

Annual Report for the year ended September 30th 2022

The trustees of Saintfield Men's Shed (SMS) are pleased to submit their report and accounts for the period October 1st 2021 to September 30th 2022.

Before considering the direct Public Benefit provided by the Charity it is appropriate to measure its past annual performance against our purpose as stated in our constitution document.

Encouragement.

One measure of the welcoming nature of the venue is the number of members regularly attending, paying dues and participating in proffered activities. Over this year we witnessed a 25% increase in membership. Part of the initial influx may have been accounted for by the relaxation of lockdown measures but membership numbers are continuing to increase as knowledge of the shed and its success spreads. Almost all attendees have found new friendships through their membership, some are attracted by the opportunity to create simple items using wood or many other materials and others come simply for tea, coffee and conversation.

Most members are retired men from various occupations who bring many different skills to the shed but we also have younger men, still in employment, who bring knowledge of modern technology and diverse capability. With such a mix new ideas for projects are developing regularly. There is a real sense of more experienced members mentoring those to develop a range of new skills.

Catchment.

Whilst the majority of the membership have addresses in the BT24 area we also have men from BT8, BT28 and BT30 areas. Equally the cross community membership demonstrates a spread of domestic circumstances across the married, separated, single and bereaved spectrums.

Social networking.

The network of communication has been broadened further by visiting other Men's Sheds. Some of the visits have been organised and funded by SMS and others organised and funded by interested external bodies. In this year we organised two open days at the shed during which any of the local residents were invited to come and spend some time experiencing the Shed environment and discussing the wide range of our activities. We participated in an open day organised and sponsored by County Down Rural Community Network (CDRCN) solely for other Men's Sheds to visit. All of these events were well attended and well supported by the membership. Other local social events organised for the membership were a Member's Christmas Dinner for which a local caterer provided an excellent meal and a late summer BBQ for members and their families – both were well attended and drew many compliments.

Members and non-members are kept informed of all organised events through the social media of WhatsApp and Facebook.

Training.

Bringing together such a disparate group of men with varied experience and skills in the use of woodworking equipment requires organisation, supervision and training. Each individual is expected to receive training on any equipment they wish to use unless they can demonstrate an appropriate skill level combined with an appreciation of risk to themselves and others. Two of the SMS members are certified trainers and they undertake the training of small groups of men on available equipment. Men who have benefited from training are then assessed by an external professional and certified fit to practice.

Members using equipment are supervised on different levels with novice users being closely monitored and experienced users being kept under observation. One member of the committee operates as a Health & Safety Guardian with the role of indicating risks in practice.

All equipment is Risk Assessed prior to being made available for use with the Risk Assessment being displayed at the equipment and PPE is made available. Also, all appropriate equipment undergoes Portable Appliance Testing by an external body on an annual basis.

Other types of training are availed of when offered such as First Aid, Diversity, Food Safety, Manual Handling etc. The majority of these are funded and organised by external bodies such as CDRCN or Irish Men's Sheds Association (IMSA). During the year 7 members have benefited from such training.

Some members also participated in a Relief Carving course taught and mentored by two of the Shed members. Some members have extended their skills and continued with Relief Carving to create a host of wooden ornaments and clocks

In addition to the above SMS also benefits from health education courses provided by external groups and we had a well-attended session on the benefits of using the proffered Bowel Cancer Screening service. Such presentations can promote lively discussion and change the views of individual members.

Public benefit.

The purposes stated in our constitution document demonstrate that the Trustees of SMS have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on Public Benefit

The Charity works specifically for men over the age of 18 to provide a local venue at which they may maintain a level of both physical and mental activity. However the improvement in their physical and mental health will result in improved social engagement, thus benefitting their own social circles. Through engagement with other sheds we hope to improve individual's understanding of diversity as well as build a province wide network of contacts. More physical examples of public benefit can be demonstrated in the building of Squirrel Boxes for the Ballynahinch Red squirrel Group and the production of an educational tool for one of the local schools. SMS also manufactured floral display troughs to assist the Saintfield in Bloom Committee.

Trustee Selection and Management.

The Charity is managed by an Executive Committee which consists of all the appointed trustees. These are proposed and appointed at the AGM.

The Executive Committee meets bimonthly; in the year to September 30th 2022 a total of 6 formal meetings took place.

At each meeting the Treasurer presents the latest accounts; current and planned spending is reviewed and approved. On occasion, Officers may authorise some spending between meetings within set limits and always ensure such spending is reported at the next meeting.

The meetings offer a forum to review recent activities and to plan forthcoming events.

Further *ad hoc* meetings are called if required, for example to plan and manage special events or projects.

The Statement of Accounts are approved by the trustees and then presented to the members at the Annual General Meeting. This Meeting is attended by a Rural Development Manager from CDRCN who provides welcome advice on due process.

Finance and Funding

As can be seen from the statement of accounts the only steady stream of funding that SMS benefits from are the subscriptions of members. These are used to purchase raw materials (predominantly wood) which is then manufactured into products that can be sold at Craft Fares etc., other sales would come from requested, bespoke items. Further funding in this year came in the form of two grants from CDRCN. In February 2022 we received funding of £1050 that allowed us to organise a tour of several Men's Sheds in the South Armagh region. In March of the same year we received £300 that had been intended to subsidise the members Christmas Lunch. SMS also benefited from a sponsorship of £500 to purchase Tee shirts and jackets for members.

Currently the operating processes described above are allowing SMS to continue by using member subscriptions as our core funding. At present we have no plans to increase membership costs whilst all of our services costs remain at their present level.

This report has been approved and adopted by a meeting of the Executive Committee on 28th March 2023 and signed on their behalf,

Colin Fleet
Chairman