

# Newtownabbey Men's Shed

Charity Number 107160

## Annual Trustees Report

Period Apr 22 – Mar 23

Address – Unit 1c, The Ferguson Centre, Manse Road, Glengormley, BT36 6RW

1. Due to the Charity Commissions NI reporting requirements this is the first set of account and Trustees Report that have been presented for at least 3 years. These accounts and reports are presented following the Charity Regulations. As the Charity has less than a £250k annual turnover the accounts have been prepared on a receipts and expenditure basis. They have been independently examined and both the accounts and examiners report are attached.

### **2. Public Benefit**

Newtownabbey Mens Shed (the shed) was first started in Mid 2015 with 6-7 men getting together and agreeing that such a venture would be worth while exploring. In early 2016 the then Newtownabbey Borough Council (NBC) agreed to support the group with some funding. This allowed them to obtain premises in Merville Garden Village. After a few years, the shed grew which required them to seek out larger premises. This was achieved by securing premises in the Abbey Centre Retail Park (ACRP). In 2020 following discussions with the ARCP letting agent it was agreed that these premises were no longer suitable which led to a search for new premises. The shed was fortunate enough to secure premises in the Ferguson Centre, Glengormley and these still are our current premises.

#### *Premises*

Our premises consist of a large workshop, two large craft rooms, kitchen, tearoom, office and two toilets. We also have significant redundant space to allow for expansion. All our members and visitors agree that the premises are a fantastic resource for use by the shed. It allows us to offer many varying activities which in turn allows us to offer a much greater service to the community. There is no doubt that the premises are a vital constituent part of the character and attraction of the shed.

#### *Activities*

We try to offer as varied and relevant set of activities as possible. These include woodturning – 4 lathes, woodworking inc table saw, planer, jointer, crosscut saw, drill press, router table and multiple power and hand tools. We are also planning in 23/24 to add a CNC Machine and a Spray Booth to our portfolio. We also offer pyrography tuition and equipment, copper work, and many forms of art. A very

popular activity is 3d printing and engraving. We also operate a successful community garden from a local allotment.

### *Purpose*

Whilst we offer an exciting and diverse range of activities these are not the purpose of the shed. Instead, we see these as the conduits by which we can help our community improve their mental health. It is well known and supported by research that men become lonelier as they get older. When retirement is added to this picture and men lose their identity and sense of purpose it all points to a mental health crisis among older men. We experience this on an almost daily basis with members and those interested recanting stories of how they have become lonely and depressed and find themselves sitting in the house watching television. In many of these instances it is interesting that it is often wives, partners and families that encourage the men to come along to the men shed. In addition, we get lots of men with addiction problems, serious mental health problems, loss of partners and various degrees of disability. We try to tailor programmes to suit all these needs being mindful of health and safety and safeguarding etc.

Our evaluations of our programmes and services have shown that our members appreciate these services and have come to rely upon them. Many of these have stated in these surveys that they cannot imagine how they would cope without the support of the shed.

Through our health and wellbeing programme we offer all forms of support as required by the membership. These can be accessed on an individual basis by request. We also offer seminars on mental and physical health issues inc depression and stress, anger, men's health etc.

An integral element of our cohesion planning and creating relationships is our trips and social programme. The membership makes suggestions as to the destinations and events these should include, and this year has included BBQs, Christmas Dinner, Ten Pin Bowling, and St Georges market.

Our membership is highly active in supporting the local community and charities. These include the NI children's hospice, disability riding school, local primary schools, and various others.

In August 2022, a Ladies Shed was created. Initially this operated as a subsidiary to the Mens Shed. However, with a quickly growing membership it is expected that the Ladies will develop their own structures and purposes etc. We consider this to be an exciting development and will significantly add to the public benefit of the shed.

With membership of the Mens and Ladies shed standing at over one hundred and the fact that we meet 5 days per week lead to the shed being able to affect and influence many people who would otherwise be lost. Added to the number of visitors and those affected by our work with other community organisations we would assess this to be conservatively in advance of five hundred of our community.

### **3. Planning**

In January 2023, the shed developed its first comprehensive 3-year strategic plan. We believe that this will bring a better focus to plans inc funding applications etc. Highlights of this plan include,

- Expansion of the premises to attract and help greater community engagement.
- Creation of a community kitchen
- Support to local schools in making planters and library boxes, maintaining school gardens.
- Continuous improvement of the experiences of our members and local community
- Building resilient teams
- Developing and improving skills across the board (trustees, management, leadership, specialist skills etc).
- Development of a working relationship with the Ladies Shed.
- Review of the current constitution and redevelopment in light of current requirements.
- Secure funding to ensure continuous and secure operations.
- Consideration of staffing requirements. We currently have no staff on the payroll.

### **4. Finances**

The accounts are attached to this report. Following the Charity Commission NI requirements these have been reviewed by an independent examiner. The support of our funders is vital to our continued operations. Whilst we charge members a subscription of £15 per month these do not come close to meeting our commitments. The rent for running a premises that can accommodate a large workshop is expensive. Added to this the cost of new equipment, maintenance, materials (wood etc) and energy all add to requiring an operational budget of between £40-50k per annum. With the planned building and equipment replacement costs for 23/24 this might rise to approx. £100k for that year.

The shed does not operate a reserves policy, but one will be considered by the trustees in 23/24. The year opened with a budget surplus of around £60k and closed with a similar budget.

It is not the preferred position of the shed to operate an available balance as high that recorded this year. However as explained in the significant issues section the turnover of leading personnel led to spending plans being put on hold. Also, the trustees decided to change banks as we were unhappy with the service provided. This process took 3 months and led to a hiatus in spending. We have no doubt that these were the correct governance approaches and are confident that spending will quickly catch up and this balance reduced to a more satisfactory level.

## 5. Significant Issues

In October/November 2022 the shed faced a significant issue when three trustees resigned. These individuals were also the Chairperson, Secretary and Fundraising manager. The individuals quoted mental health issues as well as fatigue and burn out. It is clear from communications that there was also a major fall out between these individuals which must have had an impact upon their decision. Their abrupt departure left the shed in a place of turmoil which had the potential to close the shed. However, an emergency members meeting elected a new committee and trustees which was ratified by a members formal meeting in January 23. The new committee faced a huge challenge as none of these had been involved previously in the shed administration and only 1 or 2 had any previous experience. The committee met this challenge head on, and we believe that things have improved considerably. In fact, some members have said that it was a good thing as it allowed a reset.

This was followed in March 2023 by the resignation of the recently appointed chairperson. The resignation was initiated due to a complaint about his behaviour. The chair accepted the complaint and decided that having done so his position was untenable.

Whilst all the above was a serious challenge it is our view that governance of the shed is not in very capable hands and will only improve further as more experience is gained.

## Trustees Statement on Public Benefit

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year the trustees have considered the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

Signed – David Donley, Chairperson

Willam Dunlop, Trustee

Timothy Haddock, Trustee

## **Trustees 22/23**

Gordon Neale Chairperson – Resigned

Karen Tufts Fund Raising Manager – Resigned

George McClelland Secretary – Resigned

Allan Doig Chairperson – Resigned

David Donley, Chairperson – Current

Timothy Haddock – Current

Liam Mullan, Treasurer – Resigned

William Dunlop - Current