

# SHOULDER to SHOULDER

Newsletter 036 | November 2017



'S' IS FOR SHEDDERFAIR. WILL WE SEE YOU THERE?  
Thursday 23rd November in Northampton. Don't miss out!



If you haven't booked your free tickets for ShedderFair yet, hurry! Tickets are available free to Sheddars from across the UK at the link below for what is set to be the Shed event of the

year. It's not often Sheddars from across the country get the chance to meet and mingle and we're excited to see so many of you have booked already. Tickets are available for another week.

The event takes place on the afternoon of our AGM. Sheddars will be met with a buffet lunch, workshops and demonstrations, as well as a fun challenge and our much anticipated SHEDtalks.

DON'T FORGET TO  
GROW YOUR MO  
FOR NOVEMBER



BOOK YOUR SPACE NOW AT

<https://shedderfair.eventbrite.co.uk>

Or email us to book. Tickets are for Sheddars only.

# THANKS FOR HAVING US

Our team spent some time on the road in October and I want to say a huge thank you to **Frome Men's Shed, South Petherton Community Shed, Andover Men's Shed, Romsey Men's Shed and Eastleigh Men's Shed** who each went out of their way to spend time with us this month and welcome us into their Sheds. We really enjoy visiting Sheds and hearing from Shedders themselves about the often life-changing impacts Sheds have on their lives. There's also no better way for us to shape our services than visiting Sheds and hearing first hand what they need (and don't need) in terms of support. It's part of our team's plan to visit more Sheds, not just near to where we live, but as far afield as possible. Of course with the rapidly growing number of Sheds, it will take a while to visit you all, but we're very excited to meet lots of you at our AGM and ShedderFair.

ShedderFair marks a very exciting time for us. We're a small team of three and being the longest serving member of the current staff team myself, at six months, we're still relatively new. That said we've worked hard in our infancy and we'll be launching products of some of that work at ShedderFair. Our Volunteer Ambassador programme is UKMSA's biggest project yet and it will see us recruit, train and deploy a team of volunteers across the UK that will provide advice, support and a friendly ear to hundreds of individuals and groups, just like them, developing Sheds for the benefit of their communities. You can meet Claire Shelton on the right, who has been working hard with a hand-picked team of pilot Volunteer Ambassadors to shape the programme ready for its roll out later this month. We'll be recruiting lots more Volunteer Ambassadors to help us support more Sheds than ever.

Member Sheds will receive formal notice of our AGM around the same time as this edition of *Shoulder to Shoulder*. Votes from member Sheds are hugely important so to have your say, book today! See p.4.

As well as our Ambassador Programme we'll be launching our new website, that shows off our fresh new look and boasts an online community forum for Shedders to connect, a new resource library and a way to exchange and donate tools and equipment.

See you at the AGM and ShedderFair!

Victoria

Meet  
CLAIRE SHELTON  
AMBASSADOR  
PROGRAMME MANAGER



I've been with UKMSA since June, working with a dedicated group of Shedders to develop our Volunteer Ambassador programme and I'm excited to say that we will be launching at ShedderFair this month. The programme will give support to new and existing Shed groups and prepare the ground in areas in need of Sheds. If you are an experienced Shed leader looking for another challenge, please come and talk to me or our pilot group at ShedderFair.

I joined UKMSA from Broadstairs Town Shed where I enjoyed three and a half years with some of the funniest, most stubborn yet proactive and positive people I've ever met - miss you guys! I saw on a daily basis what a gift and lifeline Sheds are for everyone involved and I'm thrilled at the chance to be able to share that nationally. Not wanting to say goodbye to the Town Shed I have recently become a Trustee and look forward to supporting it in a different way.

Outside of work I'm kept pretty busy with family, particularly my three young children. I also enjoy Flamenco dancing, walks by the sea and reading.

# NEW SHEDS ON THE BLOCK

MAP

The Find-a-Shed tool on our website is the most popular page and requests to add Sheds to the map is one of the most common we receive. The map is a great way to get your Shed noticed, to get new members and attract support from individuals, companies and organisations in the community. It is also a vital tool for men across the UK to easily find and join their local Shed.

We're welcoming the following open or developing Sheds, new to the map or upgraded to 'open' in the last month.

**Whitby Men's Shed**

**2 Fields Shed**

**Hasland and Grassmore Men in Sheds**

**Connect Shed**

**Southborne Shed**

**Ballemoney Men's Shed**

**Bury Men in Sheds @ REBUILD**

**Nuneaton Men's Shed**

**The People's Shed**

**Worthys Community Shed**

**Piston Broke**

**Grantham Men's Shed**

**Shepton Mallet Men's Shed**

**Alresford Men's Shed**



[www.findashed.org.uk](http://www.findashed.org.uk)

Make sure you're on the map and your contact details are up to date so people can find you to join your Shed or give support.

Happy Shedding, guys!

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017

THURSDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> NOVEMBER  
10AM - 11:30AM

We're pleased to formally announce the details of our Annual General Meeting, taking place on the morning of ShedderFair at the Northampton Guildhall.

The AGM will take a look at developments over the 2016/17 financial year as well as our annual accounts.

Several of our existing Trustees will be standing for re-election and relying on votes from UKMSA member Sheds to vote them back on to the Board and

keep providing direction for the UK Men's Sheds Association. In addition to Trustee elections, members will get to hear about our plans for the year ahead, including our recruitment strategy to appoint additional Trustees with specific experience to our Board.

We can't stress enough the importance of member Sheds coming along, casting their votes and giving their feedback. As the main support body for Sheds across the UK, we rely on you to shape our services appropriately.

BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW

<https://ukmensshedsagm.eventbrite.co.uk>

Or email us to book. Tickets are free and for UKMSA member Sheds only. One vote per Shed.



# SHED OF THE YEAR

Is it your Shed's year to claim the glory **(and a great prize of course)?**

We are still taking nominations for 2017's Shed of the Year. Last year, the Sheddies from Bourton on the Water took the prize and ever since, they've been thriving. You might have seen them hit the bigtime with a star appearance on BBC's Countryfile Diaries and they've been the local heroes of Bourton, helping out with projects for community groups, charities and local residents in need.

This year, it's your chance! We'll be collecting nominations from Sheddies across the UK until the day before ShedderFair which will take place at the Northampton Guildhall on Thursday 23rd November.

Nominations should come from individual Sheddies who want to nominate their Shed. Individuals and Sheddies from other UK Sheds can also nominate a Shed that is not their own.

This year, the theme is 'contribution to the local community', inspired by last year's winners, the Bourton Sheddies, who go above and beyond for their community, as many Sheds do.

We want to hear about Men's Sheds that have worked together as a team to help individuals or groups in their local community. There's no set description for the type of community contribution you need to have done. We want to hear it all!

To nominate a Shed, **send us an email or letter with the name of the Shed and a summary of no more than 400 words telling us why they should win** by Wednesday 22nd November.

The Shed must be a member of UK Men's Sheds Association.

Get nominating!



# IS RETIREMENT A WATERFALL OR A WEIR?

UKMSA Trustee, **Chris Lee** reviews findings of a recent study surrounding retirement.



'Being thrown in at the deep end' was how one participant in a recent study of older people described his experience of retirement. Others were more positive, feeling they were 'all in the same boat' - clearly we face retirement differently.

So why is it that, as we flow down the river of life into our third age, some people feel they're heading for a waterfall - to sink or swim - while others feel they're approaching a more benign weir?

As part of the 'Transitions in Later Life' study by the Centre for Ageing Better and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, YouGov interviewed over 2000 people within 5 years either side of retirement. It yielded some interesting disparities between men and women, not least that 20% of

women said they were worried about loneliness in retirement (compared with 13% of men) and 26% of men were worried about losing their social connections compared to 38% of women. Is this because, like the adventurer going over Niagara Falls in a beer barrel, men are blissfully ignorant of what's ahead? Or could it be that, true to form, men are not expressing their true feelings?

Alongside the YouGov survey, seven pilots of a pre-retirement course evaluated different tools and techniques for managing concerns about retirement. A primary aim was to build resilience and wellbeing while contemplating a future beyond paid work. Arguably men have more to lose from stopping paid work as

it's often employment that gives them their identity and sense of self-worth. It's interesting then that only 25% of course participants were men; next time I'm sure UKMSA would be happy to help redress the imbalance.

Further research is planned into 'interventions' that would help smooth the retirement process and involve employers. Two suggestions would be to convert new retirees into Sheddies as a matter of urgency or, better still, get employers to second workers approaching retirement to their local Men's Shed for a few hours a week. At a stroke, men need never be left up the proverbial creek without a paddle. For the findings of the survey and course evaluation, visit the link below.

[www.ageing-better.org.uk/news/transitions-in-later-life-pilot-projects](http://www.ageing-better.org.uk/news/transitions-in-later-life-pilot-projects)



# THE SHEDDER'S WAY

Part of the Men Behaving Gladly series by Northampton Men's Shed's Chair, **Martin Price** who writes of his observations of Tasmanian Men's Sheds from travels around the Australian Island. You can download the full version of Men Behaving Gladly that inspired this piece by [clicking here](#).

For visitors to a Men's Shed, it can appear that each Shedder is following their own chosen course of action - 'making their own arrangements'. In a Shed that is well organised, members enjoy this freedom, made possible by the roles, relationships and working practices that they themselves have developed to be fit-for-purpose. Such capability can only be sustained within a Shed community that is matured.

A Shed's members must discover the conduct that works for them. They learn it, value it and make it workable through their imagination, skill and resolve. In a recent study of Tasmanian Sheds, 'The Shedd's Way', as described here, was found to be a principal source of their distinction in the world of Men's Sheds.

Instead of following prescribed processes or structures, Sheds enjoy an autonomy that is reliant on self-determined processes of decision-making. Opportunities to work on projects are open, with Shedd's meeting needs of their local community as well as undertaking personal projects. The capability of a Shed's volunteer organisation depends on it achieving consensus-led decision-making on all matters.

## How it works

For the Shed to pursue its purpose and for Shedd's to conduct themselves working 'Shoulder to Shoulder', they need to engage through their own chosen patterns of behaviour and working practices. Many activities are 'loose' - without formal control - but others such as safety and tool management need 'tight' parameters. A Men's Shed for this reason has been described as working in a 'loose-tight' mode. This contrasts with what might be referred to as 'normal' working arrangements in which people function as the elements of a hierarchy.

For a Shed to stimulate social engagement and collaboration, it needs a regime that connects its member's efforts as volunteers. Below I list some of the behaviours and working practices seen in Tasmania that struck me to be descriptive of 'The Shedd's Way'.

## Sharing what we do – **mateship**

Shedd's get to know one-another by sharing project work, problem solving and other joint pursuits. Collegiality occurs naturally as people engage in conversation, teamwork and in other ways to collaborate in their common cause.

## Joining in – **developing community**

When Shedd's meet one-another for the first time they form first impressions. In many cases this leads to informal and easy social engagement. Some people find this more difficult than others and it is important for all Shedd's to welcome newcomers into the experiences of social engagement and companionship. As part of an induction programme in Tasmania, Shed leaders introduce new arrivals at a tea, lunch-break or other gathering. A strong 'kick-off' can be achieved in this way though relaxed and friendly introductions.

## Growing partnership – **sharing responsibility**

When a Shed first forms, decisions are made by its committee. Subsequent progress will then increasingly depend the Shedder's involvement in discussions about the ways that the Shed is run, organised and planned. It is important for Shedd's to engage in active dialogue; raising issues and having their say. A Shed's Forum and its conversations lies the heart of a Shed's values, identity and purpose.



The Forum at Ulverstone, Tasmania. Where members meet, explore issues and opportunities and take decisions -

- sharing and testing new ideas through dialogue
- deciding joint working arrangements
- resolving and agreeing priorities and other issues of concern
- developing leaders at every level. A forum is a place where ideas can be explored.
- Shedders have their say and are recognised for it.

- showing appreciation and recognition for the contributions of individual Shedders
- celebrating achievement
- endorsing a Shed's values, style and identity
- cultivating the Shed's sense of community.

It is here where the Shed's heart can be heard to beat. In the Sheds that I visited, the Forum, as described above, sometimes found its place at a tea or lunch break. Those conducting a Forum recognise the vital importance of these events and for their regularity. They also know that facilitation skills are important for the convener of a Forum.

Whatever shape a Forum takes, these events are recognised to be crucial to the health, wellbeing and quality of the Shed and its facilities. The meetings need to have the attention of most if not all members. Much of the style and progress of a Shed arises from the judgements that Shed leaders make; influencing the scope of the agenda and in encouraging productive argument.





# SUSTAINABLE SHEDDING

**Mike Jenn**, Chair of Camden Town Shed shares his final tips on income generation



I was reflecting recently on what else, in addition to money, made our Shed sustainable. I realised that it relied on elements not typically named alongside more obvious ones.

## Managing Demand

On most days, our Shed will have 10 or so people working in it and these will include both people who might not know what they want to do or how to do it and those who do. The help some need is usually forthcoming, but when one person continually sought help in an assertive manner it became apparent that the Shed wasn't the place for them. What was at risk was the continued attendance of some of the skilled members who were always being asked for help. Somehow the requirement for help has to be balanced with the willingness of particular members to supply it. Their goodwill is a vital factor. This has led on occasions to me

limiting what some people can undertake, offering extra Shed time outside normal hours to the skilled members so they can progress their own work and just recently, paying one of them to provide support one afternoon a week in a separate 'special needs' session.

## Maintaining Morale

Despite being mainly work-orientated our Shed is a leisure pursuit and it needs a positive atmosphere for it to thrive. Along with essential elements like everyone being welcomed, being treated fairly and being enabled to join in I have asked myself: Does everyone feel safe? Does everyone have at least one mate they chat with? Are the subtle put-downs in the banter damaging to some people or is the giving and receiving of banter a key means of strengthening bonds? Why aren't we laughing more? Are agreements and rules

being implemented? Would doing more joint activities give more purpose? What external support would help the Shed?

Whilst there have been a range of responses to these questions we still lose people without knowing why.

To ward off some major threats: In case you have to find new premises, money aside, get as integrated and valued within your community as you can; ensure your insurer knows exactly what you do and how you do it or they may deny cover; keep a 'professional' approach to money handling even though you are all friends; maintain sufficient safety supervision; implement your constitution and policies; and plan for the succession of your Shed's founder/leader by sharing leadership and roles. We are still working at some of these.

Whilst this hasn't covered all the elements at play this review has underlined for me how our sustainability depends on many actors and actions and so I salute and thank the members who guide others, maintain the tools, provide the supervision that keeps others safe, look after the money, welcome new people, make us laugh and those who keep a supportive eye on the organisation.

By pulling together we can expect to thrive.

# Funding Round-up

We've been speaking to a few Sheds recently that are at some point in the process of finding and purchasing land to build their own Shed on. This month's featured funds are therefore specifically targeted to those Sheds and any others who may wish to consider building their own Shed.

Until January 2018, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have an open funding stream dedicated to assessing and building capacity for developing new community-led buildings.

The funding is split into two themes:

**Pre-feasibility Grants:** For when you have identified a possible community-led building project and are assessing the way forward - looking at costs, how you will manage the project, legal concerns etc.

**Project Support Grants:** To help you pay for the advice you need to progress your community-led building project to the point

of submitting a Community Right to Build Order.

A Community Right to Build Order allows local communities to undertake small-scale, site-specific, community-led developments. The new powers give communities the freedom to build new homes, shops, businesses or facilities where they want them, without going through the normal planning application process. Type the term into [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) to find out more about the order.

To find out more about this funding stream, visit <https://mycommunity.org.uk/funding-options/community-led-buildings/>.

Timescales for the fund are tight. If you are interested you'll need to look into it and apply quickly. If you need advice about funding applications contact our team at [admin@ukmsa.org.uk](mailto:admin@ukmsa.org.uk). We are also holding a funding workshop at ShedderFair which will help attendees build confidence, and provide valuable tips and tricks for accessing funding for your Shed.



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[admin@ukmsa.org.uk](mailto:admin@ukmsa.org.uk) | 0300 772 9626 | [www.ukmsa.org.uk](http://www.ukmsa.org.uk)

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