car that doesn't have working AC. At the top, the temperature dropped to 10 degrees which was a very welcome reprieve. The roads were long, winding and shockingly steep in places but we thoroughly enjoyed ever part of our ten-day journey and it is an experience we will certainly never forget.

"On behalf of Graham and myself, I would like to thank everyone that donated to our chosen charities. We raised over £1,800 (including Gift Aid) however you can still donate through our [Givewheel fundraising page](#). Donations will be split between these two very worthy causes."



A space for the men of Ruchazie

*Following various community consultations, a new **Men's Shed** in Ruchazie, in the north east of Glasgow, is now open and a recruitment drive in full force for new members to join them at their vast site with ambitious plans.*

The new Men's Shed has been set up by the community-led **Growing21** Development Trust—formed by local residents back in 2020—and aims to undertake a mixture of economic, environmental and social initiatives for community benefit.

The charity set up Glasgow's first community pantry, the Ruchazie Pantry in 2020, to help tackle the area's higher than average levels of poverty and disadvantage and following that, the Fireclay Bistro Café & Kitchen was launched to provide a much-needed social space for members of the community to eat, connect, learn and gain new skills as well as deliver groups and classes.

Walter Sandoval at Growing21 said: "The site's vast derelict land used to site two former primary schools and is now in the process of being repurposed by the Trust. 'The Link' initiative—Ruchazie's Greening and Growing Project—includes plans to create a community growing space and allotments to provide fresh, local produce for the Growing21 pantry and the café and kitchen.

"The growing space will include raised beds, polytunnel, orchard and rainwater collection and provide a range of opportunities for local

people to get involved in gardening and food growing and opportunities for training and learning.

"The Men's Shed project is an integral part of our vision—offering a hub for local men, a welcoming space where they can gather to share stories, collaborate on projects and support each other. We aim to create a positive and inclusive environment that fosters personal growth, skills development and community engagement.

"The Shed has been in development since last November and we now have six regular members that come along every Thursday but we have capacity and would really want to welcome many more.

"Although the Shed is off-grid with no electricity, it does not hold back our members who gather outdoors. The location is central and close to public transport links and there is now a container for storing tools and projects. No-one tells Shed members what to do and they can come along and do exactly what they want—whether it's building furniture, gardening, or any other creative endeavour, members have the freedom to decide what projects to focus on and how to execute them.

"Current members have been working on improving the site and their community projects but more importantly they are taking the time to socialise with fellow members of their community over a cup of tea and playing games. Darts and cards seem to be extremely popular with the current membership. Activities are member-led, so new members are more than welcome to broaden the offering there.

"The Shed, in this amazing location, has the pull of offering an opportunity to be part of transforming disused and underutilised land into a space of vibrancy, activity and community—



whilst maintaining the natural elements of the site. We have big plans including an outdoor classroom pavilion, educational spaces, bug hotels, beehives, multi-use games areas, adventure play area, a network of paths, gardens, allotments and of course, some land left to the wild.

"We aim to provide the necessary resources and facilitate courses tailored to the projects our members are passionate about. This includes offering training and workshops that can help members gain new skills and achieve their goals.

"We need individuals who are committed to fostering positivity, dedication, and a forward-thinking mindset within the male community of Ruchazie. From hands-on manual activities to engaging conversations, there's something for everyone at our Shed. The Shed is built on the principles of mutual support, creativity and community spirit.

"Together, we can create a Shed that the men of Ruchazie deserve. If you are looking to be part of a dynamic and supportive community, come and join us as we build something great. It is all about making new friends, sparking fresh ideas and tackling exciting new tasks together."

The Shed is located at 'The Link' at the old school sites at 435 Gartloch Road opposite the pantry and is open every Friday from 6-9pm and there are hopes to extend opening hours in the not-too-distant future.



The key to a successful CAT

By Bruce Newlands, The Inverclyde Shed

The Inverclyde Shed has been the only organisation in Inverclyde to successfully navigate the [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#), Shed Trustee Bruce Newlands shares their personal experience of the process.

Bruce said: “We used the legislation to successfully negotiate a 25-year lease on our main workshop at East Blackhall Street in Greenock a few years ago and more recently used it again to agree a five-year lease for our walled garden growing project at Gourrock Park.

“Ownership or control through lease of land and buildings is a powerful tool for communities to drive change and long-term financial sustainability. It provides a base for activities that might not otherwise be accessible to members of a particular community, and can provide jobs, training and bring income to the local area. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 introduced a right for community bodies to make requests to all local authorities and a wide-ranging list of public bodies, for any land or buildings they feel they could make better use of.

“Community bodies can request ownership, lease or other rights, as they wish. The Act requires those public authorities to assess requests transparently against a specified list of criteria, and to agree the request unless there are reasonable grounds for refusal. In addition to long-term control and responsibility for an asset, community groups need to carefully consider the liabilities and maintenance of assets.



© Photo by George Munro

Inverclyde youngsters reap the benefits of growing

By Bruce Newlands, The Inverclyde Shed

The Inverclyde Shed manages two successful community gardens—one in Gourrock at Shore Street and a larger garden, orchard and apiary, in Port Glasgow at Muirshiel Lane within the Devol Industrial Estate.

The Shed has also helped many others set up growing spaces across Inverclyde and recently expanded their own growing space by developing a previously unused part of The Gourrock Walled Garden. All of these projects represent community-led regeneration.



“The installation of renewables can significantly reduce the running costs and like the Shed’s workshop effectively wipe out utility overheads forever whilst having a significant environmental impact in terms of reduced carbon emissions. [Local Energy Scotland](#) manage the Scottish Government’s Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) which can assist with covering some of the costs of things like heat pumps.

“The local council assets are contained on a register on their website but we [produced a map version of their data](#) where all of the council’s leisure, industrial, office, community and land assets are listed.

“Community groups and Sheds can [contact me](#) direct for advice on early stage technical feasibility and potential asset control models. Outright ownership is not always the best option for every group and communities can look at a range of options to reduce liability and enable regeneration from long term lease to license to occupy.”

The Shed has sometimes gone through a simple license to occupy or private lease for a site. Other times, like the walled garden, they have gone through the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 legislation to consult publicly and then secure a medium-term lease agreement with the council.

Learning how to navigate the legislation, to build and organise a community, and develop a sustainable case that results in empowerment for the wider community, is a skillset few have - and even fewer can put into action.

That needs to change if we are to broaden the benefits of community-led regeneration of our communities. The Shed believes in enabling people to sustainably take control over their environment through skills, sharing and collaboration and demonstrate it through projects.

Inverclyde is now blessed with a wide range of community garden and growing spaces all thanks to the Shed securing funding and undertaking the installation of small growing spaces. Most of the schools and nurseries also have the potential to benefit from growing spaces and orchards right on their doorstep.

New card reader makes sales a breeze at Westhill Men's Shed

Westhill & District Men's Shed has implemented a smarter way to take payments and manage their Shed finances—with a handy portable card payment reading device.

Westhill & District Men's Shed Treasurer Graham Stanley said: "When I took over as Treasurer in 2018, the Shed was well established having started up in 2013. A single bank account was in place along with a cash box for petty cash and small transactions.

"The number of transactions was quite small and we just had the use of the Old Westhill Library leased to us from Aberdeenshire Council. There was a good flow of project work mostly from woodworking and our repairs through our engineering section and through our model railway group. Back then though, our annual transactions would have fitted on a sheet of A3.

"As our numbers and popularity increased, we were rapidly running out of space to accommodate the various groups, storage, social area and kitchen facilities. About that time, the Westhill SheShed was also formed— and the ladies use the facilities outwith the men's sessions—and they too started to grow in numbers once word got out.

"It was clear that more space was required as well as a major roof refurbishment for the library so a plan for increased income and management was required.

"We needed to change the methodology and have a more streamlined system to make things easier in the long-term, especially given the two major projects being lined up, namely, an extension to the building in the form of two portable cabins and refurbishment of our Shed roof and insulation.

"So in order to manage the projects, a second business account was opened to give us greater flexibility and speed of transactions in that we

would be able to use direct banking payments (BACS) and reduce the need for the use of cheques which had to be used for the Treasurers account.

"It became apparent that we needed to raise additional funds as the grants we had secured would only cover 60% of the overall refurb costs. This is where project 'wooden Christmas reindeers' came in and wow, were they popular! And, people wanted to pay with credit or debit cards so we needed to explore how we would accommodate that.

"We reviewed six different card reading suppliers and their machines. We discussed our requirements—a low commission rate, no monthly charges, a choice of the paying out frequency to our account (transaction resolution), easy to use, portability for use outwith the Shed without the need for a secondary device (e.g. mobile phone) and a receipting facility.

"Overall, the best fit for our Shed was [SumUp](#) and their [Solo device with integrated printer](#) (currently priced at £166.80 inc. VAT) and, with Board approval, a unit was purchased for the one-off cost and it came with built-in G2 mobile phone for online connection."

"It became apparent that the ground work to gather the information required to set the system up was important. The machine was ordered at a time when a good discount was being offered and the qualifying criteria was checked and the necessary paperwork submitted to SumUp. The research and diligence paid off and we were up and running within a few days. The full integration of the new service proved seamless.

"We compiled instructions but in practice the machine is very intuitive and it is very simple to use. While a basic training session was run for those most likely to use it, in practice it prompts the actions required.

"The machine was set up to payout to our bank account once a week, although daily and monthly choices were also available. Weekly is optimum for us.

"To keep things simple and typing to a minimum during sales, our income is categorised by a number for our income categories e.g. 1 for commissions, 6 for donations etc.



"This is then identified in the sales summary from SumUp as a line item. At the end of month account reconciliation and cash box cross-check, the weekly SumUp payments are split into category totals and entered into an expanded bank statement with the SumUp payments sub divided so our monthly, quarterly and annual accounts properly reflect the various sources of our income.

"Sometimes it is clear that mistakes have been made such as a typo for the sales category or the incorrect amount entered. When the system is set up and an administrator (in our case, the Treasurer) is appointed, they become the sole interface with SumUp support, and the mobile App with admin privileges. This means that any 'fat finger error' moments and refunds can be rectified quickly through the App. A big advantage with SumUp is that for day-to-day use, the machine is self-contained, an accompanying mobile phone is not required as the machine connects directly to wi-fi or a mobile network.

"The portability requirement that we required is now met and we can easily take the device along to our regular tool sales and community events to take payments with ease and print off a receipt for the customer. There is also the option to email the receipt to the customer.

"We are now not running around banking cheques and worrying about having cash on the premises or at events. Our total transactions now exceed 1,100 per year and more and more of our customers express their wish to pay by card.

"The service offers much more functionality than we presently utilise but we like to keep it simple and it meets our need perfectly.

"Overall, it really has been a trouble-free transition and on the very few occasions that support has been required, the response received has been excellent."

Alford Men's Shed teach valuable life skills to young learners

A team of members from [Alford & District Men's Shed](#) attended Alford Academy last month to teach valuable household skills to school leavers.

Over 80 students attended the series of events to learn basic life skills including changing light bulbs, putting up shelves and unblocking a sink.

Alan Rowe from Alford & District Men's Shed said: "We were delighted to attend the local academy to deliver these learning and development lessons to the pupils. We hope they found it helpful—we certainly enjoyed meeting them all and hope it has equipped them with some knowledge and enthusiasm to prepare them for their future homes."



Scottish Men's Sheds Biker Group set to hit the road for first get-together

*Following the article in the [May 2024 issue](#) (page 13) of *The Scottish Shedder* magazine and posts on the *SMSA* social media channels to promote [Kinross & District Men's Shed](#) potentially setting up a *Scottish Men's Sheds Biker group*, there has been some keen interest shown.*

Kinross & District Men's Shed would now like to invite Scottish Men's Shed Members—that are members of the *SMSA*—for their first motorbike get together at their Shed in Kinross on Saturday 7th September 2024.

A few members of Kinross Men's Shed will also be bringing their classic cars, an MG-T self built Replica, Triumph Spitfire and another car and local Kinross-based racer [Kelly Carruthers](#) will also be bringing two of his classic racing machines, fresh from this year's Isle of Man Manx Grand Prix!

Kirkcaldy Kawasaki has also been approached to be present and potentially bring along the latest evolution in motorbikes with their Hybrid Ninja 7 brought along to be a focal point of interest.

Kinross Shed will provide bacon rolls and refreshments for a meet-up time of 10.30am, some networking and then a ride around the local area for about two hours before heading home.

Interested?

If you wish to attend on Saturday 7th September 2024, please [email Jim McIntosh](#) to confirm numbers for the get-together and for catering purposes.



North Berwick Shedders are living life in the fast lane

North Berwick Men's Shed has been particularly busy with exciting activities over the last few years—from intergenerational projects with North Berwick High School and Dirleton and Law Primary Schools to partnership initiatives throughout their town—and they are now steering off in a new direction...Go Karts!

Stewart Jackson from North Berwick Men's Shed said: "Our members have been involved in many successful partnerships including North Berwick (NB) in Bloom, Bass Rock Community, ScotRail, NB Community Centre, Leuchie House Respite Centre and NB Tennis Club.

"Our projects have included bench restoration, compost boxes, information boards, hedgehog boxes, toy storage boxes, insect hotels, a key cabinet and nest boxes to name but a few.

"North Berwick has approximately 200 benches for local residents and visitors. Our county council is strapped for cash so maintenance has been put on the back burner with obvious consequences.

"More and more responsibilities have been taken on by local groups that wish to keep our town looking good. The renovation work often lands with our Shed members. Fortunately, these groups manage to find the funds for materials so we can supply the labour. Another local group enjoy painting so they often complete jobs for us.

"Every year, North Berwick in Bloom also enters the Britain in Bloom Awards which are judged in August so we are currently actively involved in the preparations for this.

"Leuchie House, the Scottish respite centre for people with neurological conditions, is based just outside of our town and they have created an accessible walkway through a small

wood. The Shed was approached to build and fit different wildlife habitats for the woods. It was the first time that we had made an owl box and a bat box however bird boxes, insect and hedgehog hotels were certainly very familiar to us!

"Last month, we had an extremely productive meeting with SMSA Development Officer Tim Green. Our group all commented on how enjoyable it was particularly concerning the exchange of information and Tim advised that we should get in touch with Michelle at the SMSA to promote our work through The Scottish Shedder magazine!

"One of our latest ventures has been to assist the NB Youth project to install benches at the High School (see photo bottom right). Over the years we have also worked very closely with one primary school in particular in a nearby village who are in a fortunate position that a local farmer has given the school a small orchard to use and maintain.

"This area is very well used as an outdoor classroom as well as a nature space. They have a huge variety of fruit trees, willow tunnels and insect hotels. We have been involved in making a number of directional signs and information boards for this area and other related items.

"The Shed was asked to make a number of Go Karts of the traditional type, some would say old fashioned kairties! The karts were made mainly from reclaimed items including pram and golf trolley wheels, leftover timber and nuts and bolts.

"The karts were duly delivered but unfortunately the children didn't know what to do with them! They didn't have any of the mod cons of pedals, electric motors or remote controls so the Headmaster had to hop on and show them how it's done. It didn't take long for the kids to pick up and they were soon enjoying kairties old style. I think next time we will have to supply a user manual!"

Pictured (top to bottom): the North Berwick Shedders during SMSA's recent visit; some of the karts created; and a renovated sponsored bench requested by a lady who lives in Holland to commemorate her family's happy times in the town.



Carluke Men's Shed's is officially open!

On Saturday 18th May 2024, five years on since they first started their journey, Carluke Men's Shed (CMS) celebrated their official and momentous grand opening at their premises on 1 Kilmory Road!

Tom Kennedy, on behalf of CMS Members, said: "We were blessed with a gloriously sunny day and everyone had a great time at our grand open day.

"Local Councillor for Clydesdale West, Eileen Logan, who is the Council's Champion for Older People in our locality has been a staunch supporter of our Shed since its inception and we were delighted to have her cut the ribbon for us. The day was made even better with the presence of Chloe Cook from Douglas playing a grand variety of music on her bagpipes looking resplendent in her family tartan and entertained our guests.

"We were also delighted that both SMSA Chairman David Gardner and new SMSA Development Officer for the West Coast, Stewart Beck were able to attend to celebrate with us too.

"Celebrations and our big milestone aside, it has been a busy time for our Shed getting ready for the Carluke Gala Day on Saturday 8th June 2024. The gala was absolutely brilliant and our members had a great time. It was our first time entering a float in the procession...and the icing on the cake was when our Shed was awarded 'Best Newcomer'!

"Our members Jamie and David worked to the wee small hours to make sure our float entry was just right for the big day! Roll on next year—we are already looking forward to it.

Pictured (top to bottom): CMS Grand Opening; new solar panels installed; the CMS float at the Carluke Gala; Colin and John with their birthday cards; and HMP Shotts' Senior Prison Officer Martin Hunter visits CMS with Ann Yourston from Age Scotland.

"Sheds are all about friendship and when one of our members, Colin Gray, was too unwell to come along to the Shed on his 70th birthday recently—we just had to go to him.

"We hand-delivered his special birthday card full of best wishes from his fellow members and wished him a speedy recovery and we can't wait to welcome him back.

"Also, last week was our Chairman John Lindsay's 90th birthday. We could not let that one go under the radar and we delivered a card to him to mark his special day. We couldn't quite manage to fit 90 candles on his cake but we did our best !

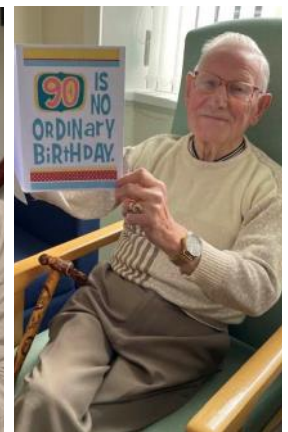
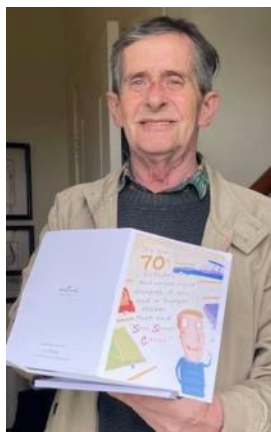
"Earlier this month, Ann Yourston—Community Development Officer from Age Scotland—returned for another visit but this time with Martin Hunter, Senior Prison Officer from HMP Shotts and we gave them a tour of our humble abode including our woodworking cabin.

"Martin was very impressed indeed and now has a better understanding of what our Shed is all about. He stayed to chat with the members present and thanked us for our hospitality and will stay in touch.

"Last week, we hit another major milestone and a tick off our wish-list when we had PV Solar Panels installed. Hopefully, this will significantly reduce our energy bills whilst helping the environment at the same time.

"This Saturday (3rd August), our Shed is delighted to be doing another bucket collection as Motherwell go head to head with Ross County for the first phase of the Scottish Premiership.

"It has been a long and winding road for our Shed but we have managed to come through the other side. Our motto continues to be 'onwards and upwards' and we are always trying to have a positive attitude and a smile on our faces. We really do have a rosy future ahead of us continuing to help our local community."



Inverclyde Shed explores tool library and repair café idea

With many similarities between the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement and [Circular Communities Scotland](#) to contribute to a thriving circular economy through the reuse, repair, repurposing and recycling of materials, Inverclyde Shed reports it is teaming up with the membership organisation to work on future plans for a tool library and repair café from their Shed base.

Back in the [July 2023 issue](#) (page 6) of The Scottish Shedder magazine, our SMSA Communications Officer interviewed Share and Repair Network Co-ordinator Emma Erwin to find out more about the Circular Communities Scotland Share and Repair Network and how Scottish Men's Sheds can get involved.



Inverclyde Shed has now met with Share & Repair Co-ordinator Jane Dixon (maternity leave cover for Emma Erwin) to discuss increasing share and repair facilities through their Shed. Jane said: "It was lovely to meet the team at Inverclyde Men's Shed and hear all about the fantastic work they do in their community. They already have a lot of the building blocks in place to move towards a successful tool library and repair café and I was delighted to be able to let them know about the resources we have available to help. I'm really looking forward to seeing their projects up and running.

"Men's Shed across Scotland continue to be a fantastic resource of volunteers for projects, and are actively involved with several projects within our network including The Men of Leith Men's Shed, Strathmore Men's Shed who are one of the partners running the Blairgowrie & Rattray Repair Café, and Linlithgow Community Trust Shed whose volunteers help with their tool library and repair project.

"If your Shed is thinking of setting up your own repair or sharing project, we have an amazing community and extensive support available at the Share & Repair Network, just visit www.shareandrepair.scot to find out more."

Scottish Recovery Network's new suicide prevention resource

Peer support has a significant role to play in suicide prevention and the Scottish Recovery Network has launched a new co-designed resource to help groups, organisations and services further develop their understanding of peer support in the context of suicide prevention and to train more people to facilitate and offer peer support in the community.



Creating Hope with Peer Support
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"This is a compassionate, gentle approach. It humanises suicide in that it doesn't feel clinical"

Irvine Valley Shed “is like free therapy”

SMSA Development Officer [Stewart Beck](#) met with a welcoming group from [Irvine Valley Men’s Shed](#) who have ambitious plans to serve the needs of men in their area. Normally, we say to groups, “go for the biggest building you can, because you will soon fill it!” but on this occasion, their building, a former lace mill in the East Ayrshire village of Newmilns, is 100m long by about 20m wide and absolutely cavernous!

The guys led Stewart on a tour of their huge space, highlighting their innovative electric vehicle builds, woodwork skills and music/sound engineering capabilities. The tour finished off in the café that they have created from recycled materials and former church pews that have been cut to size and used as seating. Here, they outlined their vision for a facility that will attract men of all ages to tackle loneliness and social isolation in the Irvine Valley.

The group discussed how they’d already managed to enhance the wellbeing of the Shedders, with one member stating “coming here is like discovering a new world, the camaraderie is amazing, it really helps me. It’s like free therapy.”



Developing Stewarton Shed is a “blank canvas with an open door”

SMSA Development Officer [Stewart Beck](#) visited Stewarton Shed this month to find out all about their developing Shed—based in John Knox Church on the main street in Stewarton in East Ayrshire—and offer support from their national association.

Stewart Beck said: “A dedicated group of men have been working together, under the auspices of the Church for just over a year, to put the building blocks in place for the establishment of a dedicated facility within the church grounds.

“Their aspirations are to give this small rural town high-quality opportunities to enhance their health and wellbeing through learning and development projects in a proposed new-build 8.5m x 4.5m wooden shed.

“They plan to host woodwork employability projects utilising skilled staff and are working to create intergenerational life-skills workshops for local young people that will increase their chances of finding employment. I was excited to hear of their plans and hear them describe their situation as a blank canvas, with an open door for local people to come along and get creative.

“I signposted the group to the Scottish Community Alliance’s Community Learning Exchange funding that will enable them to get out on the road and visit other sheds, looking for ideas and inspiration, and accessing the wealth of skills knowledge and experience of the skill-base of Men’s Sheds in Scotland.

“The amazing thing about Men’s Sheds is that Shedders are always willing to volunteer their time and expertise to help new and developing Sheds, as they have also been assisted by other on the same pathway.”





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A PERSONAL STORY

The SMSA chats to 97-years-young veteran, toolmaker and golf club manufacturer John McGhie who is the oldest active member of *Stonehouse Men's Shed* and the most mature Shedder within the South Lanarkshire Shed network. Here, John shares his life story and how he connected with his local Men's Shed which he now 'could not live without'.

Born in Stonehouse on the 20th June 1927, John McGhie went to school in the village before leaving at age 14 to become a toolmaker and studying practical and theory at Burnbank Engineering College for two years travelling back and forth on his motorbike.

John then went on to work in the tool rooms of Metropolitan Vickers in Motherwell and Ranco in Tannochside before, at age 18, he was drafted into the army towards the end of the war and sent to the Royal Corps of Signals in Berlin putting in lines of communication.

John describes Berlin as 'flat and very quiet' but he did meet a local girl and asked his commanding officer if he could get married. His commanding officer's response was to send him to Antwerp instead saying he was too young to get married.

Following the army, John came home and established himself as an entrepreneur, building up the brand of McGhie Golf Clubs. John said: "I set off on the train to travel all the way to the Foxhall Stores near London—the equivalent of Harrods today—for a meeting with the manager. On arrival, my excitement was quickly deflated when the lady at the reception informed me that it was the manager's day off!

"On my way to leave the store and feeling very disheartened, a man brushed the back of me and asked me why I was there. I informed him that I had travelled all the way down from Scotland to meet the manager but he was not working that day.

The gentleman turned out to be the owner, Brian Marks and he was keen for me to show him a set of the clubs that I had brought with me. There and then, I received an order for £6,000 for 15 half sets of clubs and it was also the beginning of a life-long friendship between myself and Brian.

"I waited a few weeks and finally, an envelope plopped through the letterbox. It contained a big cheque—ya beauty—and then there was also a letter with an order for 2,000 more sets!

"More orders quickly followed so I purchased a building in Stonehouse for £500 and started manufacturing. I brought in people from the Larkhall labour exchange and bought grips from Goodyear, maple heads from Canada and iron shafts from three foundries in Douglas in Lanarkshire all shipped via Motherwell Railway Station.

"I really had a great, loyal and trustworthy team working with me and I trained the men on every step of the process—how to make, polish and finish the clubs.

"I really did make an awful lot of money with my business back then but to be honest, the workload almost killed me. Towards the end, we were making over 500 clubs a week with a team of just four and I have to say, it was such a relief when I retired."

John was delighted that he had built up McGhie Golf Clubs to become a well-known and highly-respected brand in the golfing world, famed for its quality, but all good things must come to an end. Avid car enthusiast John, who at one time owned five much-treasured cars, then went on to invest in Jaguar motor cars and was then asked by the Managing Director of Taggarts to deliver Jaguar cars across Scotland. Not one to turn down a great offer, John then began driving all across Scotland delivering his favourite luxury car.

John said: "When I retired—for the final time—I then just started staying in the house. I didn't go out much—I had nothing to go out for! But then one day, I noticed some building work taking place at an old toilet block near my house. Intrigued, I went over to chat to the builders to see what was going on.

Continued on next page...



A PERSONAL STORY (CONTINUED)

...continued from previous page

“The builders informed me that the toilet block was about to become a Men’s Shed! A Men’s Shed—whatever it was, it sounded great and I was in. I took an interest and talked to my grandson who was all for it too and offered to support me by taking me along.

“Every Monday without fail, since day one of the Shed, my grandson picks me up in his car to take me along. I make a beeline for ‘my chair’ and thoroughly enjoy chatting to the lads and hearing all the banter. I love listening to everyone’s stories and also sharing my tuppenny’s worth.”

Throughout the interview, John reminisced on many stories of his loving wife Georgina—who was selected to be a model for many, including the army, and had the most stunningly beautiful low-maintenance hair that she used to dunk in a bucket and swirl and shake in the air and then she was done. Georgina (pictured below) had always supported John tremendously and devoted her life to John and their son and daughter. Georgina unfortunately had a family history of cancer and is now sadly no longer with us and John himself has also fought and recovered from cancer.

Graham Curtis, Chairman of Stonehouse Men’s Shed said: “Recently, this remarkable man stood and captivated the Shed members with his incredible life story for over 50 minutes (pictured above right). This man has lived in Stonehouse all of his life and has so much wisdom and experience to share. John commands his seat on the couch and is a focal point of our Shed. He comes in the Shed and soaks in what people say and you can hear his laughter echoing through the social area. We are so lucky to have him as a valued member.”

When asked about his secret to a long life and still living in his own home, John first of all had to stop the interview to cancel another call on his smart watch, before sharing that he makes sure to keep himself and his brain active by going to the Shed and his main meal of the day is his hearty breakfast—a humungous bowl of porridge made with a pint of milk and four Weetabix dunked in and topped up with orange juice—sometimes



“They are already speaking about my 100th birthday celebrations. I can’t let the lads down.”

with a scoop of jam on top! “The breakfast of champions, plus the odd pint of Guinness” he said.

John added: “I intend to keep coming along to the Shed every single Monday. The lads held a fantastic birthday party for me for my 96th birthday, we all had a great time, and they are already speaking about my 100th birthday celebrations. I can’t let the lads down.”

Following this interview, John—all giddy from telling his stories—unfortunately had a fall leaving the Shed that day. John was quickly attended to by the neighbouring doctor’s surgery before the ambulance arrived. John has a broken knee cap that required stitches, a sprained arm and bruised face. His fellow Stonehouse Sheddors have been providing updates and regularly checking in and visiting John with a supply of cakes. John is still in his usual high spirits and eating his breakfast of champions and plans to return to the Shed in a few weeks.

We wish John a speedy recovery and thank him for sharing his amazing life story and memories with us—and hope we are invited to this incredible man’s centenarian birthday celebrations.



IN REMEMBRANCE

It is with great sadness that the members of [Stonehouse Men's Shed](#) announce the loss of one of its original members and a valued Trustee, Robert Freel.

Robert was born in 1958 and had an active career and was heavily involved in the local community through the Shed, the Heritage Group and he also served over 40 years on the community council. Robert sadly passed away after a short illness at home on the 10th June 2024 surrounded by his loving family.

Robert pioneered the rewilding 'Back Yard' project—which was covered in the [May 2024 edition](#) of The Scottish Shedder magazine (page 15)—converting 500 m2 of wasteland into a garden with fruit trees, flowers, beehives, a pergola, e-bikes and a BBQ for the members and community to enjoy.

Shed Chairman Graham Curtis said: “Robert’s loss is felt greatly within the Shed and the ‘Back Yard’ project is a tremendous asset to the community today and for many generations to come. We were delighted that Rob was able to be a major part of the recent opening.

“The project was Robert’s vision and really would not have taken place without him inspiring the team and sourcing the funding—it will now be renamed ‘Rob’s Back Yard’ in his honour.”

Pictured below: Gordon Thomson from OnPath Energy who provided funding for the project and Robert (right) opening the back yard in May 2024.



SHED PROJECTS

Iranian refugee creates unique tartan guitar at Inverclyde Shed

Javad Soltani (40), who fled his home city of Shiraz and arrived in Inverclyde two years ago and started attending his local Men's Shed, has created a unique tartan electric bass guitar from the heart as a thank you to the Scottish people for making him feel so welcome.

The stunning guitar, named Caledonia, was created using ash for the body and wenge wood for the neck and finger board and finished off with a piece of tartan plaid which was sourced by his local church, Glasgow Kelvin Christadelphians.

Javad, better known as Jay in the Shed, had previously studied interior design and has made over 1,000 instruments. On his arrival in Scotland, Jay approached Bruce Newlands at Inverclyde Shed with his wish to make guitars and teach others in the Shed what he knew through workshops.

Jay is hopeful to set up a new business making these guitars and teaching others how to craft their own musical instruments.

In other news: [Inverclyde Shed](#) recently welcomed a donation of guitars and headphones thanks to the [Music For All](#) charity. Music for All's mission is to create, provide and expand positively life-changing experiences through music for all and thanks to this very generous donation, the Shed was able to launch their 'boy' band, 'Nae Direction'.



© Photo by George Munro



Inverclyde Shed Boy Band—NAE DIRECTION!

Cullen Shedders create new reading nook for local school

[Cullen Men's Shed](#) members Dick, Malcolm and Steve were ready for a wee break after completing their latest project—a new reading bench (pictured below) for the pupils of their local school. The stunning bench was delivered and assembled on-site to provide a comfy outdoor area for the children to sit and relax with their favourite books.



Things are very black and white at Paisley Men's Shed!

[Paisley Men's Shed](#) has been having some St Mirren FC themed fun of late.

The Shed created a Goal Game for their community open days and Shed member Taz created a shield for St Mirren FC's Paisley Panda Club.

It was a real team effort from the Shed and they were delighted to support their partner.



SHED PROJECTS

The SMSA caught up with Deadpool, AKA Paul Stewart (42) from [Three Towns Community Shed](#), for a chat to hear all about his latest highly-detailed 3D printing project—a full red and black suit based on the Marvel comic character made completely on their Shed’s 3D printer—and their plans to make smaller versions for wee ones to buy or hire to raise funds for the Shed.

Paul said: “I started 3D printing around the time of my 40th Birthday and my father-in-law asked me to come down to the Shed to give a demo to the other men..... and I’ve never left.

“I started thinking of ways to get the Shed noticed whilst also fundraising. We like to try to do something a little bit different, something no-one else is doing.

“Everyone thinks 3D printing is like rocket science but it is really easy once you know how—I have even taught our 81-year-old member how to do it recently.

“Over the years, I have created many characters on the 3D printer including a Power Ranger, the Predator suit and our popular dragons—I honestly can’t print those fast enough to cope with the demand from kids.

“This year, I mentioned producing a Deadpool suit for upcoming events—made from 3D printing files I had found online. All in, the suit took

around four months to create piece by piece. Most of the time is actual printing time and then the really fun part comes when it is time to assemble and paint the parts with different metallic spray paints for the desired effect.

“Ensuring the suit was comfortable to wear was really important too, making it fit my body shape.

“I debuted the full Deadpool getup at the recent Ardrossan Highland Games last month, much to the delight of local families, especially the children. The kids were going berserk for it and I must have taken hundreds of photos.

“The success of the event has certainly got us thinking and whilst some kids may own a Deadpool helmet, they would absolutely lose their minds to get the suit!

“The suit cost around £400 to produce but smaller bespoke versions for kids could be made for a lot less to sell or the Shed could rent out different sizes for kids parties and community events to raise a good income towards the running costs of the charity.

“We have even spoke about creating a Rabby Burns for Burns Night. For what it costs to produce, we would make this back and then some by renting these out.



“If any Scottish Sheds are interested in chatting to me about 3D printing or even coming to visit Three Towns to see our projects in person, please feel free to contact me via [email](#).

WANT TO SEE THE SUIT AND THREE TOWNS SHED’S 3D PROJECTS FOR YOURSELF?

The SMSA has invited Paul to deliver an interactive workshop at the upcoming SMSA 10-year anniversary gathering in Perth on Friday 4th October 2024—details to follow soon. Paul will be bringing the suit, his 3D printer and some of his other creations for a showcase with workshop delegates!



SHED PROJECTS

Milngavie and Bearsden Shed projects

A big highlight of [Milngavie and Bearsden Men's Shed](#)'s open day last month was when member Sandy demonstrated how robust he had made his rocking horse!

The Shed had received some donated saddles from [Riding for the Disabled](#) and sometimes riders need a gentle introduction to horses so Sandy thought it may be of benefit for riders to get the feel of a saddle before encountering a live horse. Sandy's rocker was then delivered to Riding for the Disabled later that week.

The open day on Friday 7th June 2024 was a great success and saw Shed members welcome a number of visitors, families members and even a few prospective new members.

The day before the Shed's Open Day (6th June 2024) marked the 80th Anniversary of D-Day and the battle of Normandy and in remembrance, the Shed created a fitting tribute of black military silhouettes which were mounted on the white wall of the Shed. At 1100 hrs, the members held a one minute silence as a mark of respect.

The silhouettes were then removed to be stored and may be displayed again on the 11th November for Remembrance Day and to mark both of these occasions in future years.



Ayr & Prestwick Shed's mobile bench vice solution

The [Ayr & Prestwick Men's Shed](#) members are always looking for innovative ways to improve on and create new and unique projects and tools, and Shed member Hugh McWhinney

recently created a fabulous work area accessory to benefit all in the Shed—even on the move!

The mobile bench vice can be clamped on to any table or work surface in the Shed workshop or even taken home or elsewhere to finish tasks and is proving to be extremely useful and popular at the Shed.



New buddy bench replaces vandal-hit school picnic table

[Milngavie and Bearsden Men's Shed](#) has created a friendship bench for Holy Trinity Primary School in Kirkintilloch from a bench that was damaged by vandals that broke into the school during the Easter holidays.

Shed Secretary Hamish Livingstone said: "Our Shed member Gerry found suitably sturdy offcuts in the Shed's woodstore—one to make the 'Be a Friend, Make a Friend' sign

and another to replace two key missing seat parts. Another member Ronnie cut the curve on the replacement seat segment using the band saw.

"The school was very impressed and, after waiting on dry weather, it was then painted by one of the pupils, the Deputy Head and Gerry.

"So, a bench that was broken with malice is now a friendship bench to help young children meet new friends.

"Well done Gerry and everyone who assisted."

WHAT'S COOKING IN THE SHED?

Westhill SheShed curry tasting night!

At a recent social night of the Westhill SheShed which holds sessions at [Westhill & District Men's Shed](#)—and, our Scottish Shedder magazine 'Sheditor' Michelle Wibrew is a member of—the ladies were treated to a cookery demo from Westhill Shedder, Pushp Vaid.

On the menu was dhal/lentil curry (recipe below), onion bhajis, naan bread, sabzi bhaji (fried mixed vegetables) and rice fit for a king—and of course, a queen! These recipes are featured in the Westhill She Shed/ Men's Shed collaboration cookbook which is filled with over 140 recipes to drool over. We contacted the Shed to ask if we could share one of the tasty recipes with our Scottish Shedder readers...and here it is, enjoy!



Dahl (Lentil Curry)

Ingredients:

- 200g lentils
- 3 onions (chopped)
- 15g garlic (grated)
- 15g fresh ginger (grated)
- 40g fresh tomatoes (chopped)
- 20ml cooking oil
- Spices: chilli powder (1/4 tsp), cumin seeds (1/2 tsp), garam masala (1/2 tsp), salt (1/4 tsp) and amchoor/mango powder (1/2 tsp) *optional*
- 10g fresh coriander (chopped) *optional*
- 1tbsp butter *optional*

Method:

- Wash the lentils thoroughly and drain
- Chop the onions and tomatoes into small pieces
- Add the drained lentils, tomatoes and one third of the onions to a pan and add water to cover the lentils
- Cook on a medium heat until lentils are soft. Stirring regularly
- In another pan, heat the cooking oil of your choice and add the cumin seeds and fry for 30 seconds to release and intensify their flavour

- Add the ginger, garlic and remaining onions and fry until onions are light brown
- Add the other spices and cook for another 5 minutes or so. Stirring regularly
- Add this to the boiled lentil pan, stir and cook for a further 5 minutes
- Fry the rest of the onions until brown and keep for a garnish
- When you are ready to serve, heat the lentils and garnish with your fried onions and chopped coriander (optional)
- You can also add the butter before serving too (optional)
- Season to taste

Seasonal scran from Inverclyde Shed allotments

With an abundance of fresh fruit and vegetables growing at [The Inverclyde Shed's](#) community gardens in Gourrock at Shore Street and on Muirshiel Lane in Port Glasgow, their popular 'Soup Shed' group have been experimenting with tasty and creative seasonal recipes.

The group recently sampled seasonal asparagus and tender stem broccoli with a range of delicious dips including a wild garlic humous, strathdon blue dip, curried rhubarb, gauacmole, piccalilli, edam dip and an Asian-inspired dressing!

Following all their hard work to maintain the gardens, the members can now enjoy the task of coming up with even more tasty delights to utilise their bumper harvests from their Shore Street garden—including Charlotte tatties, red baron onions, snowball onions, stuttgarter onions, shallots, various garlics, detroit beetroots, redcurrants, pink berries and gooseberries—and Muirshiel Lane garden—broad beans, lettuce, courgettes, tatties, broccoli, onions, garlic and lots of blackcurrants!



MEN'S HEALTH MATTERS



Navigating prostate cancer with Prostate Scotland

Prostate Scotland's [COMPASS project](#) helps men and their families navigate prostate cancer.

There are two main projects, the Living Well with Prostate Cancer course which is delivered in partnership with [Ayrshire Cancer Support](#) and [Maggie's Centres](#) throughout Scotland and also [Prostate FFIT](#) (Football Fans in Training), run in conjunction with the [Scottish Professional Football League \(SPFL\) Trust](#).

[Living Well with Prostate Cancer](#) is a free six-week course for men at any stage of their prostate cancer journey. Each week experts cover a different topic including fatigue, managing urinary problems, treatment side effects and nutrition.

Over 200 men across Scotland have benefitted from the course content so far and feedback is extremely positive. One man attending the course at Maggie's Fife said *'this course complements the great treatment we get from the NHS and fills some of the gaps'*.

[Prostate FFIT](#) is a tailored version of the SPFL Trust's health and wellbeing programme, Football Fans in Training (FFIT) specifically designed for men affected by prostate cancer. The free

fitness programme has now helped more than 100 men living with prostate cancer, improving their quality of life with a combination of exercise and healthy eating advice. Prostate FFIT is run, by professional qualified coaches with cancer expertise, at football clubs near the main treatment centres in Scotland—Rangers, Hearts, Kilmarnock, St Johnstone and starting in September, Aberdeen.

Owen Neil, from Troon, came along to PFFIT at Kilmarnock and said *'my cancer diagnosis was life-changing in the worst way. This programme has also been life-changing, only for the better'*. He added *'the course is phenomenal and I will never be able to thank them enough because they have given me my life back'*.

100% of men who have attended both the Living Well with Prostate Cancer course and Prostate FFIT would recommend to others as they go through their cancer journey. Men really enjoy the opportunity to meet others in the same situation and share their stories – it makes them realise they are not alone.

The COMPASS project navigates north in September with the next PFFIT programme kicking off with **Aberdeen FC at Pittodrie** on Wednesday 11th September at 2pm. If you or someone you know might like to get involved, registration is via the [SPFL Trust](#).

Check out the [website](#) for details on the support in your area or contact Elaine Stewart, Prostate Scotland Services Development Manager on 07816 408429.



Free 'Action Man' Manuals

['Action Man - ten top tips for men's health'](#) is a free Man Manual from the Men's Health Forum in Ireland. The booklet doesn't preach or lecture - it simply explains:

- (i) WHY an action is needed;
- (ii) WHAT can be done about it; and
- (iii) HOW to find support if you need it.

Thus, the ten top tips put you into the driving seat, and give you the tools and DIY instructions to make positive changes - if you choose to be your own 'Action Man'.

The SMSA acknowledges and expresses 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

