

Trustees Report for Eglinton Men's Shed

Charity Number: NIC 107554

Financial Year April 1, 2022 to Mar 31, 2023

This is our second year of formal reporting to the Charity Commission. This is a report for the financial year April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023 as an integral part of the process to complete and approve the Annual Accounts for this period.

Full reporting consistent with the Charity Commission's annual reporting requirements will be completed to meet the submission deadline of 31/01/2024 set by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

Current Trustees:

Alastair Davidson (Chairman), David Craig (Secretary), Sam Parkhill, Richard Manning (appointed Sept, 2022)

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of Trustee, Gerard O'Donnell on November 25, 2022. Gerard was a founder member and the driving force behind the establishment of our Men's Shed. His considerable contributions will be greatly missed.

It is intended to appoint a new trustee at our upcoming AGM.

The Trustees met twice during the reporting period.

At each meeting we included:

- Recapping on the responsibilities of Trustees and confirming each person's intent to remain in position and to accept these responsibilities.

- All 4 current trustees wish to remain in place and accept the responsibilities of a trustee of a registered charity
- Reviewing the Public Benefit Statement of Eglinton Men's Shed and reflecting on our performance consistent with this statement.
 - We remain confident that we continue to satisfy the intent of our Public Benefit Statement.
- Taking stock of our financial position and the continued viability of our enterprise.
 - We remain fully satisfied with the managing & accounting processes and operation of the Shed's Management Committee (this committee had 6 formal meetings during the year).
 - In particular, we applaud the continued diligence of Bob Parke who leads efforts to secure appropriate grant funding to supplement our income. We remain confident with regard to our financial viability and our ability to continue consistent with the declared purposes of our organisation.

Achievements & Performance

Over the reporting period, as we started to emerge from the darkest period of the COVID crisis, the pressure from our members to re-open and re-energise all our core activities had made it clear to us that what we offer is an invaluable resource, way beyond our original expectations. The fact that over the period we have not lost any members, (other than one member passing away, and one moving to Cavan), but rather gained a couple, is tribute to what we do and a great encouragement to continue.

Consequently this period has been one of recovering from and consolidation of activities after the Covid-19 pandemic

We continued to strive successfully to satisfy the objects of our organisation set out in our governing document:

To promote personal development, positive mental health and physical activities for the benefit of individuals from in and around the village of Eglinton and district, to advance the health, wellbeing and education of its members by providing a safe and happy environment where the members can, in the company of others:

- (i) Pursue hobbies, pastimes and interests,
- (ii) Learn new skills, practise and pass on old skills,
- (iii) Promote their own and other men's health and well-being.
- (iv) Help reduce feelings of social isolation and loneliness.

With the gradual easing of restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, life in our Shed gradually returned to some sort of normality although there has been some hesitancy by a few of our older and more vulnerable members due to lingering misgivings about health risks that we had to overcome to get them fully engaged.

Our doors were opened on 254 days in the review period, although this does not include figures for the polytunnel when the main building was closed, that is, weekends for watering etc. Our "official" opening days (3 per week) accounts for 156 days, so it is clear that the desire, commitment and need to use the facilities had resulted in many additional days of opening.

The accumulated “Volunteer Hours” were well in excess of 4,000 hrs, as estimated via our signing-in book (although this does not include figures for the polytunnel).

The figures above clearly demonstrate the continuing commitment of the Officers and Committee to ensure that the Shed was available to serve its members/volunteers, and that the members clearly felt the benefits, otherwise their attendance would not have been maintained at such a high level.

The main hub of internal activity in the Shed continued to be the main workshop with a number of team and individual woodworking projects.

A key expansion of our activities has been bringing to fruition the provision of metal working activities and provision of essential instruction on metal working. Some small projects started in May, 2022 with the facility being fully commissioned by September, 2022. Equipment available for use includes a metal band saw, a drill press, a metal cut-off saw, a pedestal grinder, an electric welder plus a variety of hand tools. Projects included making shelving and racks for community groups in the village.

Our programme of talks was resumed and we held three talks that were open to members, their families and non-members. These were well attended.

Our walking group, which meets on Tuesdays, continued activities although they were often frustrated by inclement weather.

The flow of members/volunteers through our doors remains clear evidence of the value of what we offer. One of the most important aspects of our activities continues to be the provision of a warm, safe, convivial space for members and guests to visit and use,

whether they wished to be involved in woodwork, metalwork, gardening, playing pool, using our free library, or simply sitting down for a coffee and a chat. The comradeship of shared endeavours serves to strengthen bonds and helps eliminate loneliness and social isolation. All these activities contributed in a very significant manner to the achievement of our objectives as listed above.

Our endeavours to share and pass on skills in our various workshops ensure active and positive participation in learning processes, and also serve to enhance the skills of the trainers. As a “one-off” project we have recently completed the making of 70 nesting boxes for kestrels and 50 normal bird nesting boxes for a joint commercial/community project in the Strathfoyle area. This has meant adapting our usual “single piece” working to a more “production-line” method, with several people being tasked with specific jobs, to achieve the scale of preparation required. This has been a most interesting learning process, and will stand us in good stead should any similar enquiries come our way in the future.

Along with our partners, Eglinton Annual Show Committee and Eglinton Community House, we have continued to maintain a wide variety of floral displays across the village, including planters attached to the benches which we made a few years ago, as well as a number of free standing planters made in our workshop. This work is ongoing and we envisage it being further developed as we move forward.

When the local ethical food retailer became a co-operative venture having commenced some years ago as a private enterprise, we assisted in reconfiguring the premises to make them more customer friendly, and the steady growth of that business has contributed to the environment with its emphasis on plastic-free packaging and,

where possible, low “food-miles” stocking. This in turn is a benefit to local agricultural producers of fruit, vegetables, dairy products, oils etc. We are proud to be a contributor to this success story.

Part of this outreach has resulted in our workshops doing jobs for all three local Churches, from creating life-sized Christmas Crib figures for St. Canice’s, C. of I., to repairing seats for Faughanvale Presbyterian Church, and repairing, refurbishing and polishing the Sanctus Bell for Star of the Sea Church (R.C.) in Faughanvale. Such activities contribute to cross-community fellowship which is so important to nurture our local society.

Overall our Management Committee has continued to be forward looking to enhance our offering to existing members and to attract more participation from our local community:

- During this reporting period detailed planning was carried out for an Open Day in April, 2023
- Overseeing of all of the work to complete and commission a metalworking facility and to provide essential training to enable safe operation.
- Supporting gradual improvement of the facilities in our Polytunnel with the installation of an irrigation system in the tunnel and new cold frames outside the tunnel. All this has all led to increased use of the facilities and attracted members to further engage in healthy, open air physical activity which has proved extremely beneficial to all those involved.
- Further modifications/improvements have been made to our grounds including resurfacing of the access road to the Polytunnel.

- Fostering links with the wider Irish Men's Sheds organisation and participating in various forums and workshops

In summary the Trustees are confident that the overall management of Eglinton Men's Shed continued to be to a high standard, are confident of the probity of its Officers and Committee and are confident that Eglinton Men's Shed has a sustainable future.