

Newtownabbey Men's Shed

Charity Number 107160

Annual Trustees Report

Period Apr 23 – Mar 24

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

1. 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 have expanded our usable space to incorporate a mezzanine level within our workshop to allow us to expand the activities we can offer. 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 grateful to have been able to add CNC Machine and laser equipment this year and have aspirations to

continue development with the addition 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.

The local mental health providers, eg Northern Trust, Cedar, etc are in contact with us almost daily to introduce their clients to the benefits of our shed. This is a real and significant contribution to our community.

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 and a fishing trip.

Our membership is highly active in supporting the local community and charities. These include the NI children's hospice, local primary schools, and various others, including local old peoples homes and other charity partners in our community.

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. This has continued to thrive this year and membership has grown to around 40 ladies.

The ladies have set up their own committee allowing them to experience the benefits of being a peer lead group, with the ladies learning new skills as they develop into these roles.

With membership of the Men's 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.

We have been able to extend our opening hours this year due to support from the ARN foundation which we are most grateful of.

We also were able to deliver a programme to some of the refugees who had moved into our community and again we are grateful to Clanmill Housing for supporting this initiative.

We also were able to extend and develop both our copper work and pyrography this year due to the generous support from Carhill Community Fund and this enabled our members to develop new skills and grow in confidence as a result which had very positive impacts on their wellbeing.

This year also saw a development in our kitchen facilities and we are grateful of the support of the CO OP community fund and HubHub in this very exciting development. We are now able to offer our community healthy nutritious meals as part of their experience at the Shed.

As well as the nutritional benefit of this we have seen an extension of the time members spend in the shed leading to greater social interactions and all of the benefits to health associated with this.

In February this year we were able to employ a Project Support Worker, whose part time salary is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. This welcome addition to the resources of the Shed has made a positive impact on the day to day running of the administrative aspect of the organisation and we hope will continue to be helpful as we seek further development opportunities.

We are grateful for the ongoing and substantial support we receive from The National Lottery Community fund and also Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council together with those other funders mentioned in this report without whose support the Shed could not function.

3. Planning

Following the creation of our strategic plan we continue to monitor and assess all of our operations and to enable us to change and progress to ensure we are meeting the ever changing and growing needs of our community.

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.#

We have been working through this plan this year and have had various training sessions for our trustees and committee members, and as can be seen from our report positive outcomes are being achieved.

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 (Men) and £5 per month (Ladies) 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 £50-60k per annum. The shed does not operate a reserves policy, but one will be considered by the trustees in 24/25. The year opened with balance of £57K and closed with a balance of £31K. We are in the fortunate position of having ongoing support from both the National Lottery and Antrim and Newtownabbey Council which will cover our expenses for the next financial year, however we are in the process of working through funding applications to ensure the longer term financial stability of the shed after this period.

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 – Gordon Neale, Chairperson



Trustee

Gibson (5)
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Trustees 23/24

David Donley, Chairperson

Gordon Neale Vice Chair (Acting Chair)

William Dunlop

John Gibson Snr

Ian Gardner