MEN'S SHEDS

A TOOLKIT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY OF SHEDS IN THE UK AND IRELAND

GCU Glasgow Caledonian University
University for the Common Good

COMMUNITY FUND

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- Scottish Men's Sheds Association
- Age Scotland
- Scottish Government Community Empowerment Team
- Seniors Together, South Lanarkshire
- UK Men's Sheds Association
- Men's Sheds Cymru
- Irish Mens Sheds Association
- Barrhead Men's Shed
- Bellshill Men's Shed
- Carse of Gowrie & District Men's Shed
- Keith & District Men's Shed
- Perth Men's Shed

How to use this toolkit

Men's Sheds come in all different shapes and sizes, so this toolkit is designed for Sheds at all different stages of operation and development. The idea is to have one place where you can access all of the information that you might need on your Shed journey.

The toolkit is split into two main sections. ***Part 1*** provides guidance to those thinking of starting a Men's Shed, or those in the development stages. ***Part 2*** is for Sheds that are already established who might be looking for advice and information, for example, how to overcome unexpected challenges. The toolkit can also be a useful reference point for agencies supporting Sheds. At the back of the toolkit we have also created a list of useful sources of information and support.

There is no right or wrong way to start or run a Men's Shed, and not all of the information provided will be applicable to you. This toolkit is simply here to provide easily accessible support and guidance where needed. To find what you are looking for just click on the relevant section in the following table of contents.

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FOREWORD

Dear Shedder,
Men's Sheds are vibrant community spaces bringing people together to take part in practical activities, learn new skills and simply have a laugh. The benefits that Sheds can bring are far reaching, they can improve men's health and wellbeing, help the environment, and contribute to strengthening communities- every city, town and village should have one. Indeed, the number of Men's Sheds in the UK and Ireland is rapidly growing and we want to contribute to the development of both – new and existing Sheds.

As organisations led by volunteers, starting and running a Shed can bring pressure and responsibility, and Sheds need the right support to survive and thrive. We have spent the past four years closely studying Sheds to fully understand the challenges that they face in their sustainability and development. We have spoken to hundreds of Shedders, visited all kinds of different Sheds and eaten a lot of biscuits along the way. We are so grateful to those who took the time to tell us what is important to them and share their brilliant ideas.

The culmination of this work is the following UK and Ireland Men's Shed Toolkit for Sustainability and Development- a one stop shop for all of your Shedding needs. We hope this will be a useful tool for you on your Shed journey, whatever way, shape or form that may take.

Dr Danielle Kelly and Professor Artur Steiner

Part:1 DEVELOPING A MEN'S SHED

THIS SECTION OF THE TOOLKIT IS *FOR THOSE THINKING OF SETTING UP A MEN'S SHED, OR THOSE IN THE DEVELOPMENT PHASE.*

WHAT IS A MEN'S SHED?

Men's Sheds are community-based organisations typically ran by local volunteers. They are spaces where men with 'time on their hands' come to meet and take part in fun, practical and social activities in a friendly environment. Sheds typically have three core features:

1. **A practical space** where members can take part in activities, such as woodwork or gardening.
2. **A social space** where members can relax, grab a cuppa and chat to others.
3. **An inclusive and friendly atmosphere** where everyone is welcome and supported.

Men's Sheds come in all shapes and sizes, and men attend Sheds from all different backgrounds and ages. They also attend Sheds for many different reasons; to use their skills and share their knowledge, for relaxation and escape, for fun and banter, to meet new friends, or simply to be in a different place that's not the pub. Some bring along their own projects, some take part in group projects and some just come along for a cup of tea and a chat. Some Sheds are mixed community Sheds and some are men only spaces. As a grassroots organisation, set up *'by men for men'*, your Shed can be whatever your members want it to be.

WHERE DO WE START?

There isn't one specific way to start a Men's Shed and every Shed is different and unique, so some parts of this section will be more relevant to your journey than others. Some Sheds are set up by local community members, while others might be set up with help from external agencies. Not all of the listed steps are mandatory, so feel free to skip any parts that aren't relevant to you at this time. However, it is useful to consider each piece of information to future-proof your new Shed.

A good starting point may be to engage people in your local community that might be interested in a Men's Shed. You might choose to form a more formal 'steering group' or simply meet for a regular coffee in a local café. Public meetings are a good way to spread your message, garner community support and attract willing volunteers. This might also be a starting point to help you identify potential premises, any funding available in the community, or any supplies or equipment that people in the community might have. It is also a good idea to visit other Men's Sheds to get useful tips and inspiration.

Some things to consider are:

Why?

- Why a Men's Shed? Is this needed in your community? What is the demand?
- Why are you involved in starting this type of organisation? What is your motivation?

What?

- What resources will you need to get started?
- What other resources are there for men in your area? Is there anything similar already in existence?

How?

- How will you engage with members of your community and target potential members?
- How will you sustain your Shed?
- How might you guarantee the success of your Shed?

Who?

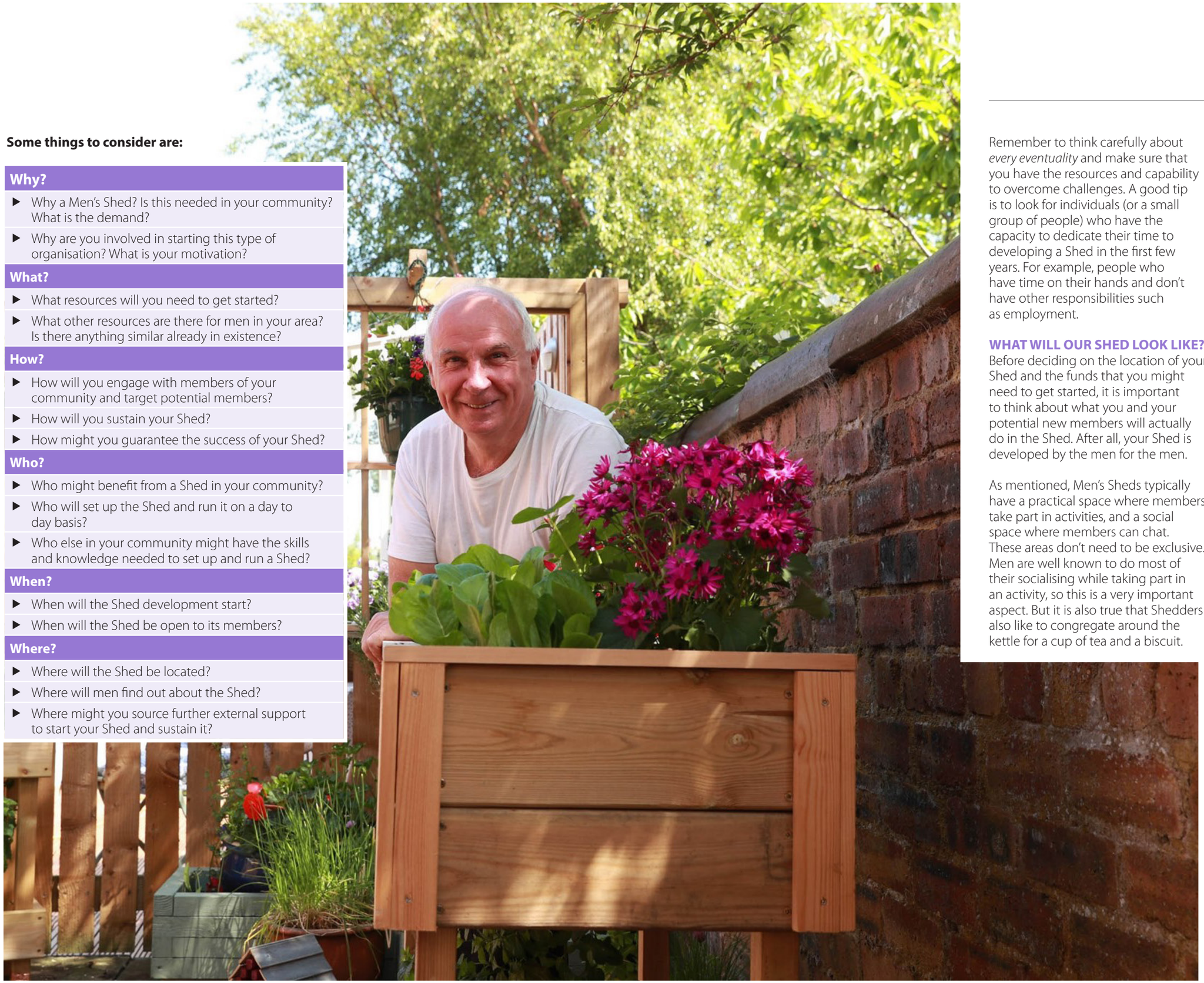
- Who might benefit from a Shed in your community?
- Who will set up the Shed and run it on a day to day basis?
- Who else in your community might have the skills and knowledge needed to set up and run a Shed?

When?

- When will the Shed development start?
- When will the Shed be open to its members?

Where?

- Where will the Shed be located?
- Where will men find out about the Shed?
- Where might you source further external support to start your Shed and sustain it?



Remember to think carefully about *every eventuality* and make sure that you have the resources and capability to overcome challenges. A good tip is to look for individuals (or a small group of people) who have the capacity to dedicate their time to developing a Shed in the first few years. For example, people who have time on their hands and don't have other responsibilities such as employment.

WHAT WILL OUR SHED LOOK LIKE?

Before deciding on the location of your Shed and the funds that you might need to get started, it is important to think about what you and your potential new members will actually do in the Shed. After all, your Shed is developed by the men for the men.

As mentioned, Men's Sheds typically have a practical space where members take part in activities, and a social space where members can chat. These areas don't need to be exclusive. Men are well known to do most of their socialising while taking part in an activity, so this is a very important aspect. But it is also true that Shedders also like to congregate around the kettle for a cup of tea and a biscuit.

Traditionally Men's Sheds are based on the garden Shed model of being full of tools for making things. However, you don't need to be good at DIY to join a Men's Shed. Sheds are well known to provide a wide range of activities to suit everyone's interests, including:

- Woodwork
- Metalwork
- Gardening
- Social events
- Photography
- Bike repairs
- Car restoration
- Furniture restoration
- Walking
- Cooking
- Choirs and bands
- 3D printing
- Book clubs
- Arts and crafts
- Model making (e.g. railways)
- Board games and computer games
- Seminars and workshops from guest speakers or Shedders
- Community activities (e.g. galas)
- Home repair
- Exercise classes (e.g. yoga)

The type of activities that your Shed delivers can also depend on what you are allowed to do in the space you have. For example, if you start off hiring a village hall they might not let you use electric tools and might not have a kitchen. Sheds often start off small with a few activities and build up their range of activities as their membership, skills base and funding pot grows. It is also likely that activities might change as members needs and interests change, so it is always important to regularly review what you are doing to see what works and what doesn't.

WHAT RESOURCES WILL WE NEED?

It is difficult for one person to set up a Shed by themselves. You will need willing volunteers who are able to dedicate their time over the long or short- term. This may consist of people from your local community, friends or family.

Members

Your members are your key assets; they bring the skills, knowledge and resources that are needed to develop and run a Men's Shed. The equal input of all members is essential, especially in the beginning stages of development (i.e. deciding on premises and activities). This is to ensure that your organisation isn't too 'top down' or hierarchical.

You may have started off holding local community meetings about setting up a Shed, and now you have a group of core 'members' who are taking this project forward. As the wheels are in motion you will likely attract more members as you continue to develop and grow, however, here are some useful steps to generate interest:

- Hold a public meeting in your area and invite people from across the community, such as other community groups, local authorities, friends and family. You could advertise the meeting in areas where men congregate in your community (e.g. bowls club, pub, bookies). Similarly, it can be very effective to advertise your meeting in areas where women visit (i.e. hairdressing salons), as it is often wives and partners of men who will bring them along or encourage them. In this meeting you can spread the word about your plans and gauge people's interest in joining as members.
- Contact your local newspaper and see if you can get a small advertisement or even a full page article about your Shed plans.
- Create leaflets to be handed out in your community and placed in local venues (e.g. GP surgeries, supermarkets, community centres). This doesn't have to be anything fancy, a small print-out will do as long as it looks catchy and has your contact details on it.
- Set up a social media account that includes your contact details and some photos (e.g. Facebook or Twitter). This is also a good way to link up with other local community webpages and advertise your Shed online.
- Set up a table or stand at a local venue (e.g. supermarket, community centre) or community event (e.g. gala) where you can chat face to face with people from your community about your Shed plans and gather contact details of potential members.
- Register your details on a national Shed association webpage- these websites often have a map where people who have heard about Men's Sheds can locate their closest organisation. Shed associations may also provide opportunities to advertise your Shed in their newsletter or through their mail-outs.
- Market your Shed to family members such as wives of potential members. Family members are often a good source of encouragement for men thinking of joining a Shed and might provide that extra gentle push. Again, places like hairdressing salons, supermarket noticeboards, local cafes and takeaways can be great places to reach this audience.

You may collect a lot of contact details for potential members but this does not translate into people showing up for meetings or attending your Shed. Be patient, these things can take time, and don't forget that your Shed doesn't have to be busy to be successful, sometimes it's about quality over quantity. On the other hand, you may prefer to remain small, especially at the beginning; your Shed doesn't have to continually grow and expand, again, it's up to you what works.

It is important to consider some barriers that may prevent men from joining your Shed, and how to overcome them:

- **Taking part:** Some men might not be interested in socialising, taking part in group activities or making new friends. They might simply want to use the Shed equipment to do their own projects. Therefore, make sure you make it clear that the Shed is not solely for socialising. Often the socialising comes later as a product of taking part in activities.
- **Communication/language barriers:** There may be potential members who have communication barriers, such as not speaking English, or having hearing limitations. Therefore, consider ways to improve communication within your Shed. For example, making sure you have doors that can be closed to keep noise at a minimum for those hard of hearing. You can also contact your national voluntary organisation support webpages listed in the resources section at the back of the toolkit for more support.
- **Confidence:** It can often be difficult for men to pluck up the courage to attend a Shed meeting, or walk into Shed premises. Especially those who may have physical or mental health issues. Always make sure to welcome new members in a friendly manner. It can also be useful to introduce a buddy-system where a designated Shedder accompanies new members at meetings, or on their first few days at the Shed. Ask them what their interests are, show them around, get them a cup of tea and introduce them to other members.

If you have any questions about your membership please contact your national Men's Sheds Association for guidance.

Committee

Although all people in Sheds are equal, it can be important to have some form of leadership and decision-making processes in place. To help with the smooth running of your Shed you may decide to form a committee, which is also usually made up of key members with useful skills and knowledge. A typical committee will consist of:

Role	Jobs	Skills required
Chairperson	To represent the Shed as a main point of contact, ensure that meetings are well organised and chaired, guiding the committee and the running and development of the Shed.	Good listener, competent speaker, confident.
Vice-chairperson	To support the chair in their role and stand in where necessary.	Good listener, competent speaker, confident.
Secretary	To organise meetings, write agendas, take minutes, ensure the committee are informed of meetings dates and to deal with committee correspondence.	Well organised, good communications skills, able to meet deadlines.
Treasurer	To ensure the smooth running of Shed finances, to monitor income and expenditure, maintain financial records, manage budgets and provide financial reports to the committee.	Financially literate, good with numbers, attention to detail.

The number of members you have on your committee may be dependent on the structure of your organisation. You may also have a sub-committee who help out when needed, for example, handling social media or advertising the Shed.

When forming a committee, succession planning is vital so that the same people are not overburdened. You must also consider that committee members may need to be replaced unexpectedly due to poor health or other obligations.

Men's Sheds are well known for their 'by the men for the men' ethos, so it is important to remember that non-committee members also play a vital role in decision making. Everyone is equal and you are all working together for a common purpose.

'EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE A WORKING COMMITTEE, EVERYBODY'S ON A LEVEL PLAYING WHEN YOU WALK THROUGH THAT DOOR' (MEN'S SHED MEMBER)

The aim is to make sure that all members feel included, listened to and have a safe space to share their experiences and knowledge.

External support

As well as sourcing core volunteers and forming a committee, you will likely need to seek external support to help develop your Shed. There are a wide range of agencies, associations and organisations that you can contact, including:

- *National Men's Sheds Associations*, provide useful advice and resources to both new and existing Sheds. You can also use their webpages to locate existing Men's Sheds across the UK and Ireland.
- *Existing Men's Sheds* in your area or in other regions. It may be useful to check if there are already any Shed networks existing in your region. Shedders are always happy to share their experiences and offer advice.
- *Voluntary Organisation/ Charity Support Agencies/ Third Sector Interfaces* who can give advice about running a voluntary organisation. Examples include the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), and local volunteer support centres.
- *Local Public Authorities*, for example Community Development Officers operating in your local council region. They can offer useful advice on premises available to use in your area, and sources of funding.
- *Business Development* support if you need advice about generating income. Advice is often available from local and national Government webpages.

Some Sheds are set up by external agencies, or may be part of an existing community partnership, so you may already have direct access to skills and advice.

All contact details and links to relevant websites can be found in the resources section at the back of the toolkit.

Box 1: Regional Support

Regional support for Men's Shed development is offered across the UK and Ireland.

The Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA) provide regional support by engaging with local networks, and offering support via personal visits, phone calls and emails. SMSA promotes and attend regional Shed Network meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to connect with the regional representatives of Scottish Sheds face-to-face or virtually on Zoom to allow the free flow of information in regard to successes, challenges, solutions and building personal relationships with the national association and with each other 'shoulder to shoulder'. The SMSA's post COVID-19 development plan includes the development officers support to SMSA Shed Ambassadors across the national network to help further the ethos and deeper understanding of the Scottish Men's Shed grass roots Movement and the benefits of SMSA Membership.

The UK Men's Sheds Association (UKMSA) has a scheme where experienced Shedders become volunteer Shed Ambassadors. These Ambassadors have a track record of setting up safe and sustainable Sheds in their region- and are therefore able to offer valuable support and guidance to those wishing to set up Sheds within their own communities. Ambassadors provide information and support via phone, email and in person, sharing their vast knowledge and experience. Ambassadors also present at local events and conferences, and attend start up meetings to inspire and motivate people to start new Sheds.

Men's Sheds Cymru has three Regional Development Officers (RDO's), who are the main point of contact to generate interest and promote the Men's Sheds concept in their area and across Wales. They work with individuals, communities and organisations who have an interest in creating a new Men's Sheds. RDOs are also on hand to help and support existing 'sheds' with continuity or new ventures.

For more information on regional based support and networks please contact your national Men's Sheds Association.

Suitable premises
While you are in the planning stages of your Men's Shed it may be easier to meet in a local community space, such as a village hall bowling club, or community centre. Especially if you are still trying to generate interest, sign up members or form a solid committee. These spaces can often be used for free so are a great starting point for those who have little or no start-up funds.

However, you may likely get to a stage where you need a permanent space to start activities and store your equipment. It is important to think about how many Shedders you are likely to attract, how long you would like to stay in the premises and what is available locally. Here are a few examples of things to consider:

- Is it easily accessible by public transport? Is there parking?
- Are there kitchen facilities for tea breaks and washing up?
- Does it have accessible toilet facilities?
- Is it wheelchair friendly?
- Is the building structurally safe? Are there any risks?
- Can we store our equipment?

A good starting point is to get out into your community and do some research:

- Contact other community groups for advice, they may know of local spaces available for use. There may be potential to share some space with another group.
- Check your local public authority webpages or contact them via email for lists of empty or 'surplus' properties/assets in your area, or properties they are unable to market (e.g. council, police, health service).
- Make connections with private landlords in your area (e.g. owners of factories or industrial units).
- Talk to local housing associations who often have a large portfolio of properties.

The important thing is to make good connections and get yourself known in your local area- you might be surprised at how many people want to support your initiative.

There are a number of options to consider for your premises, some useful examples are also shown in **Box 2**:

Box 2: Thinking outside of the box

It is good to keep an open mind about premises. Here are some examples of creative ways to use space:

- Hire a Scout Hut when not in use by the Scouts
- Set up storage containers in a waste recycling centre and upcycle materials on site
- Set up a Shed in a community allotment and contribute to building planters and fencing
- Use a school woodwork department out of hours.

Sheds are also known to rent out their own premises to other community groups to use as an income stream. Visiting other Sheds may give you great inspiration.

Hiring/using a room - this is less permanent but is good for the planning stages of your Shed. For example, a community centre or village hall could be hired at an hourly rate or even for free. However, you may not be able to bring in or store any electrical tools or materials.

Leasing a public authority building - leasing a public authority building (e.g. from the local council) is a common route for community groups. Public authorities tend to have a portfolio of buildings and land that you can enquire about, and you can often negotiate reduced rates. In some areas there are also options for community ownership of public buildings and land. More detailed information on this can be found in Part 2 of the toolkit.

Renting a commercial/ private property - private landlords may be keen to support a community initiative so can often offer reduced rates, or shared use of a space. Sheds have been known to negotiate lower rental rates if they do some renovation of the building for the private landlord. However, costs for private rental from letting agents can sometimes be high, so this might only be a feasible option if you have a steady income stream.

Buying a property - this is probably the most expensive option but there can be grants available to support the purchase of a building by a community group if you do your research.

Build your own Shed - if you can find a suitable plot of land to build a Shed, are able to raise the funds and have access to the skills and knowledge required this could be a viable option. However, this can be a very ambitious task and can involve a lot of planning and paperwork.

You might also want to think about your plans for the future of your premises- would you want to have a long or short-term lease - or would you want to have full ownership? Who will be in charge of the maintenance of the building? Might your financial situation change in the future that could affect your ability to make rental payments?

There is help available to support you while you work out the best solution for your Shed, and this is covered in more detail in the Part 2 premises section of the toolkit. There are also links to various organisations that offer free help to support you in acquiring premises- these can be found in the resources section at the back of this toolkit.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO MAKE YOURSELF KNOWN IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND MAKE GOOD CONNECTIONS WITH POTENTIAL DONORS.

Start-up funding

There are always costs associated with starting up and sustaining any type of community organisation. Start-up costs for a Men's Shed may include:

- Rental/hire costs for premises
- Possible renovation of premises
- Utilities costs: gas, electric, water
- Funds to pay for tools, equipment and activities
- Insurance costs
- Printing/ photocopying costs for promotional leaflets and posters
- Money for tea, coffee and biscuits.

Depending on the intended location and size of your Shed and range of activities you plan to offer, you will need to consider your current and future finances.

To cover all or some of these costs there are specific types of funding available:

- *Grant funding-* this involves filling in an application form for a pot of money from a small or large funder. It will typically require providing detailed information about your Shed. Some funders may specialise in start-up funding for small community organisations, so this is a good place to start.
- *Donations/ Fundraising-* this can be a simple way to raise a small amount of money to cover start-up costs such as buying equipment. For example, you could hold a coffee morning, or organise a community raffle. You may also receive donations of physical objects to fill your Shed (e.g. tools, kettle, wood, paint). The most important thing is to make yourself known in your community and make good connections with potential donors (e.g. local businesses and builders merchants).
- *Income generation-* a simple way to generate start-up income is to charge fees to your members through a single, monthly or annual fee. For example, some Sheds may charge £1/ 1 Euro per meeting to each member to cover the cost of hiring a hall and paying for tea and biscuits. Some Sheds also create items to sell for income generation at local events such as bird tables, nesting boxes, planters.

More detailed information about funding and financial sustainability can be found in Part 2 of this toolkit.

Equipment
The type of equipment that you need will depend entirely on the activities that your members want to do (e.g. woodwork, metalwork, gardening, music, computing). Members might bring in their own hand tools from home, you may also get donations from community members, local businesses or schools through word of mouth. However, if your Shed is going to have any electrical equipment you must ensure that this all complies with health and safety regulations, such as Portable Appliance Testing (PAT). You can contact a local electrician or visit your national health and safety webpages for guidance; these are all listed in the resources section at the back of the toolkit.

Materials (such as wood or metal) can be found through a number of means:

- **Recycling:** visiting recycling depots, using community re-use and Freecycle websites, charity shops, looking for unused or surplus materials from builder's yards.
- **Donations:** from the local community or local businesses. Some national Shed Associations have partnerships with national suppliers.
- **Purchased:** buying from suppliers, if you let them know that you are a small community group you might even get a discount.

Other Sheds in your area might also be looking to swap, sell or upcycle some of their tools and materials so it might be useful to contact them. This could be done through social media pages or through contacting your national Men's Sheds Association. Donations of equipment may increase as your Shed becomes more well known. It is vital to plan for space to store equipment, materials and donations from the start, especially when looking at potential premises. This might include having a designated storage space in the Shed; finding local free storage solutions within your community; or renting or purchasing storage containers.

ESSENTIAL RULES/ LEGISLATION

To run any type of community organisation there are basic rules/ legislations that you should be aware of and follow where necessary. This is to ensure that your Shed is a safe and secure environment for all, and that you are fully aware of issues that could affect your organisation. There are different laws and legislations that exist across the UK and Ireland, so always refer to your local and national government webpages for guidance. Useful contacts can also be found in the resources section at the back of this toolkit.

Your Shed might consider creating a 'code of conduct' to ensure that everyone adheres to the standards and expectations set within your Shed. This could be given to new members upon joining, for example in a membership form. Ideas and templates can be sourced from your national Men's Sheds Association.

Health and safety
Although Men's Sheds are not classed as places of work and are not bound by legislation, such as the UK Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Irish Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (2005), your Shed still has a duty of care to look after the health and wellbeing of its members.

Your Shed might have equipment and machinery that could cause injury to members. You might also have members who are more vulnerable to injury, especially if they have limited ability or existing health issues.
To ensure the health and safety of all members there are a number of things to consider:

Fire safety
including fire alarms, fire extinguishers, clear exits, assembly point

Safety of machinery/ equipment
including PAT testing, emergency stop buttons, regular maintenance, handling flammable liquids, risk assessments

Safety of premises
including risks and hazards, building regulations/ inspections, electrics, signage, tidying up

Training
including safety inductions, use of machines/ equipment, keeping individual records

Supervision
of those using machinery/ equipment

Personal protection
safety goggles, gloves, dust extraction, accident book

Insurance and liability
are you adequately covered in the case of an accident?

Recording of personal details
including emergency contacts, medical details, factors that may increase individual risk

Cleanliness/ Hygiene
including keeping shared areas clean and the use of anti-bacterial products i.e. disinfecting toilets

Due to the unpredictable nature of the COVID 19 pandemic, and the length of its influence on society, we suggest you refer to guidance from your government and national Men's Sheds Association about ongoing COVID 19 related health and safety measures.

As there are a lot of factors to think about, it can be helpful to have assigned Shedders who are in charge of regularly overseeing health and safety in your Shed. You also need to think about ways to get your members to adhere to health and safety rules. Some members may attend your Shed to have fun and escape rules and regulations, so you might have to think creatively to get them on board. More detailed information on on-going health and safety can be found in Part 2 of the toolkit.

To ensure that you have considered all aspects of health and safety, it might be useful to visit a fully operational Shed and ask for their advice. Useful links to online advice can also be found on the national health and safety webpages listed in the resources section at the back of the toolkit. You can also contact your national Men's Sheds Association for guidance.

Insurance and liability
Adequate insurance is essential for all types of community organisations to cover for all eventualities. This may include protection for:

- Property (e.g. land, buildings, furniture, computers, tools)
- Cash held on premises or in transit (e.g. membership fees)
- Any liabilities to people (e.g. volunteers or the general public)
- Fundraising or special events
- Trustee protection

The most common form of insurance or organisations that deal with members of the public is public liability insurance, which is relatively inexpensive and protects against any allegations of injury caused to someone by your Shed.
For example, if someone was to trip over a wire, burn themselves with a kettle, or damage their fingers using a sander. It also covers you should you accidentally damage a property that you are renting/ hiring, so most landlords or public authorities will require that you have this in place before renting space to you. Some insurers offer specialist charity insurance that can be more comprehensive and tailored for your needs, especially organisations that do not have the financial capacity to pay any costs for damages. For more information on insurance, please visit the national voluntary organisation support webpages listed in the resources section at the back of the toolkit. You can also contact your national Men's Sheds Association for specific advice for Sheds and possible insurance discounts for shed members.

AS COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, MEN'S SHEDS ARE OPEN AND WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS FOR PEOPLE OF ALL BACKGROUNDS AND ABILITIES.

Data protection
As you may gather and store personal information of your Shed members (such as contact details), you must follow the UK Data Protection Act 2018 and the Ireland Data Protection Act 2018. There are strict rules that must be followed that ensure that information is:

- used fairly, lawfully and transparently
- used for specified, explicit purposes
- used in a way that is adequate, relevant and limited to only what is necessary
- accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
- kept for no longer than is necessary
- handled in a way that ensures appropriate security, including protection against unlawful or unauthorised processing, access, loss, destruction or damage.

Similarly, under all Data Protection Acts, members have the right to find out what data the Shed stores about them, which includes the right to:

- be informed about how their data is being used
- access personal data
- have incorrect data updated
- have data erased
- stop or restrict the processing of their data
- data portability (the reuse of their data for different services)
- object to how their data is processed in certain circumstances.

For further information about data protection, visit: *www.gov.uk/data-protection* or *www.dataprotection.ie*

Equality/ discrimination
As community organisations, Men's Sheds are open and welcoming environments for people of all backgrounds and abilities. Equality is all about treating everyone fairly, and recognising that people have different circumstances that need to be considered to enable their participation on equal terms with others.

The UK Equalities Act 2010 and Irish Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 must be adhered to within every Shed. These Acts are in place to legally protect people from discrimination and outline the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat people. For example, preventing discrimination for sex/gender, race, religion or disability. For more information on the UK Equalities Act please visit: *www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance*

For more information on the Irish Equal Status Acts please visit: *www.ihrec.ie/your-rights*

IT IS LIKELY THAT PLANS MIGHT CHANGE AS NEW OPPORTUNITIES OR UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES ARISE.

ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION

To ensure the smooth set-up and operation of your Shed, there are some key areas to consider. Again, each Shed is individual so some of these tasks may be more relevant to your journey than others.

Creating a constitution
(also known as a 'governing document')
In simple terms a constitution is a written agreement of what a group is going to do and how they are going to do it. This can be the basic starting point for any organisation. It is there to guide you by setting out the aims and purposes of the group and it also shows that you are democratic and accountable. For example, by outlining particular rules about decision making processes and governance. Most constitutions include:

1. Name of organisation
2. Purpose of organisation
3. Who runs the organisation?
4. How meetings are held?
5. What rules are in place?
6. What happens if the organisation dissolves?

If you decide to gain charity status you will require a constitution. This document also gives funders an assurance that their funds will be spent in line with the aims of the constitution. Similarly, most sources of funding are only available to groups that have a registered bank account, and to get a bank account your group will need a constitution. For more information on how to write a constitution, visit the national voluntary organisation support webpages listed in the resources section at the back of the toolkit. You can also contact your national Men's Sheds Association for useful Shed specific templates.

Getting charitable status
You may decide that you would like your Men's Shed to become a registered charity with a distinctive legal form and a special tax status. It is free to become a registered charity and the benefits of this can include:

- Public recognition and trust
- The locking of assets for charitable/ social use
- Tax benefits and reduced rates
- Being looked on more favourably by funders/ more access to funding.

However, there are legal obligations that come with being a charity, for example having a set of charity trustees, providing annual financial reports to charity regulators and creating a constitution. You will also need to decide what legal form your charity will take. There tends to be four main types of charity structure, however this can differ across the UK and Ireland:

1. **A charitable incorporated organisation (CIO)** - Trustees have limited or no liability for charity debts or liabilities. All actions are taken under the charity name as a single entity. An advantage of becoming a CIO is having an independent examiners report rather than a full audit, which is a quicker and cheaper option.
2. **A charitable company (limited by guarantee)** - an incorporated charity that also trades, employs staff, regularly enters contracts etc.
3. **An unincorporated charitable association** - Trustees do have liability for charity debts or liabilities. You can't employ staff or own premises.
4. **A charitable trust** - a group of people (i.e. trustees) who manage assets such as money, land or buildings under a governing document.

For information on charity structures and how to become a charity please visit your national charity regulator webpages listed in the resources section at the back of the toolkit. You can also contact your national Men's Sheds Association for advice, or speak to other Men's Sheds who have been through this process.

Creating a business plan
While this may seem a little strange for a voluntary organisation, a business plan can be important to plan for the future, and to be accountable to your members, funders and the public. It will help you to clarify your aims and objectives, identify potential risks and issues, set out goals and strategies and measure your progress. A business plan is also required if you wish to become a charity, and you will likely be asked for a business plan from funders. A typical business plan will include:

1. A history or background to your Men's Shed
2. What future activities are planned and how you will achieve this?
3. How you will source funding and become financially sustainable?
4. How you will assess/deal with potential risks to your Shed?
5. How you will measure/ evaluate progress and growth?
6. How you will monitor budgets and spending?

It is likely that plans might change as new opportunities or unexpected challenges arise. Similarly, different funders might ask different questions. Therefore, it might not be appropriate to produce a single formal document, but rather to regularly evaluate where your Shed is and what it's plans are.

The key is to be as honest as possible and not to set unachievable goals. For more information about how to create a business plan, please visit the national voluntary organisation support webpages listed in the resources section at the back of the toolkit. You can also contact your national Men's Sheds Association for templates and examples of previous Shed business plans.

Getting a bank account
If you are a constituted group generating funds through memberships or donations you will require a bank account in the Shed's name. Accounts are available from most banks for small voluntary organisations/charities, so contact your bank to see what they offer. You will need to provide proof of your voluntary or charity status and that you are not a private business, this could be your constitution or charity number.

Managing/recording finances
Up-to-date financial records (or projections if you are a new group) will need to be produced for the following reasons:

- To provide financial transparency to your members and to plan for the future
- To send to the charity regulator (usually annually but can be on request)
- If applying for funding (part of the application process).
- If applying to public authorities for premises (part of the application process).

This might be the job of the Treasurer, but other members can also provide help. A financial record may include monthly or annual income and expenditure, records of any funding received, a list of assets, and where you have financial reserves or a deficit. The amount of information you are required to offer can depend on how much income your Shed receives and who is asking for the information. For more information on financial reporting, visit the national voluntary organisation support webpages listed in the resources section at the back of the toolkit.

Core administration tasks
There are core administration tasks that may also require attention when running your Shed depending on the scale of your activities. Here are some examples of things to consider:

- Membership- recording member contact details (and keeping this up to date), recording who has been trained on machinery, visitor bookfor fire safety regulations, collecting membership fees
- Communication- contacting members and relevant stakeholders via email or telephone, drafting letters, answering enquires, chairing and organising meetings
- Advertisement/ promotion- setting up and running social media accounts, designing and distributing leaflets, contributing to articles in newsletters, organising promotional events, contacting media outlets, engaging with the community
- Funding- searching for funding opportunities, writing applications, organising fundraising activities, coming up with ideas to generate other income (see funding sections in Part 1 and 2).

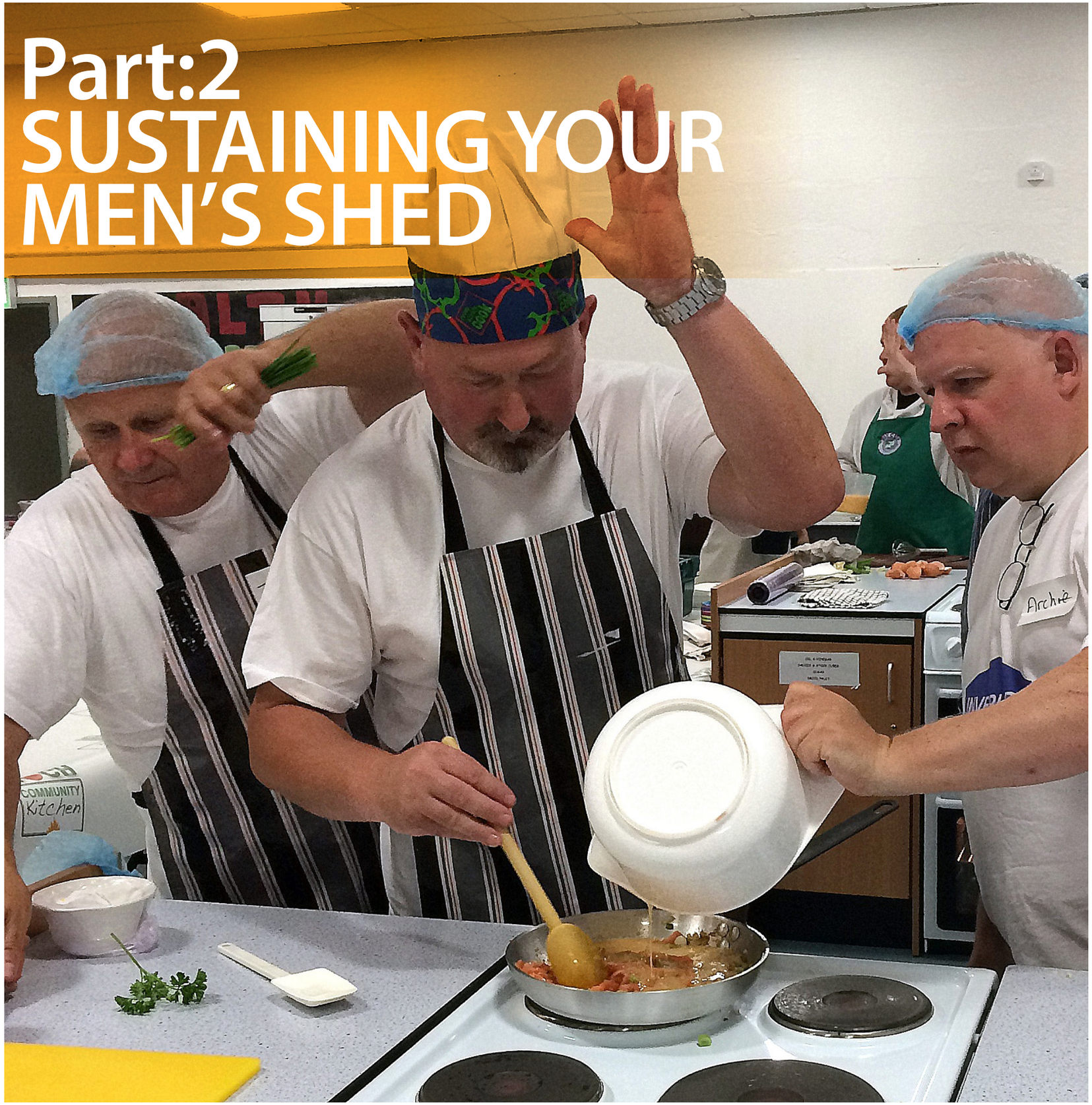
These tasks may fall to committee members, however, finding others who are willing to help out can be important to ease the workload. The sharing of tasks can also be important to promote group responsibility, and can also provide members with a sense of purpose and routine in their lives where this may have been lost.

Training and knowledge sharing
Whether your Shed offers only a few small activities or a wide range, you will likely require members who can share their knowledge and experiences and train others to use equipment and machinery. Sometimes members may naturally fall into roles based on their expertise. For example, someone with health and safety experience may take charge of doing risk assessments; or an ex-carpenter may want to take charge of overseeing a woodwork area. It can be useful to gather information from new members when they join about the skills they possess. It is also helpful to gauge their willingness to share their skills and knowledge with others as some may not want to take on any responsibility.

Some Sheds may choose to take a more formal route and draw up rotas, workshop manuals and introduce training schedules. This can work well to keep track of who has been trained on particular machinery. An example of a type of training checklist is shown that could be used. There is no one way to organise training and knowledge sharing, it is simply about what works best for your Shed.

Name	Machinery	Date completed Training	Training given by	Signed
John	Sander	28th October 2020	Mike	
Dave	3D printing machine	30th September 2020	Jim	
Graham	Blow Torch	14th July 2020	Mike	
Jeremy	Sander	28th October 2020	Mike	

Part:2 SUSTAINING YOUR MEN'S SHED



SUSTAINING YOUR MEN'S SHED

Once your Men's Shed is open and fully operational, there are still tasks that will require regular attention to make your Shed sustainable. The following section provides advice on how to 'future-proof' your Shed to ensure its survival. Some parts of this section will be more relevant to your journey than others. Not of all the listed steps are mandatory, so feel free to skip any parts that aren't relevant to you. However, it is useful to consider each piece of information to make your Shed more sustainable.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Financial sustainability can be key to ensuring the future longevity of your Men's Shed. A healthy bank balance will ensure that:

- There are enough funds to cover all major outgoings (such as rent and bills) for a substantial period of time
- There is enough left over to pay for unexpected eventualities (e.g. machinery breakdown, a broken boiler).

To ensure financial sustainability you will likely need a variety of income streams instead of relying on one source. There are 3 main sources of funding for Sheds to consider; *grant funding, fundraising/donations, and income generation*.

Grant funding

There are a number of steps involved in sourcing and applying for grant funding. This section will talk you through each of them:

1. Getting ready and organised

- Make sure you have a constitution with clear aims and objectives and consider obtaining charitable status for more credibility.
- Get your finances in order including setting up a bank account, producing regular financial statements (showing cash flow, balances, budgeting, deficits, reserves), and producing annual account reports.
- Identify who in your Shed has the knowledge or skills to put together a good funding application, and where you may need training or external support.
- Gather as much evidence as possible of the impact that your Shed has on individuals and the community. This could include letters of support, newspaper articles, testimonials or awards received.

2. Sourcing the funds

There tends to be four main sources of grant funding that are available to Men's Sheds; lotteries, trusts and foundations, government funding and local authority funding.

It is important to remember that funders and funding pots can be very different sizes, some may be small and local, and some may be some large and national. The table below gives some examples of the four main sources of grant funding available to your Shed:

Source	Examples	Where to find information
Lotteries	National Lottery Community Fund, People's Postcode Lottery, Heritage Lottery Fund, Health Lottery, Irish National Lottery	Check the 'funding' section of each Lottery webpage or contact them via phone or email
Trusts and Foundations	Private/individual family trusts (e.g. The Robertson Trust), **corporate trusts, governmental trusts** (e.g. The Voluntary Action Fund), **community trusts, supermarket foundations** (e.g. ASDA Foundation), **bank foundations** (e.g. Lloyds Bank Foundation)	Refer to national funding databases, some examples are: - **www.fundingcentral.org.uk** - **www.fundsonline.org.uk** - **www.wheel.ie/funding** Check supermarket foundation/trust webpages, or contact them via phone or email Check bank foundation/trust webpages, or contact them via phone or email
Government Funding	Community regeneration projects, people and communities projects, environmental projects	Check UK, Scottish, Welsh, NI or Ireland Government funding opportunity webpages (e.g. community funding)
Local Authority Funding (e.g. councils, health services)	Community development funds, service level agreements, local budgeting	Check local authority bulletins online. Contact your local authority by phone or email for up to date information and to be added to mailing lists

Always be aware that there are two distinct types of funding offered by funders:

Project funding: for a project or activity that has clear deadlines and specifications from the funder. For example, funding that is only available for the purchase of poly-tunnels to help Sheds grow vegetables for their community.

Core funding: to cover the core cost of what you specify in your application (e.g. rent, equipment). This is often a fixed amount that must be spent within a given time frame.

The type of funding you apply for will depend on exactly what you need the money for. It can be very easy to think 'any money is good money' but this may not always be the case if there are restrictions to what you can do with it.

3. Applying for funds

Before you apply for any type of funds it is vital that you do your research. This includes finding out about funders' objectives, application deadlines, eligibility criteria, who they might have previously funded, and their application form process. A typical application form will ask for the following information:

- The title or goal of your project
- A short introduction to your organisation (e.g. aims and objectives, charity number/ legal status, years in operation, number of members)
- A detailed description of what the money will be used for, including a statement about what the funds will address and what might happen if you didn't get the funds, and who the beneficiaries are
- A statement of how you might monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the funds and if a need has been met (e.g. keeping a numerical record of the amount of members who have benefited, recording individual's stories/testimonies, using a feedback survey)
- A detailed breakdown of the costs of the project and where the money will be allocated (e.g. equipment, contractors)
- A statement about how you intend to financially sustain your organisation in the long-term (funders want to see that you have the ability to make yourselves financially sustainable so you are not purely reliant on grant funding). This may also include being transparent about reserved and unreserved funds you already have in your bank account
- Additional support documents which may include letters of support from your community, newspaper articles about your Shed, testimonials, and proof of awards received.

4. The outcome

Whether your application is successful or not, it is good etiquette to keep in contact with the funder, especially if you might apply for more money again in the future. They can provide useful feedback and tips.

Successful application?

- ✓ Thank the funder through a letter, email or phone call from the committee
- ✓ Make sure that the funder is acknowledged and recognised correctly (e.g. displaying their logo on website and letterhead)
- ✓ Keep the funder up to date with your activities
- ✓ Adhere to any formal requirements for reports or monitoring.

Unsuccessful application?

- ✗ Don't be disheartened, funding applications can be very competitive
- ✗ Get feedback on your application to find out where you went wrong
- ✗ Find out whether it is worth applying again and when you are permitted to re-apply
- ✗ 'Recycle' your application form wording to further develop it and use on future applications
- ✗ Keep applying to other funders

If you are successful in your application, you will likely be expected to keep in touch with the funder to evaluate the success of the project and provide evidence of your spending.

For more information about grant funding for voluntary organisations please visit the national voluntary organisation support webpages listed in the resources section at the back of the toolkit.

Fundraising/ Donations

As an organisation doing positive things in your community you may be surprised at how many people and/or businesses are willing to help. Here are a few ideas for ways to raise funds or gather materials through donations:

- Host fundraising events in your community (e.g. coffee morning, quiz)
- Set up a direct online donations page (to fund a single project or ongoing activity)
- Get a stall/table at community events such as fairs and gala days and take a donations box
- Contact local suppliers who may be willing to donate materials such as wood or paint
- Use leaflets and social media to advertise for tool donations
- Get in touch with your local newspaper to promote your activities and request donations.

It is always useful to contact or visit other Men's Sheds or community groups in different areas to see what fundraising activities they are doing and get some inspiration. Think outside the box, sometimes crazy ideas can generate the most interest!

Income generation

Taking part in income generating activity may not be a key goal of your Shed (e.g. producing items to sell by donation) especially for retired members who may be keen to avoid 'work' like tasks. However, it can be a quick and easy option for raising funds for the pot. Here are some ideas for income generation:

- Charging members single, monthly or annual fees (even as little as £1/ 1 Euro to cover tea and coffee)
- Producing items to sell by donation at local events or online (e.g. fairs, markets, Gumtree)
- Producing or restoring items for your local community (e.g. planters or benches for schools). See Box 3 for more inspiration
- Renting out space in your Shed to other community groups
- Providing training, mentoring or apprenticeship schemes (seek advice from your local voluntary support service).

If you are a charity you are able to trade if the activity *is in the pursuit of the primary purpose or aims of your organisation* (for example selling products made by Shedders), and profit is reinvested back into the organisation. In addition to generating money, it can also be rewarding to see that the outputs of your work are wanted by your community. As most Sheds are not VAT registered, products could be made for a suggested donation, rather than a 'sale'.

For more information on this, please visit your national charity regulator webpages listed in the resources section at the back of the toolkit.

If your Shed regularly takes part in trading activity, it might also be worth thinking about becoming a 'social enterprise'. For further information visit Social Enterprise UK at: ***www.socialenterprise.org.uk*** or the Irish Social Enterprise Network at: ***www.socent.ie***

Box 3: Things you could make, sell or donate

- Garden items: benches, tables, planters, bird feeders, bee hives, sheds, storage.
- Items for schools/ nurseries: sandpits, mud kitchens, activity tables, buddy benches, doll houses, wooden toys
- Homeware and furniture: clocks, bowls, kitchen utensils, sculptures/ornaments, coffee tables, dining chairs
- Things that could be fixed- up/renovated: bikes, cars, model railways, computers.

Contracts
This involves an organisation delivering goods or services that have an individual or community benefit through an agreement with a public, private or voluntary sector entity. It is often called a 'service level agreement'. For example, a voluntary homeless organisation may take on a contract from a public sector agency to deliver employment training to homeless service users. Options for Sheds could be to produce planters for your local council gardens and parks. Contracts will often come with a specific budget, targets and timescales (including penalty clauses for non-delivery). This option may not be suitable for your Shed as you may not want to deliver a formal service or take on any level of responsibility- but it is useful to be aware that this can be an option. For more information on contracts, please visit the national voluntary organisation support webpages listed in the resources section at the back of the toolkit.

ACQUIRING NEW PREMISES

There are a number of reasons why you might need to change or improve your Shed premises, for example:

- You have outgrown your current space and have to turn away potential members.
- Your current premises aren't suitable for the types of activities you want to do.
- You can no longer rent the building/ the landlord is selling the building.
- You would rather own your own premises and have more control.
- The building is no longer safe to use (e.g. damp issues, accessibility issues).

Just like when you first started up your Men's Shed, you will need to do your research to see what alternative options are available to you. As well as letting agents and solicitors, you can also find information about buildings and land from local public authorities, voluntary support agencies and other community groups.

There are typically four main options for acquiring new premises:

1. Negotiating a lease or license (or full ownership) of a public authority building

Public authorities, like local councils, health services, police, fire services and government, own and rent lots of land and buildings, such as schools, hospitals, parks and forests. If you find a potential building or piece of land within your community, first find out who owns it and make some initial enquiries with them, if possible. For example, if a building you are looking at is owned by your local council, ask to meet with them to discuss your potential plans. If you are unable to work out who owns a property or piece of land, you can access this information publicly through authority webpages or contact them directly via phone or email. Similarly, if you are already supported by a local authority (i.e. a council community worker) they may also be able to guide you through this process.

Public authorities may be able to offer you a short or long-term lease or rental agreement, or even offer you alternative premises that suit your needs better. It is important to consider the benefits that your group can offer a public authority by taking on one of their buildings. For example, un-used council buildings can often be derelict or in need of renovation, therefore the Shed might be able to fix up the building, saving the council money in the process. This could be to your advantage when negotiating an appropriate rental rate.

It is also important to note that national funders often require that you have a long-term lease when applying for funds (i.e. five years or more) as they want to see that your organisation is sustainable and has a long-term plan. They also want to see that their funding can benefit the group and the wider community over longer periods of time.

Sometimes the community might have an idea for a better way of using something that is owned by a public authority. For example, turning a derelict school into a community hub with a Men's Shed within it. This is commonly known as a community 'asset transfer'. Each part of the UK and Ireland has differing legislation on asset transfer, leasing and community ownership of public authority buildings. For more information, visit your national Government webpages, speak to your national Men's Sheds Association, or get in touch with your local authority (i.e. council). You can also contact other Sheds who have been through these processes for advice and guidance.

2. Renting a commercial/ private property

Using a letting agent to find a rental may only be an option for Sheds that are financially stable enough to afford commercial rental rates. It may be difficult for a new Shed to rent through a letting agent without the backing of a guarantor or paying a large rental cost upfront.

However, many Sheds negotiate rental agreements (formally or informally) with private landlords within their communities, for example, a local business that has spare space within their warehouse. It can be advantageous for private landlords to house a charity/organistion especially if a landlord has empty premises that they are still paying for, or they have premises that require a little renovation work that Shedders could do. Private landlords can also receive reduced rates for renting to a charitable organisation, and it can also improve their reputation in doing something socially responsible. These types of relationships can be reciprocal with Sheds receiving reduced or free rental, heating and lighting rates. The UK Government offer a 'charitable rate relief' of up to 80% if a property is used for charitable purposes.

Box 4: National Legislation relevant to Sheds

In Scotland, the Community Empowerment Act 2015 gives community organisations a right to ask to take over control of public authority land or buildings.

If the community organisation's plan is better for people, they will be allowed to buy, rent or have the use of it. Men's Sheds can formally apply for a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) through their local authority webpages. This involves filling in an application form and providing supporting documents to prove that your group is capable of taking on the lease or ownership of the land or buildings. For example, showing that your group has the right skills and knowledge needed and are financially sustainable. Free adviser-led support to navigate this process is provided by the Scottish Government funded Community Ownership Support Service (COSS) which can be found at ***www.dtascommunityownership.org.uk.*** For information about the Community Empowerment Act please visit: ***www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6***

Similarly, in Wales there is the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015. This act means that public bodies, such as local authorities, health boards and sports and arts councils have a duty to support communities to be healthier, resilient and prosperous. Men's Sheds can play a big part in this in providing activities to support these goals and through their involvement in the community. Therefore, Men's Sheds can be supported by public bodies to find suitable space within their community. For more information about the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act please visit: ***www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act***

With this in mind, it can be worth speaking with potential landlords, or seeking legal advice from your local voluntary sector support agency about your occupation rights as a charity or voluntary organisation.

Here are some advantages and disadvantages of this option:

Advantages

- ✓ Can be a quick and easy process through a letting agent
- ✓ Can receive reduced rates by doing a private landlord a favour in taking on the building
- ✓ A private landlord will have responsibility for making sure the building meets safety standards and dealing with structural repairs.

Disadvantages

- ✗ Letting agents can be expensive and may require a guarantor or large deposit
- ✗ Private landlords can give notice to get the building back at any time (for sale or alternative rental)
- ✗ Rental costs may be insecure
- ✗ You may be unable to make any modifications to the building (e.g. hanging shelves).

In all cases you will need to ensure that you have a solid rental agreement and you are happy with the terms.

3. Buying a property

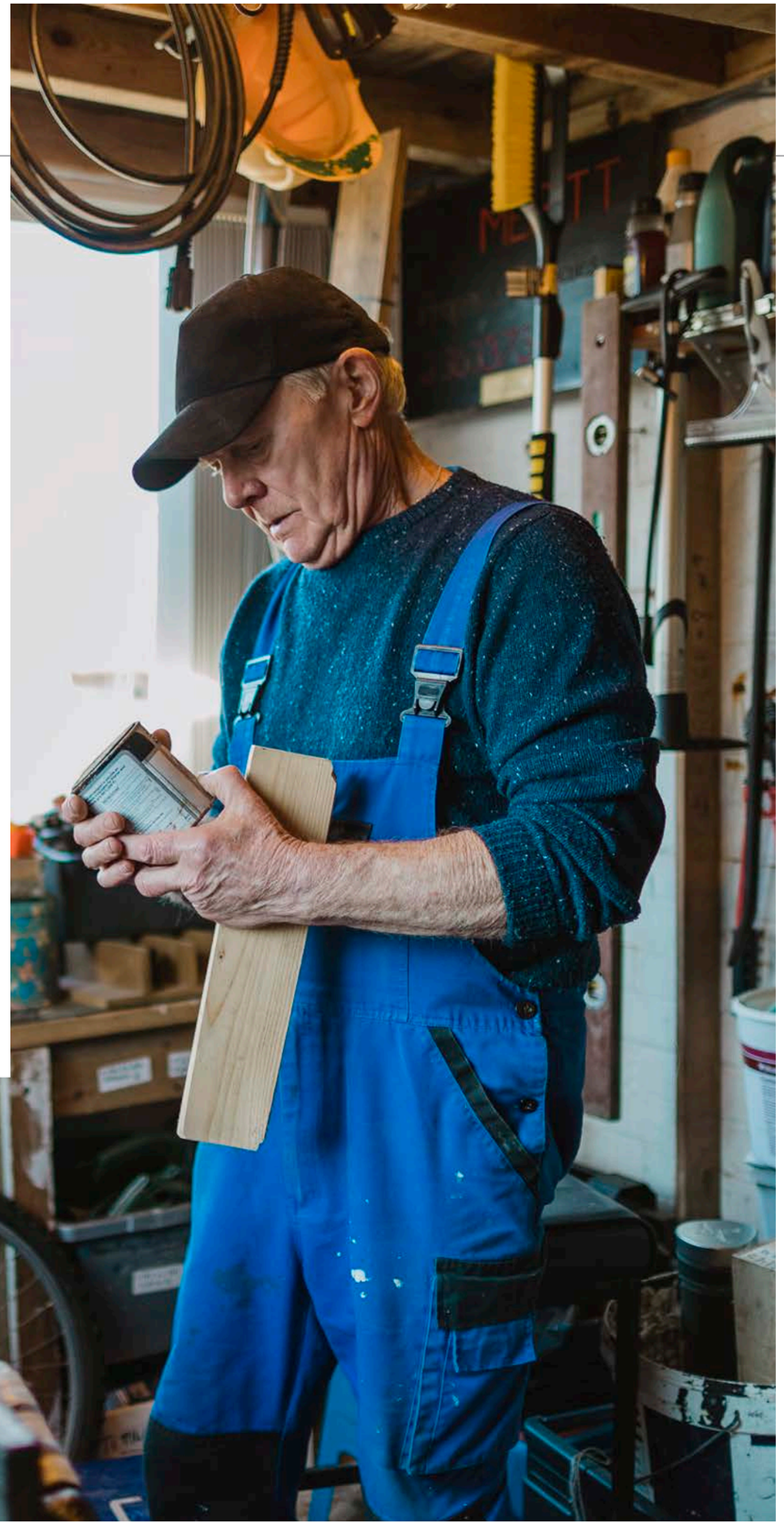
This may only be an option for Sheds that have a large amount of money available to them through fundraising or grants. There can also be many legal requirements attached to purchasing a property, such as the need for surveys and a solicitor, and sometimes planning permission for a 'change of use' of a building. Here are some advantages and disadvantages of this option:

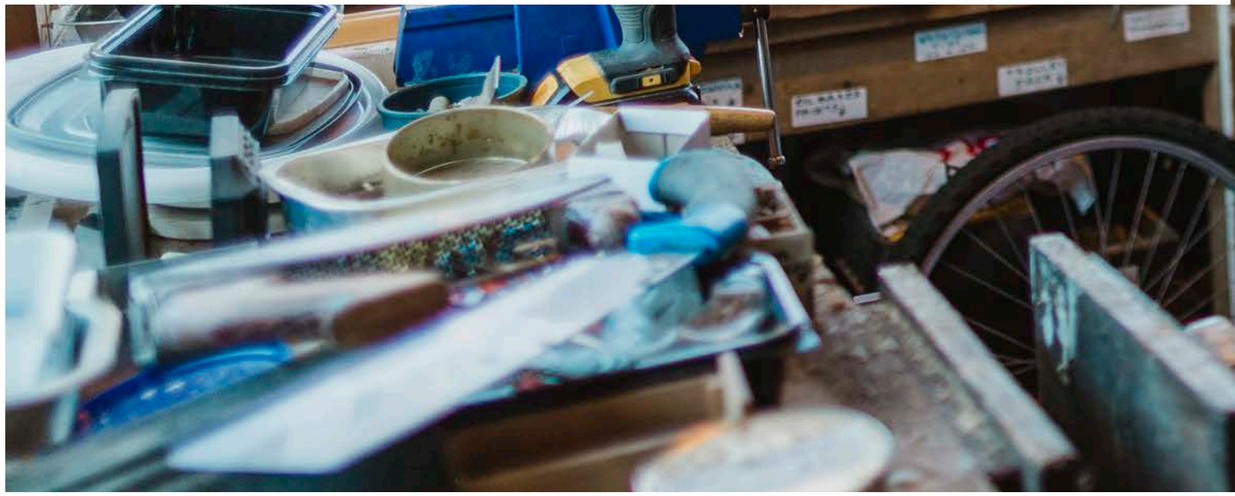
Advantages

- ✓ It is your building; you have the freedom to set it up/ design it as you wish
- ✓ You have control over your costs (e.g. mortgage payments, utility suppliers).

Disadvantages

- ✗ The building is the responsibility of the Shed, so requires a long-term commitment and contingency planning for its future.
- ✗ Responsibility for the costs of all maintenance.
- ✗ The ongoing threat of meeting mortgage payments (if applicable).





Your Shed will also need to decide what might happen to the building should you no longer need it or if you could no longer afford to run it. Try to answer some of the following questions:

Would the property be sold privately? Where would the money/ funds from the sale go? Would you consider handing over ownership to the community?

If ownership of your Shed was gained through a formal public authority process, there may be terms of your agreement that dictate what happens to your premises. For example, the land or building being returned to public ownership should the venture fold. For more information, contact your local voluntary sector support agency or relevant local authority.

4. Building your own Shed

This might be ambitious but it is still very achievable if you have located a suitable plot of land to buy, and have funds available for purchase and building costs. You will also need planning permission so it's best to check if you would get this before purchasing any land and make sure any surveys have been completed. This may also involve paying for an architect to design a building for you that meets regulations, however, you will end up with a Shed that is to your exact specifications. Much like buying a property, this has the same advantages and disadvantages (see above). It is advisable to seek professional advice at all stages.

ONGOING HEALTH AND SAFETY

Although Men's Sheds are *not* places of work and are not bound by legislation, such as the UK Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Irish Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (2005), your Shed still has a duty of care to look after the health and wellbeing of its members. There may also be instances where Sheds do choose to employ people, for example, as supervisors.

Once your Shed is fully operational and you have all of your health and safety protection in place (e.g. fire extinguishers and alarms, insurance cover, PAT tested machinery), an issue can be the upkeep of health and safety standards.

A common challenge for Men's Sheds is that members can be predominantly ageing, retired, or have existing health issues. This means that members may want to escape the rules and regulations of working life, and/or may have health issues that impact on their ability to use machinery (e.g. mobility and agility). Here are some useful tips for managing the ongoing health and safety of your Shed:

- Make sure that all members are aware of the *consequences* to the Shed of not adhering to basic health and safety (e.g. inspections or closure).
- Safety is everyone's responsibility as the Shed belongs to everyone. Make sure that all members have a *voice and ownership* over decisions about health and safety and how this is implemented. Consult with your members through regular meetings where you discuss issues and ways to overcome them.
- Try and make it *fun and engaging*- create funny safety posters for your walls that are light hearted and relatable.
- Create a rota of willing participants who can do *regular health and safety checks* (e.g. checking fire alarms and machinery).
- Communicate regularly with members with *health issues* that may impact on their ability to be safe in the Shed to see how they are getting on. This might also involve talking to their family members. Encourage other members to look out for each other. Keep a record of any concerns. More information can be found on the following pages.
- Make sure that you have *comprehensive insurance* that covers your Shed for every eventuality. Speak to an insurer who specialises in cover for community voluntary groups.
- Invite *interesting speakers* into your Shed to talk about health and safety matters (e.g. the fire service, St John's Ambulance). This can be a great way to raise awareness amongst your members, whilst still keeping it fun and engaging.

There can be grant funding available to cover professional training on aspects of health and safety, such as how to use machinery or first aid. There may also be courses delivered for free or for a small fee in your local community, so it's worth contacting other community groups, local authorities or your local voluntary support agency for advice. It might also be useful to visit other Sheds to ask for their advice. Online advice can also be found on the national health and safety webpages listed in the resources section at the back of the toolkit.

MEMBERS WITH ADDITIONAL HEALTH NEEDS/ DISABILITIES

Men's Sheds are a welcoming environment for individuals from all backgrounds and levels of ability, however, some individuals may have additional health needs or disabilities that require particular attention. For example, physical disability, long-term illness, learning difficulties, or mental health issues.

It must also be noted that although Men's Sheds may deliver health benefits to their members, *they are not a formal health care deliverer/ service*. This means that Shed members do not have direct responsibility for their members, and all members must be accountable for their own actions, therefore expectations and roles must be clearly communicated. Here are a few useful tips:

- Identify any health requirements of members when they first start at the Shed (e.g. medications, if they require a carer, contact details of a guardian). This information could be collected using a simple application form. Always be aware that there are varying levels of disability that may not be immediately visible to the eye.
- Work with the person to consider ways to adapt the environment so that they can participate. It could be something as simple as turning down music for those hard of hearing.
- Be aware that, for some individuals, some tasks may take longer to accomplish but it is important to show respect and consideration for each person by allowing them to operate at their level of ability with dignity.
- Regularly observe or 'check-in' with members who may show signs of health deterioration that may impact on their ability to take part in Shed activities. If appropriate consult with the person's family, carer/ guardian/ service provider for advice.
- If an individual requires a support worker/ carer, ensure that they always accompany them to the Shed and are responsible for them while they are there.

In terms of legislation and liability:

- **Always refer to the UK Equalities Act 2010 or the Irish Equal Status Acts 2000-2018** to ensure that you are not unlawfully discriminating anyone based on disability.
- **Ensure that the Shed is covered by adequate insurance** (e.g. in case someone is injured and claims that the Shed is liable).

If you are concerned you can also speak to your national Men's Sheds Association for further advice.

As Sheds are known for the positive health benefits they can bring their members, you may receive visits or phone calls from healthcare professionals, such as social workers, asking if they can bring their clients/ patients down to the Shed. This can include people who require constant care or do not know why they are there. Some Sheds may be able to accommodate this, however always remember to consult with all of your members first. Similarly, it is ok to say no to such referrals as this might not be appropriate as your Shed is not a healthcare provider.

A FEW MORE COMMON ISSUES

1. Communication breakdowns

Communication breakdowns can occur within community organisations, especially when you have a mix of people working together with differing backgrounds and experiences.

Just remember, *not everyone is going to get along*, but it is important to create an environment in your Shed where all people feel welcomed, valued and listened to. *Your Shed does not belong to one person*, it is there for all members and, therefore, everyone should have a level of ownership.

Ensuring good communication in your Shed can be a difficult task; some Sheds have a lot of members, not all members attend every week, and not everyone has access to phone or email.

Here are a few useful tips to improve communication in your Shed:

- As well as committee-only meetings, hold regular meetings *where all Shed members (committee and non-committee)* put down their tools and come together to discuss any burning issues, upcoming events, and share ideas in an open forum. These meetings don't have to be formal, sometimes it's better to sit down together and have a cuppa and keep it relaxed. This could be a monthly occurrence.
- *Noticeboards* are a good way of informing members of what is going on each week (e.g. who might be visiting the Shed, what events might be happening, who is in charge of emptying the kitchen bin and cleaning the toilets).
- *Have a good social area* that encourages people to talk to each other and share views/ ideas. This is often the most important area of your Shed as not all men are interested in practical activities. On a basic level all Sheds should have a kettle and a decent biscuit selection.
- *Name badges* are a good idea to encourage members to chat to each other. Sometimes not knowing someone's name can be enough to stop people speaking to each other.
- *Welcoming new members* by giving them a tour and introducing them to current members. If someone turns up at the door, make sure to put in the effort to welcome them in, offer them a cuppa, ask what their interests are and introduce them to others. Someone may have spent weeks plucking up the courage just to walk through the door.
- *Keep up to date contact details* of all members, including alternative contact details for those who don't have access to email. Ask your members if your current system of communication is working and what might help to improve this.

Some members may be louder or more dominant than others, or may try to assert authority and make decisions without consulting with everyone. Often people who are from management or leadership backgrounds find it hard to let go of old working habits and may want to implement strict rules and regulations, or try to run the Shed like a business. Some Sheds may implement different levels of governance and leadership, but it is important to ensure that this is not a hierarchy that excludes the views and opinions of others and that everyone is treated equally. The Shed belongs to everyone. Make sure that you are constantly aware of how things may appear to your members, and offer plenty opportunities for members to give feedback if they are unhappy (e.g. an anonymous suggestion box).

If you are unsure about how to approach a particular communication issue within your Shed, you can always seek outside assistance. Sometimes someone external and neutral, such as a local voluntary sector support worker or a representative from your national Men's Sheds Association, can bring a fresh pair of eyes and ideas to help solve your issues.

2. The overburden of committee members

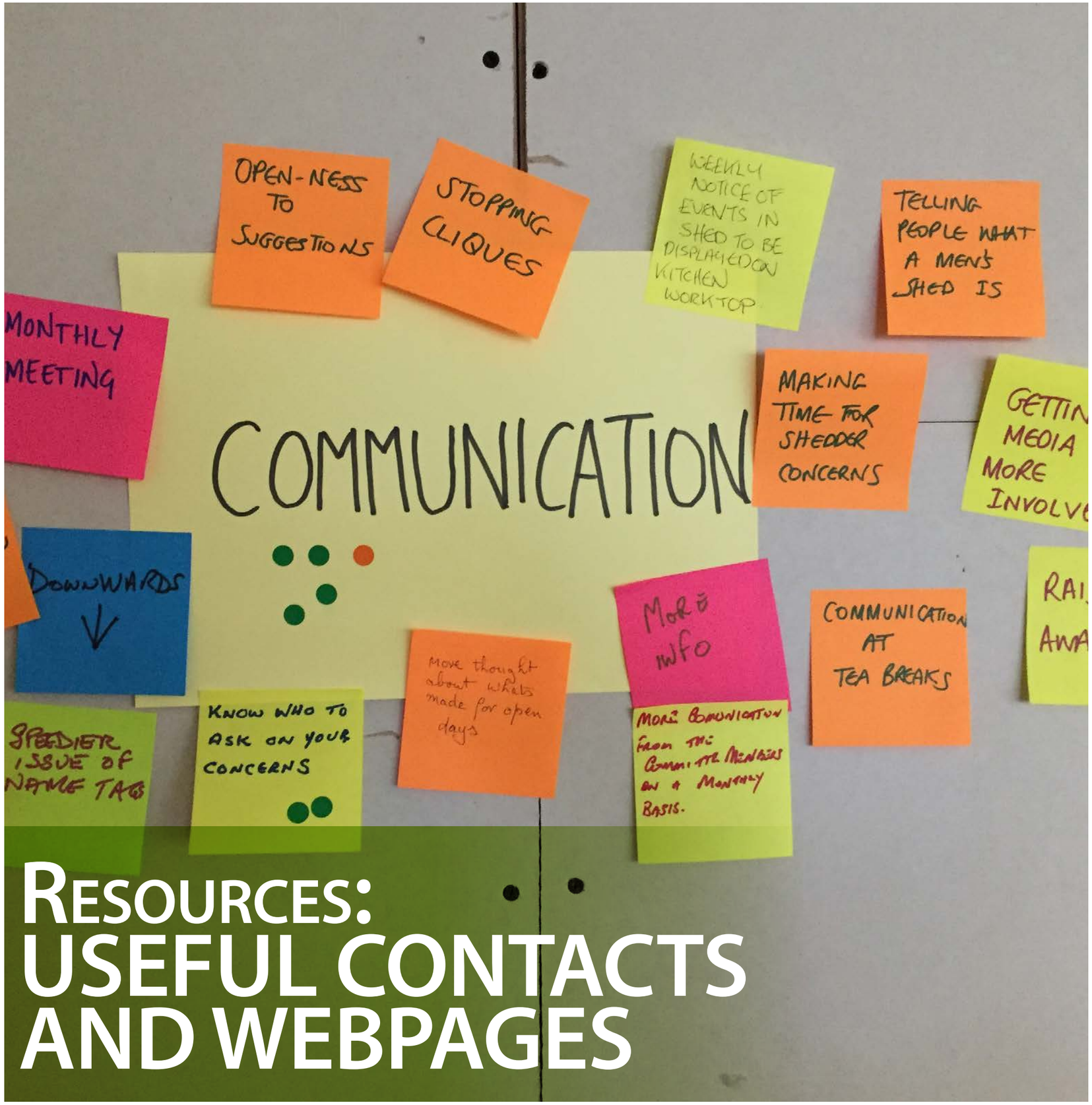
Men's Sheds typically attract those with 'time on their hands', including men who are retired or are looking for a leisure activity to fill a gap in their week. However, this can mean that members may be reluctant to take on any formal role within a Shed, especially if they are seeking to escape the structure and responsibility of their previous working life. Similarly, some members may simply not have the skills or knowledge required to take on some responsibilities, or may have health issues that limit their capability to perform tasks. This can mean that all of the necessary tasks required to operate and sustain a Shed can fall on the shoulders of a very small group (typically committee members) or one person. In some cases, Sheds may have committee members who are not very active and just 'fill a space', leaving their delegated tasks to others.

It is important to remember that volunteers who are completing the necessary tasks to sustain your Shed are not being paid for their time and hard work. The role of the committee is to 'safeguard' you and your Shed- including all members and assets (money, property, equipment etc.).

Without a committee your Shed may cease to exist, so careful forward planning and action can often be required:

- *Do some research*- find out what skills and knowledge your members have and if they would be willing to share this experience in any capacity. This could be a supporting role to an existing committee member on an ad hoc basis (e.g. taking minutes, helping to check machine safety). This could also involve filling in for a committee member if they are ill or want to take a break.
- *Succession planning*- identify members who might be willing and able to take on a role in your committee in the future or in an emergency. Make sure you have a plan in place should a committee member be ill or decide to leave the Shed, even if this is a temporary measure.
- *Talk to inactive committee members*- be realistic about their expected roles and if they are willing/ able to take on any responsibility. Remember, some members might just be making up the numbers, so ask if they would mind being replaced should someone else be more suitable.
- *Do a recruitment drive*- advertise for committee members through word of mouth, contacting other community groups, local newsletters, or at events.

In simple terms, if your committee is unable to complete tasks or keep up with responsibilities (often through no fault of their own) and you are unable to find new committee members, it may helpful to scale- back activities. For example, not open the Shed on as many days, hold fewer meetings, or keep costs down. It might be useful to contact other Sheds for practical advice about committee issues.



Resources: USEFUL CONTACTS AND WEBPAGES

National Men's Sheds Associations and Shed support organisations:
Offering support and advice to help new and existing groups to set up and run a Men's Shed in their local town or community. This includes access to an extensive range of helpful resources covering all aspects of starting and operating a Shed.

UK and Ireland

UK Men's Sheds Association
www.menssheds.org.uk
Henleaze House, 13 Harbury Road,
Henleaze, UK, BS9 4PN
Tel: (+44) 03007729626

Scottish Men's Sheds Association
www.scottishmsa.org.uk
Wester Mains, Campfield, Banchory,
Aberdeenshire, UK, AB31 4DR
Tel: (+44) 07397382533

Men's Sheds Cymru
www.mensshedscymru.co.uk
Hafan Cymru Head Office, Stephen's
Way, Pensarn, Carmarthen,
UK, SA31 2BG
Tel: (+44) 01267225555

Irish Men's Sheds Association
www.menssheds.ie
2nd Floor, Irish Farm Centre
Bluebell, Dublin 12, Ireland, D12 YXW5
Tel: (+353) 018916150

Groundwork NI Men's Sheds
www.groundwork.org.uk
63-75 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast,
UK, BT15 2GB
Tel: (+44) 02890749494

Royal Voluntary Service (UK)
www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk
Beck Court, Cardiff Gate Business Park,
Cardiff, UK, CF23 8RP
Tel: (+44) 03305550310

Age UK
www.ageuk.org.uk
Tavis House, 1-6 Tavistock Square,
London, UK, WC1H 9NA
Tel: (+44) 08000556112

Age Scotland Community Development Team
www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland
Causewayside House, 160
Causewayside, Edinburgh, UK, EH9 1PR
Tel: (+44) 0800 12 44 222

International

Australian Men's Sheds Association
www.mensshed.org

US Men's Sheds Association
www.usmenssheds.com

Men's Sheds Canada
www.menssheds.ca

National support for third sector/ voluntary organisations:
Webpages for third sector/ voluntary organisations for guidance on areas such as how to get charity status, writing a constitution and business plan, recording finances, insurance and liability and sourcing funding.

National Council for Voluntary Organisations UK (NVCO)
www.ncvo.org.uk
Society Building, 8 All Saints Street, London, UK, N1 9RL
Tel: (+44) 02077136161

Community Matters (England and Wales)
www.communitymatters.org.uk
Clayton Works Business Centre, Midland Road, Leeds, UK, LS10 2RJ
Tel: (+44) 01134504866

Scottish Council for Voluntary organisations (SCVO)
www.scvo.org.uk
Mansfield Traquair Centre, 15 Mansfield Place, Edinburgh, UK, EH3 6BB.
Tel: (+44) 08001690022

Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)
www.wcva.cymru
Tel: (+44) 03001110124

Third Sector Support Wales
www.thirdsectorsupport.wales
Baltic House, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff Bay, UK, CF10 5FH
Tel: (+44) 08002888329

Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)
www.nicva.org
61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, UK, BT15 2GB
Tel: (+44) 02890877777

The Wheel Ireland
www.wheel.ie
48 Fleet Street, Dublin, Ireland, DO2 T883
Tel: (+353) 014548727

Charity Regulators
Independent regulators and registrars for charities (including community groups). Providing information on how to become a charity in addition to guidance and support for existing charities. Acting as a monitor to help charities to meet the requirements of charity law.

The Charity Commission for England and Wales
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission
Charity Commission, PO Box 211 Bootle, Liverpool, UK, L20 7YX
Tel: (+44) 03000669197

OSCR- Scottish Charity Regulator
www.oscr.org.uk
2nd Floor, Quadrant House 9 Riverside Drive, Dundee, UK, DD1 4NY
Tel: (+44) 01382220446

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland
www.charitycommissionni.org.uk
257 Lough Road, Lurgan, Craigavon, UK, BT66 6NQ
Tel: (+44) 02838320220

The Charities Regulator Ireland
www.charitiesregulator.ie/en
3 George's Dock, IFSC, Dublin, Ireland, D01 X5X0

Health and safety webpages
Working with Government, local authorities and a range of health and safety professionals to bring up to date information and resources to help groups comply with health and safety legislation.

Health & Safety Executive UK
www.hse.gov.uk
Redgrave Court, Merton Road, Bootle, Merseyside, UK, L20 7HS.
Tel: (+44) 0300 003 1647

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland
www.hseni.gov.uk
83 Ladas Drive, Belfast, UK, BT6 9FR
Tel: (+44) 08000320121

The Health and Safety Authority for Ireland
www.hsa.ie/eng
The Metropolitan Building, James Joyce Street, Dublin, Ireland, D01 K0Y8
Tel: (+353) 1890 289 389

Relevant Legislation
UK Data Protection Act 2018
www.gov.uk/data-protection

Ireland Data Protection Act 2018
www.dataprotection.ie

UK Equalities Act 2010
www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

Irish Equal Status Acts
www.ihrec.ie/your-rights

Further information on legislation can also be sourced from your National Men's Sheds Association.

Funding databases
UK wide:
Funding Central
www.fundingcentral.org.uk

Funds Online
www.fundsonline.org.uk

UK Community Foundations
www.ukcommunityfoundations.org

Scotland:
Funding Scotland
www.funding.scot

Foundation Scotland
www.foundationscotland.org.uk

Wales:
Funding Cymru
www.*funding.cymru*

Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) funding pages
www.*wcva.cymru/funding*

Northern Ireland:
Government Funding Database Northern Ireland
www.govfundingpublic.nics.gov.uk

Ireland:
The Ireland Funds
www.*irelandfunds.org*

The Community Foundation for Ireland
www.communityfoundation.ie

Business Support and Social Enterprise Guidance
UK wide:
Government Business Support Helplines
www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline
England: (+44) 08009981098
Scotland: (+44) 03003030660
Wales: (+44) 03000603000
Northern Ireland: (+44) 08001814422

Social Enterprise UK
www.socialenterprise.org.uk
The Fire Station, 139 Tooley Street, London, UK, SE1 2HZ
Tel: (+44) 02035894950

Scotland:
Business Gateway
www.bgateway.com
Tel: (+44) 03000134753

First Port (social enterprise)
www.firstport.org.uk
6-7 Montgomery Street Lane, Edinburgh, UK, EH7 5JT.
Tel: (+44) 01315640331

Wales:
Business Wales
www.businesswales.gov.wales
Tel: (+44) 03000603000

Wales Co-op
wales.coop
Y Borth, 13 Beddau Way, Caerphilly, UK,CF83 2AX
Tel: (+44) 03001115050

Northern Ireland:
NI Business Info
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk
Bedford Square, Bedford Street, Belfast, UK, BT2 7ES
Tel: (+44) 08001814422

Ireland:
Irish Social Enterprise Network
www.socent.ie
Bea Orpen Building, NorDubCo, DCU, Glasnevin, Dublin, Ireland.
Tel: (+353) 0892550289

Local Enterprise Office
www.localenterprise.ie
Civic Offices, Block 4, Floor1, Dublin 8, DO8 RF3F
Tel: (+353) 012225611

The Sheds for Sustainable Development Project
This toolkit is the product of a four year Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) research project, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. The project focused on identifying the key development and sustainability challenges that Sheds face, and ways to support them to enhance their sustainability and viability for the future.

From the outset, Shedders and Shed stakeholders were involved in this process, helping us to both identify and understand the main challenges that they face in their development. Therefore, this toolkit is developed directly from the first-hand knowledge and expertise of those working on the ground.

To inform this publication, we worked with five Men's Sheds in Scotland, interviewing 62 of their members about Shed sustainability and development. Sheds were selected based on their demographic and geographic variation, and the fact that they were all at differing stages of development, in order for us to understand how challenges can be faced at many different parts of the Shed journey. We also ran a series of participatory workshops with Sheds to discuss solutions to overcome identified sustainability challenges. Further, we interviewed a variety of Shed stakeholders from across Scotland to gain both a practitioner and policy level understanding of Shed development. We attended numerous Men's Shed events and spoke to hundreds of Shedders from across the UK and Ireland to hear their experiences. As such, we hope to represent here the voices of Sheds and Shedders both nationally and internationally.

The project team would like to give special thanks to all of the Sheds and Shed stakeholders that have directly contributed to the Sheds for Sustainable Development Project. Thanks are also extended to the Shedders that attended our events and presentations and shared their important views on Shed sustainability and development.

GCU
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