

THE SCOTTISH SHEDDER

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE SMSA



SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION

SCOTLAND'S LARGEST
MEN'S HEALTH & WELLBEING CHARITY

In Scotland, For Scotland



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

cover story

20 Costco Aberdeen supports its local Sheds to grow

news

5 Learning exchange funding extended & new Social Prescribing Guidance

6 Scottish Men's Shed Awards 2025: You got to be in it to win it!

8 Thinking of acquiring a Shed building?

8 Get Shed-Wise!

features

12 Shed in the Spotlight: Portsoy Men's Shed

25 Personal story: Owen Neil, Troon Men's Shed

26 Personal stories from the Inverclyde Shedders

27 Aviation Preservation Society: Sophie soars

28 Black Isle Men's Shed transforms 'Beauly Elm'

30 Men's Health Matters

...and much, much more

The Scottish Shedder magazine promotes the latest news from the SMSA and Men's Sheds across Scotland to inform and inspire others. The magazine is sent digitally every second month to over 4,400 Individual Member subscribers and supporters of the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:
Friday 15th August 2025

Send a contribution

To receive 'The Scottish Shedder', you must become an SMSA Individual Member (free)

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What a rollercoaster of a ride we have been on since the last edition. For the first time in ten years, we were nominated, alongside three other charities, for the Scottish Charity Awards finals in the Community Impact section.

We had a fantastic evening and SCVO sure did put on a fine show for the 400+ people who attended. We didn't take first place however being recognised was an honour in itself. We are immensely proud of the decade of work we have done to reach the finals and the work you all are doing to make the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement the ongoing success it is today – well done everybody and congratulations to [Letham4All](#) for winning the award—well deserved!

At the same time, we were invited by the [Scottish Rural Action](#) and the [Scottish Community Alliance](#) to have a table within the Scottish Government marquee at the Royal Highland Show last weekend (19th to 22nd June 2025). Our invaluable trustees stepped up to the mark and we managed to cover all four action-packed days at Scotland's most iconic events from 8.30am until 5pm and connecting with Scottish Government Ministers who wanted to know more.

There was lots of networking to be done and we were delighted to make new relationships with other organisations like [Youth Scotland](#) – (watch this space) and of course, members of the public.

Thousands of people passed through the marquee and we want to thank our partners for the invitation so we could fly the flag for our men's health movement – silent no more, In Scotland For Scotland.

We have also collaborated with many of our partners to bring you new guidance on Social Prescribing, Community Asset Transfers and living with prostate conditions—promoted in this edition of The Scottish Shedder magazine.

The leaflet versions will also be sent out with your SMSA Shed member certificates very soon. Please place them in your SMSA Shed Member file for easy reference for your trustees and members when they need a talk or access to the information. We have also restocked with the very popular SMSA Opening Doors, Join leaflet and branded pens so, if you need more in your Shed, please [get in touch](#) and keep spreading the word about Sheds and the Shed movement in your communities.

Our three Development Officers are always busy and 18 new Sheds across Scotland are well on their development pathway. They are there to help, Shed groups in development, navigate often the unknown waters in regards to Shed-specific constitutions, required Scottish policy documents, good charity governance, funding and having the answers to a million questions to get the Sheds developed as sustainably and quickly as possible.

Also, to help open Sheds remain sustainable, we offer partner discounts, guidance with changes in legislation, our 'Shedloads of Opportunities' funding advice. All helping you to keep being the heartbeat of the Shed healthy with our new Shed-Wise presentations covering many male related health topics – so do book a session with your [regional Shed Development Officer](#) and it's absolutely free – because every day is a school day and your wealth is your health.

I recently had the pleasure of attending several key events on a personal level: the launch of Mintlaw Men's Shed's new picture framing enterprise; Stonehaven & District Men's Shed's Texas Scramble golf day with my son Cormac, and the Legion Scotland AGM, where I proudly represented our community.

I'm especially pleased to share that our research continues to show a growing number of veterans becoming Shedders.

Seeing them enhance their lives through this connection is deeply rewarding and aligns with one of my personal core aims when founding the SMSA—to help ease the transition from military to civilian life by building a supportive bridge through the Men's Shed movement.

Some more good news comes from our partner, the Scottish Community Alliance and their Community Learning Exchange with their funding from the Scottish Government being extended and increased from £750 to £1,000 per inter-Shed visit.

This allows Sheds to visit other Sheds and learn from them and be inspired by their efforts. You will often read in The Scottish Shedder magazine about these invaluable trips of learning and building camaraderie – who doesn't like a road trip with your mates after all.

This funding comes from the Scottish Government and with all the cuts we are thrilled that this wasn't one that got the chop.

So an exciting, creative and co productive six weeks since the last issue taking us up to the Summer Solstice and the half way mark of the year.

We're hopeful that the SMSA will have a presence at more and more events to help spread the word—provisional plans are already in place for us to attend the Turriff Show, all going to plan. And who knows—maybe we'll also be back at the Scottish Charity Awards 2026!

Keep shining Shedders.

Jason Schroeder
SMSA CEO



FINALIST
Community Impact

#ScotCharityAwards

Proudly presented by  SCVO

SMISA bids fond farewell to long-serving trustee and welcomes two new board members

The SMISA announces the sad departure of long-standing Board member Richard Monaghan (from [Moffat Men's Shed](#)), who has stepped down from his Trustee role due to health reasons.

Richard has been a valued member of the SMISA Board and a passionate advocate for the Men's Sheds movement across Scotland. His dedication, insight and unwavering commitment have left a lasting legacy.

SMISA Chairman David Gardner paid tribute, saying: "On behalf of the Board and the wider SMISA community, I want to sincerely thank Richard for his service and dedication over the years. His contributions and belief in the Shed model have made a real difference. We wish him the very best for his health and continued wellbeing."

As one chapter sadly closes, another opens with the appointment of two new Trustees to the SMISA Board — marking an exciting step forward in the charity's regional representation and reach.

Gus McLafferty (pictured below left), Chairman of [Men's Shed Dalry](#) in the West Coast, brings a wealth of experience following a 44-year career with BT, most recently leading service assurance for fibre rollout across the North of the UK.



A lifelong cyclist and former Scotland National Team manager, Gus is deeply embedded in the cycling world and community life. Gus chairs the Ivy Cycling Club in Glasgow and served as Chairman of the West of Scotland Cycling Association for five years during the late 1990s.

Gus co-founded Men's Shed Dalry in May 2022 and is proud to now spend his retirement connecting with 'new mates' through the Shed, often with cycling as the common thread.

Donald Reid (pictured right), Chairman of the Fort William Men's Shed, also joins the SMISA Board. For the first time in its history, the SMISA welcomes a Highlands-based Trustee. Donald will ensure this vital region has a voice at the table.

Donald brings with him a strong understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing Sheds in more rural and remote communities, helping the SMISA further strengthen its mission of supporting all Scottish Sheds. Now based in Corpach, Donald is a passionate advocate for community, connection and volunteering.

A lifelong Glaswegian until moving up north with his wife in 2023 to be closer to family—children (Carrie and Graeme) and two grandchildren. Donald brings decades of leadership and people-focused experience — from running global sales with Moorcroft Pottery to 18 years as secretary of Glasgow Accies Rugby Club. Donald has travelled extensively and retired in 2016.

A founding member of the [Milngavie and Bearsden Men's Shed](#), he believes deeply in the power of Shed life to foster camaraderie, purpose and support—especially for men seeking meaningful social connection and a desire to help others in the community.

These new appointments mark a significant step toward strengthening our national network, ensuring diverse, regional representation across the Board to better serve our members' needs.

We thank Richard for his invaluable service and warmly welcome Gus and Donald to the SMISA family.



PRINT A HARD COPY OF THE SCOTTISH SHEDDER MAGAZINE FOR YOUR SHED'S SOCIAL AREA

KEEP YOUR DETAILS UP-TO-DATE WITH THE SMISA



The SMISA recommends that Scottish Men's Sheds have a hard copy of The Scottish Shedder magazine available in your social areas for members, that are not online, to read in the Shed and also have a library of past issues.

All previous issues of The Scottish Shedder magazine are available to [download here](#) (log-in required)



New email address?
Moved house?



Change of Office Bearers?
New Chair?



Not sure if you are a member or not?

If any of your information has changed, don't forget to let us know

[Click here to notify the SMISA](#)

Community Learning Exchange funding extended – great news for Scottish Sheds!

The Scottish Community Alliance (SCA), has secured another year of funding from the Scottish Government for its [Community Learning Exchange \(CLE\) 2025-2026](#)—and this is great news for Scottish Men's Sheds.

In partnership with the SMSA, the CLE offers small grants (now increased from £750 to £1,000) to help Scottish Men's Sheds visit and learn from other Sheds or community groups across Scotland. It's a fantastic way to develop new ideas, share solutions, and avoid reinventing the wheel.

Whether you're curious about how another Shed runs its workshop, grows its membership, or develops its activities, the CLE can fully fund travel, subsistence, and a host fee for the Shed you're visiting. There's also funding for virtual exchanges (up to £200) if you'd prefer to connect online.

Don't miss this chance to be inspired, learn new skills, and build valuable connections. If you've got an idea, but aren't sure how to start — visit a Shed that's already doing it!

Let's keep the learning flowing across Scotland's Men's Sheds!

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

scottish community alliance

local people leading

SMISA Social Prescribing Guidance for Scottish Men's Sheds

With men's health and wellbeing under increasing focus across Scotland, Scottish Men's Sheds are playing a vital role in local communities—offering a place for friendship, purpose and belonging. Yet many people who could benefit from joining a Shed may never hear about it through traditional channels. That's where social prescribing comes in—and why a dedicated leaflet from the SMSA is so important to offer guidance to Sheds.

Social prescribing connects individuals with non-clinical support in the community to improve their health and wellbeing. It empowers GPs, link workers, social workers and other professionals to refer people to activities and groups that help reduce isolation, anxiety and/or boredom—exactly the challenges being tackled in Men's Sheds.

The SMSA has produced this new dual guidance, in consultation with our health partners, to:

- provide health professionals with information to confidently signpost or refer men to their local Shed
- explain to Sheds about the importance of joint working with social prescribers and ensuring a consistent message about the value of and benefits of what Sheds offer
- make it easy for men to understand what a Shed is, what happens there, and how/if they can get involved

Scottish Men's Sheds are open to all men aged 18+ and are **welcoming, inclusive and safe spaces**, however they are not always the right environment and fit for everyone. For example, Sheds can be noisy environments (especially in the workshop) and also require the ability to take in important health and safety information to use the Shed safely and safeguard others.

The SMSA's quick-reference guide covers: what is social prescribing; what is a 'good fit' to be a Shedder; opportunities for Sheds; as well as the next steps.

The publication aims to strengthen the link between community-led initiatives like Men's Sheds and the NHS and other health professionals. It's a low-cost, high-impact way to raise awareness, boost membership, and ultimately help more men lead healthier, happier lives.

Let's make sure every GP surgery, wellbeing hub, and link worker in Scotland knows that the Shed doors are open and what to safely expect.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE GUIDANCE](#)





SCOTLAND'S LARGEST
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Scottish Men's Shed of the Year 2025

In Scotland, For Scotland

New regional process, more winners: Apply Now for SMISA's 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' 2025!

SMISA's Scottish Men's Shed of the Year Award is back—and this year, it's bigger, better, and more localised than ever with a brand-new regional format designed to recognise even more incredible Sheds across the country.

With over 200 Sheds and 10,000+ men now part of the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement, the SMISA has revamped the process to make it simpler, more inclusive, and more rewarding for all.

What's new?

- **Five regional categories:** East Coast (North & South), West Coast (North & South), and Highlands & Islands
- **One regional winner from each region** will go on to compete for the national title
- **Streamlined application** with just two key questions — or submit a short video instead!

Key Dates:

- **Apply by:** Noon, Friday 18 July 2025
- **Regional winners selected by:** 25 July
- **Finalists announced:** Week of 4 August
- **SMISA individual members' voting opens:** 29 August
- **Winners revealed:** Friday 3 October at the SMISA Gathering & AGM in Perth

You don't need to be the biggest or busiest Shed to win! Just share your story and show the impact you're making in your community and with your members. Previous winners have included new and developing Sheds making a big difference in a short space of time. This is about celebrating the life-changing friendships, projects and support systems that are being built across Scotland every day.

Ready to put your Shed in the spotlight?

The SMISA awards programme is a great way to showcase your Shed's story, boost your local and national profile, and inspire others. Finalist Sheds also receive trophies and prizes from SMISA partners.

Apply online at www.scottishmsa.org.uk





Thinking of acquiring a Men's Shed building?



The Scottish Men's Shed Association (SMSA) works in collaboration with the Community Ownership Support Service (COSS) to help Scottish Men's Sheds acquire buildings through the Community Asset Transfer process.

COSS is funded by Scottish Government to support community-based groups across Scotland take a stake in, or full ownership, of previously publicly-owned land or buildings.

COSS also supports local authorities, other public bodies and members of Community Planning Partnerships to transfer a building or land asset, recognising the benefits of partnership working with the community to meet future goals.

COSS provides support and resources for every stage of the process of taking on public assets.

COSS' support includes:

- advice on all aspects of asset transfer
- training courses on the asset transfer and asset development process
- a wealth of written materials and training modules
- web access to information on good practice, toolkits and case studies
- signposting to other support agencies
- communities will also be able to link into the Development Trusts Association Scotland's wider network to explore the wide range of business models being adopted by other communities throughout Scotland and the UK

COSS has a wealth of online resources available including a Shed-specific factsheet entitled '[Community Asset Transfer for Men's Sheds under the Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015 \(CEA\)](#)'

The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Process

The asset transfer process allows community organisations to take over publicly-owned land or buildings for community use, often at a discounted price, recognising the public and community benefits that the transfer can bring.

Transferring an asset to a suitable community organisation can enable a redundant public building to thrive again or turn a marginal public service into a viable community service.

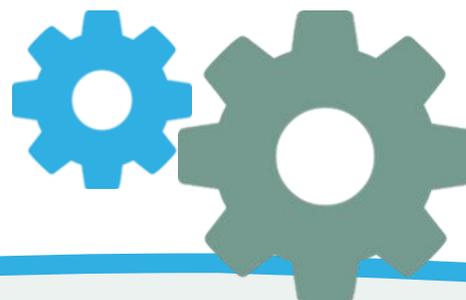
This transfer can be facilitated in different ways:

- the transfer of Title for outright ownership
- the use of a long-term lease
- or indeed management agreements

Realistically however, the process can take on average up to 18 months, sometimes even longer. [COSS' route map](#) can help groups navigate the process and timescales.

Found a fit-for-purpose building that meets the needs of your Shed members?

- your first point of contact is to discuss this with your [regional SMSA Development Officer](#)
- read COSS' Factsheet: '[Community Asset Transfer for Men's Sheds under the Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015 \(CEA\)](#)'
- familiarise yourself with the [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#)
- and, finally, [contact your regional COSS Advisor](#) for additional advice if required



scottishmsa.org.uk

dtascommunityownership.org.uk

COSS is part of the Development Trusts Association Scotland—a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) No. SC034231

shed-wise

Shedders' Health Empowerment Drive for Wellness, Information, Signposting & Engagement

Strong. Silent. No More!

Being Strong, Doesn't Mean Staying Silent

Through its Shed-Wise programme, the Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA) is championing a much-needed shift in health and wellbeing for men across Scotland.

Men are statistically more likely to take risks with their health and wellbeing—including higher rates of alcohol and drug misuse, obesity, smoking and other poor lifestyle choices—which can lead to serious long-term consequences. Scotland's men also face considerable health challenges including rising mental health issues and a persistently high suicide rate.

This highlights the urgent need for targeted men's health initiatives and continued focus on both physical and mental wellbeing. And, that's why this all-embracing **Shed-Wise programme** exists and is offered directly in Scottish Men's Sheds to hard-to-reach men. Small changes can make a big difference!

Delivered by our fully-trained Development Officers, the In-Shed presentations encourage men to have voluntary and honest conversations about men's health. The sessions focus in on key men's health matters such as **diabetes, heart health, alcohol and smoking risks, blood pressure, Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA), dementia, cancer awareness (testicular, bowel, breast, prostate, and skin) and coping skills.**

The Shed-wise goal? To help men take charge of their health, make informed choices, and lead longer, healthier lives.

It's time to break the silence and speak up for men's health.



Did you know? In Scotland:

Working-age men are 50% less likely to visit a GP than women

Shockingly, one in five men won't live to reach retirement age

Scotland has high rates of smoking, obesity, alcohol and drug-related deaths

The male suicide rate remains over three times higher than the female rate



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Interested in booking a Shed-Wise session at your Men's Shed?

Please contact the SMSA at info@scottishmsa.org.uk

The SMSA’s MOT4Men workshop series has seen great success however we’ve also listened closely to feedback from Sheds across the country. Many found it challenging to commit members to a full four-hour session, and some felt that without elements like blood pressure and BMI checks, the car MOT analogy no longer held strong.

In addition to this, the cost and time involved in delivering sessions across Scotland proved too high for SMSA to sustain as a charity—especially without dedicated support and investment from the Scottish Government. We also heard calls for more inclusive coverage of men’s health topics that matter most to Shedders—such as male breast cancer, heart health, dementia, and Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA). Several Sheds also expressed a desire to explore how they could co-produce health promotion efforts in their Sheds with trustees, office bearers, members, and wider stakeholders.

However, we are pleased to share that the SMSA has secured new funders specifically to support the delivery of a refreshed two-hour format. These grants have permitted us to design our own agenda, tailored specifically to Shedders’ needs, without being tied to the original MOT4Men brand. In direct response to Shed’s valuable input, the SMSA is proud to introduce Shedders’ Health and Empowerment Drive for Wellness, Information, Signposting, and Engagement - which is a bit of a mouthful, so you will be glad to know we are just calling it [Shed-Wise](#).

This comprehensive, two-hour workshop—delivered right in your Shed—will cover tips and advice from the SMSA to keep your body and mind in great shape looking at:

- Blood pressure
- Prostate health
- Skin cancer
- Bowel cancer
- Breast cancer
- Testicular health
- Mental health
- Type 2 diabetes
- Quitting smoking
- Alcohol awareness
- Good heart health
- Dementia
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm
- Lifestyle changes

We will celebrate and showcase the great work your Shed is already doing, while also exploring whether the “health by stealth” approach to health promotion is helping nurture healthier Shedders—and whether there may be opportunities to do even more. For example:

- Health talks by partners/organisations
- Health-focussed cuppa & blether sessions
- Health professionals attending the Shed
- Health activities such as walking groups, tai chi, yoga, boccia, bowls and pétanque
- Leaflets, posters, displays and/or men’s health-focussed notice boards
- Provision of equipment e.g. defibrillators, blood pressure monitors, weighing scales, exercise equipment

If the discussions are in the affirmative, there will be an opportunity to draw up an action plan of how your Shed could maintain or improve the promotion of health and wellbeing to your members.

Please contact your [local Development Officer](#) to arrange a Shed-Wise session for your Shed.

Tim Green
SMSA East Coast Development Officer
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Upcoming 2025 Regional Shed Network Meetings

- **Aberdeen City/Aberdeenshire**—Tuesday 1st July 2025 at Banchory & District Men’s Shed from 10am
- **Angus**—Monday 21st July 2025 at Arbroath Men’s Shed from 10am
- **Ayrshire**—Monday 11th August 2025 at Ayr & Prestwick Men’s Shed from 11am
- **Perth and Kinross**—Thursday 21st August 2025 at Scone Airport Men’s Shed from 10.30am
- **Moray**—Tuesday 26th August 2025 at Keith & District Men’s Shed from 10.30am
- **Fife**—Tuesday 16th September at The Shed@Bayview from 11am

If you wish to attend a Shed Network meeting in your area, please contact the [Development Officer](#) for your region.



The SMSA facilitates and/or attends Regional Shed Network Meetings across Scotland to connect, support, share and learn.

Regional meetings take place for: Aberdeen City/Aberdeenshire; Angus and Dundee; Ayrshire; Fife; Forth Valley; Highlands and Islands; Greater Glasgow and Clyde; Lothians; Perth and Kinross; and the Scottish Borders



Sizzling Spring, Shedding in the Sun!

The sun’s out, knees are out, and so are the Shedders! From Cumnock to Crookfur and everywhere in between, it’s been a busy time for the Men’s Sheds of the west.

Let’s kick things off with a wee return visit to the Three Towns Men’s Shed, where six months ago the lads took part in a Shed-Wise session (formerly known as MOT4Men). So, how did they get on? Well, here’s the proof in the (sugar-free) pudding:

- 7 Shedders improved their diet
- 8 out of 11 went to see their GP (and not just for a chat or a free pen)
- 6 have started checking themselves for lumps – no more leaving things to chance!
- 5 are exercising more – steps are being taken, literally
- And 5 have reduced their alcohol intake

Honestly, if that doesn’t scream “positive impact,” I don’t know what does. So why not book your Shed in for a Shed-Wise session? Healthier, happier Shedders = longer Shedder lives!

Speaking of growth (and not just around the waistline), the west coast Shed scene is absolutely booming:

- Cumnock is teaming up with a wellbeing charity to build a brand-new facility. Wellness and woodwork – what’s not to love?
- Over in Newton Mearns, a local church, a retail trust, and the community are putting their heads (and Sheds) together
- In Leadhills, the Lowther & District Men’s Shed group have repurposed a former ski shed and have men’s health and wellbeing at the top of their agenda
- Troon Shed is pushing for a Community Asset Transfer of their local sports pavilion – men’s health is front and centre
- Picturesque Fintry is forging ahead with big plans alongside their local development hub – small village, big ambition
- And in Wishaw, a new crew of tool-wielding legends are battling loneliness with hammers, drills and friendly banter

But let’s not forget our more established Sheds, the ones who’ve been blazing the trail for men’s health for a wee bit longer.

- Stewarton Shed is nearly finished with their town sign project, giving both their town and local men a new lease of life. Handy with tools and civic pride? Tick
- Ruchazie Shed is recording a podcast about men’s health, with the help of a student on placement. Fame, microphones, and the occasional dog bark in the background – it’s all part of the magic
- Port William (pictured below), where a fantastic community building ensures that Shedders rub shoulders and collaborate with a wide range of like-minded, positive people, offering locals opportunities aplenty
- we’ve also been criss-crossing the country for four (yes, FOUR!) regional Shed network Meetings – from Dumfries and Galloway up to Greater Glasgow & Clyde, with Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire in between. These networks are vital – a chance for sharing ideas, having a laugh, and occasionally realising someone else has also accidentally glued themselves to a bench.

And just to round things off, we popped up (literally) during Mental Health Awareness Week at the Barclays campus in Glasgow. We rubbed shoulders with corporate types, talked all things Sheds, and made some cracking contacts. Sadly, we didn’t get to meet Eddie “The Eagle” Edwards, but we’re still claiming we were just a few feathers away.

So, that’s the latest from the western front – sun, sawdust, and serious Shed stuff. Until next time, keep hammering away and don’t forget the sunscreen.

Stewart Beck
MSMA West Coast Development Officer
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Following up on my previous update on our outreach efforts in Sutherland, I conducted a public meeting in Bonar Bridge (pictured above), which was attended by 12 men—including two who had also joined the earlier meeting in Lairg. Encouragingly, both groups have now agreed to merge efforts and form a single Shed, proudly calling themselves The Kyle of Sutherland Shed.

Next, I journeyed to the UK mainland’s most westerly point—Ardnamurchan. After navigating its famously winding single-track roads, I met with a group of enthusiasts in Kilchoan. They’ve already identified suitable premises and plan to spread the word by inviting the community to an upcoming public meeting.

Along the way, I passed through Acharacle and spotted a Community Centre. I took the opportunity to pop in and introduce them to the SMSA and held an impromptu meeting with the manager and development worker. They expressed strong interest in establishing a Men’s Shed in the area and were enthusiastic about SMSA’s work. A public meeting has now been scheduled for July.

In Fort William, we hosted a local network meeting at the Caol Centre. Eighteen Sheddors attended from across Kinlochleven, Mallaig, Fort Augustus, and Fort William, leading to lively discussions and plenty of craic.

I also spent time shadowing my colleague Tim Green at Alford & District Men’s Shed for delivery of a Shed-Wise preventative men’s health session (please see page 10 for more information)—which was a valuable hands-on learning experience. Additional visits included Aultbea, the Black Isle, Lochinver, Nairn, and Ullapool—each offering unique opportunities for connection and potential development.

Venturing into new territory, I had a productive Teams call with Third Sector Hebrides in Stornoway. The ‘real need for a Men’s Shed in the Outer Hebrides’ is clear, and we’ll be holding a public meeting there soon also. And finally, after a conversation with the local mental health team in Kinlochbervie, plans are now underway for a public meeting in the area as well.

The wheels are well and truly in motion and it’s full steam ahead for many new and developing Men’s Sheds in the Highlands & Islands.

Ross Murray
 SMSA Highlands/Islands Development Officer
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Does the SMSA Development Team get the thumbs up?

Has your Shed received support from the SMSA or a Shed visit from one of our Development Officers recently? If so, we want to hear your thoughts.

Please let the SMSA know what you think of our support services so we can continue to meet the needs of our members:

<https://scottishmsa.org.uk/smsa-support-evaluation>

SHEDLOADS

OF OPPORTUNITIES



FUNDING | CONSULTATIONS | CONNECTIONS | OPPORTUNITIES

‘Shedloads of Opportunities’, the SMSA’s roundup of all of relevant funding, consultations, connections and opportunities open to Scottish Men’s Sheds, is available to view in our online resource area (login required)—accessible to the Shed contacts registered with the SMSA.



It's only been a few months since Portsoy Men's Shed had its first public meeting to gauge interest and it has been all guns blazing ever since. The group has made huge progress 'doing up their toon', been recognised in Parliament for their 'outstanding community efforts', moved into a temporary Shed home and if that wasn't enough...they have a permanent Shedquarters building in sight for the future!

Army veteran Richard Smith, Chair of [Portsoy Men's Shed](#), said: "My wife's ill health and my early retirement resulted in our decision to move to Portsoy for a better quality of life. On speaking to a couple of local fellas, they mentioned that there was talk of a Men's Shed for Portsoy.

"Although I unfortunately missed the first public meeting on the 25th September 2024 at the town hall due to my bad back, I popped along the second week and really liked what I was hearing. It sounded right up my street as I like to get out of the house and get bored very easily and used to be a pub-goer.

"At the Shed meetings, I started meeting more like-minded men that I would never have connected with otherwise in the local community.

"SMSA Development Officer Tim Green was a great help. He explained all of the steps we had to take but also expressed that we should not worry about how long the process takes. "But as I have zero patience, I wanted to crack on as I was fortunate enough

to be retired and could devote the time to see it come to fruition. "The SMSA created a poster for us to display around Portsoy promoting the idea of a Men's Shed in the area and there was a buzz around it.

"We visited other Sheds—Banff, Macduff and District, Aberchirder and Finechty Men's Shed—and not only made new friends, but were extremely impressed with what they had to offer and learnt so much. Men's Sheds are just like a youth club but for men...with tools!

"The hardest task to date, I would say, was filling those office bearer roles. I spoke to another member, Pat, and asked him 'If you do Secretary, I'll volunteer for Chair? If we don't do it, no one else is going to at this point'. So we did, and then recruited our Vice-Chair Graham Hadden and Jill Douglas who was already the Treasurer of the [Portsoy 75 Club](#).

"We filled all the office bearers' chairs, got a bank account, became a registered charity in January 2025—now we had to walk the walk. We secured a free meeting space at the Station Hotel and began our advertising and recruitment campaign. We went from just a handful of us to now having almost 30 members—several of which are younger men who work offshore.

Not all heroes wear capes! Sometimes they don waders and retrieve bins and cones chucked into Loch Soy!

"My past includes being in the British Army and then being a train driver. I have been extremely unfortunate to be witness, or involved with, many suicides in both of those career choices and the one big common denominator is... they were all men.

I often think, what could have prevented this? A chat could have stopped those thoughts. Going along to their local Men's Shed could have helped.

"I tried in the past, through ex-forces Facebook pages and trying to work with my former train company employer about having alerts for

people missing and at risk. Now, with the Men's Shed, I feel like we are helping people to help themselves without even realising it.

"But, not all heroes wear capes! Sometimes they don waders and retrieve bins and cones chucked into Loch Soy! We laugh our heads off as we work. I think it had been quite some time since we had all laughed as hard as that. Our banter, men amongst men where we love to take the mic, is accepted, allowed and encouraged!

"Our other community projects include improving paths and walkways, replacing the rotten hand rails on the path leading down behind the cemetery so they're all new and stable. We even installed dog poo bag dispensers, sponsored by local business to improve our environment.

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“Our largest project, and arguably the most enjoyable so far, was when Ordiquhill Primary School Parent Council made an appeal for resources to improve the garden for their young pupils and we stepped in to transfer it into a sensory garden—alongside Young’s Plant Hire (Cornhill) and Colin Smith Contractors.

“Another feel-good project took place when we were approached by a local wheelchair user (pictured below left) who couldn’t leave home as he could no longer get his mobility scooter out of his shed due to extremely uneven ground and broken flags. Our Shedders sprang into action to help. Four of us spent four hours lifting the flag stones, levelling the ground and re-laid the slabs to allow him full access. We now see him going about the toon, which makes it all worthwhile.

“We have also held events—a quiz night and horse race night—to raise funds for the Shed whilst raising awareness of our Shed to hopefully reach more local men and encourage them to head to the Shed.”

On the 16th May 2025, Portsoy Men’s Shed was [commended in Parliament](#) for the ‘outstanding community effort that led to the refurbishment and revival of the sensory garden at Ordiquhill Primary School and Nursery for the benefit of pupils; and acknowledged the generosity and dedication of the Shed, whose gift of time, materials and hard work has transformed the space into a valuable community asset, and believes that

their efforts will provide joy and enrichment for the pupils for years to come.’ Richard said: “We are honoured to be acknowledged in this way and look forward to doing many more projects like this for good causes.”

“And now we venture into the Expression of Interest and Community Asset Transfer phase of our Shed’s journey—for the local gasworks building—with many letters of recommendation, good backing from our local politicians most notably Karen Adam MSP, almost 400 signatures in support through our petition and the powers of the [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#).

“Although I feel so out of my comfort zone and feel frustrated and stalled awaiting decisions, if I can do this then anyone can. I am fortunate to have the support of member Hugh Bennett who is experienced in all of this. He is the calm to my impatience so we make a good team and we won’t give up. If we get knocked back, we will appeal.

“I often feel like we are a small fish in a big pond, but we need to think like a huge fish in a tiny pond! If we are successful, it is not a building that we could just move into straight away. The roof requires repair but we have the skillset to do it so that won’t stop us. We have excellent quotes from a local builder who supports our cause—we are good to go.

“Our plans would be to build a separate Shed, keep the roof line to existing walls and make our social

area. Over time, we would then do up the toilet block and create a large room to restore cars and bikes. One member is very into building cart bikes (pictured below right) and it would also be great to transform an old car together.

“We carried out an online poll on our Facebook page to ascertain what activities people would like to see at the Shed. If there is a want for French darning then we will cater for that. We will cater for the minority, not just the majority. We will also work with our local health professionals to recommend us—socially prescribe us, not medication.

“Like all Sheds—some of our members are just there for the tea and chat. So if your skill set includes the ability to chat and make a brew and you want to get out of the house then come along and see what we’re about.

“We invite all men in and around Portsoy, Sandend, Fordyce and Cornhill to join us and play a part in the exciting development of the new Portsoy Men’s Shed. We are finding our own way out.”

Whilst writing this article, the loaf-ly news broke that J.G. Ross (Bakers) Ltd had offered the Shed their former bakery premises on the square on a one-year lease, easing the burden of the Shed group’s rush to secure the gasworks building. The Shed moved in at the end of May—no more working from the boot of their cars. We wish them all the best in their new temporary home...they are certainly on a roll!



AURACAST

Approximately a third of the population in the UK, 18 million people, are deaf or hard of hearing. Here, hearing aid wearers and Dunfermline Shedder Bill Mackintosh and Hugh Donaghy from the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) in Scotland share their thoughts on Auracast, a new technology set to transform the lives of millions.

Shedder Bill, who volunteered for the RNID for many years, said: “If you’ve ever struggled with bad Bluetooth connections, audio cutting in and out, or just trying to pair your earbuds to your phone without going through a digital obstacle course, you’ll appreciate what’s to come. Enter AuraCast—a new Bluetooth technology that might just be one of the biggest innovations to wireless audio in years.

“But beyond better headphones and easier connections, AuraCast is also shaping up to be a total game-changer for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or dealing with tinnitus and as many Shed members are, shall we say, slightly more advanced in years—they are likely to be in one of those situations.

“AuraCast is part of the new Bluetooth Low Energy (LE) and it does something pretty revolutionary. It turns Bluetooth into a kind of audio broadcast system. Instead of just connecting one pair of headphones to your phone or laptop, you’ll be able to tune in to broadcasts of audio in real-time—like tuning into a radio station, but it’s digital, personal and super precise.

“Imagine walking into a gym and instantly being able to tap into the audio from a TV across the room. Or getting off a plane and tuning into announcements at the gate—straight into your hearing aids. No fiddling. No asking someone to repeat something. Just crisp, clear sound that you control. For most people, it’s just convenient but for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, or who live with tinnitus, it could be life-changing.

“One of the most frustrating things about living with hearing loss is how hard it can be to understand speech in public. Airports, train stations, theatres, schools, places of worship—these are all places where important information is given through loudspeakers or intercom systems. And those systems? Usually terrible for people with hearing loss.

“They’re echoey, noisy and often impossible to understand. AuraCast changes that. Any place that installs AuraCast-enabled transmitters can broadcast announcements straight to someone’s hearing aids or cochlear implants—without needing a special receiver or device.

“No wires, no setup. Just tap to join. So instead of struggling to hear a garbled gate change announcement, someone can get that audio fed straight into their hearing device in perfect quality. It’s like getting subtitles—but through your ears.

“A huge barrier for people with hearing loss is that using assistive technology often draws attention. Traditional assistive listening systems like induction loops or FM systems require people to ask for devices, wear extra gear, or sit in specific seats. That’s not just inconvenient—it can be embarrassing, and it’s one reason these systems are so underused.

“AuraCast could flip that script. It allows anyone with compatible earbuds or hearing devices to connect privately, discreetly, and instantly to the audio stream. You don’t need to tell anyone, borrow anything, or make a request. You just... connect. Like everyone else. It’s tech that doesn’t feel like “special” tech. It just works. And when assistive technology blends into the mainstream, stigma starts to fade.

“Now, let’s talk about tinnitus—something that affects millions of people. That constant ringing, buzzing, or hissing in your ears can be incredibly distracting and stressful. While there’s no cure, one of the most common treatments is sound therapy—basically using low-level background sounds to mask or take the edge off the ringing.

“AuraCast opens up a whole new world of options for people managing tinnitus. Imagine walking into a café or coworking space and tapping into a gentle soundscape: ocean waves, forest sounds, white noise—all broadcast wirelessly. Instead of fumbling with apps or headphones, you could just tune into the environment’s background audio stream and get instant relief. And, since it allows multiple connections to the same stream at once, businesses could actually support this as a public wellness offering. ‘Need a little focus or calm? Tune into our in-store sound stream’. That’s a whole new level of accessibility and care.

“Live events are another area where AuraCast will shine. Think about concerts, conferences, or lectures. Right now, if you’re hard of hearing, your options are limited: hope they have a loop system, sit in a designated spot, or rely on someone’s mic not cutting out. AuraCast allows multiple audio streams to be broadcast at the same time. So a venue could send out the main audio, plus a version with live captions or translations, or even just a cleaner audio feed for people with hearing loss. It’s not just accessibility—it’s inclusivity. It means being able to participate fully, with the same level of clarity and connection as anyone else in the room.”

Hugh Donaghy, Development Manager for RNID in Scotland, said: “Restrictions to current hearing aid technology has convinced the RNID to embrace, and indeed encourage, the Auracast roll-out. The most exciting application of Auracast is in assistive listening, where hearing devices can pick up audio from public address systems.

“This will be especially useful in situations where hearing loops are not appropriate. This is vital because it allows everyone



- ◆ One Device, Everywhere
- ◆ More Independence, Less Stigma
- ◆ Tinnitus Relief: A New Tool in the Toolbox
- ◆ More Inclusive Events and Experiences

access to the same information at the same time. For Auracast to deliver on its potential, it needs to be installed across national infrastructure, such as transport, education and healthcare. That’s why the RNID is working with government at the highest levels to raise awareness and discuss the challenges and opportunities of making it available to all.”

“Perhaps the best thing is how universal it’s meant to be. Once more devices support it (and that’s already starting to happen) you’ll be able to take your own earbuds, hearing aids or implants and connect to audio in any AuraCast-supported space—whether that’s a bus terminal, hotel, your GP or at your local Shed. No more asking for adaptors. No compatibility nightmares—just seamless, personal audio access on the go.

“AuraCast is still rolling out—it’s not here, there and everywhere...yet. It’s built into the newest versions of Bluetooth (Bluetooth 5.2 and up), so hardware needs to support it. That means hearing aid, phone and TV manufacturers, as well as public venues, need to get on board. And, let’s be honest, widespread adoption takes time.

“The momentum is there. Big companies like Samsung, JBL, Intel, Sony and Bose are already integrating it. Airports and stadiums are starting to install AuraCast systems readying themselves for a whole new way of thinking about audio.

“For the average person, it means easier connections and better sound. But for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who live with tinnitus, it’s much more: it’s a path to clearer communication, more independence, richer experiences, and greater inclusion in everyday life.

“Technology like this doesn’t just make the world more convenient—it makes it more accessible. And that benefits everyone.”

RNID run local support services in Fife, Edinburgh & Lothian, Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Scottish Borders and the Shetland Isles. For more details please contact [Hugh Donaghy](#) on 07483 941896.

Hugh is also keen to visit Sheds to promote their volunteering opportunities in Greater Glasgow, Fife, Edinburgh & Lothians, Scottish Borders and Tayside. Interested? [Get in touch.](#)



Sanday Men's Shed brings stained glass to life

Sanday Men's Shed welcomed back Orcadian artist Shona McInnes from [Leadline Studio](#) for a four-day stained glass workshop—bringing together newcomers and returning Shedders to master their skills whilst also creating a collaborative panel that will soon take pride of place in the Shed.

Francis Edwards from Sanday Men's Shed said: "Our Shed first worked with Shona back in 2024 through a partnership with the [Friends of Sanday Kirk](#) who had secured funding for a stained glass window project.

"The Kirk invited the Shed to host workshops, open to the wider community, focused on glass cutting and leading techniques. The sessions were very well received and inspired us to pursue further training for our members.

"Thanks to a grant from [Voluntary Action Orkney](#), we invited Shona back to continue her tuition. The funding covered her fees in addition to workshop materials to set up as a small stained glass workshop at the Shed.

"Over the second week in May 2025, members who had completed the previous beginners course were able to refine their skills and new participants afforded the opportunity to explore the craft for the first time. The sessions were both productive and enjoyable, resulting in individual pieces including contributions to a communal panel that will proudly be displayed in our Shed.

"To house all the tools and materials, an old sideboard (pictured below left) was upcycled into a bespoke storage unit. Tools are stored on the upper shelf,

boxes of lead sit snugly on the top and a child's Lego storage system with pull-out trays was re-purposed to store coloured glass offcuts. Everything we need to make stained glass fit neatly into a very small space, making it easy to find... and put away!

"Shona taught us how to handle glass safely and how to use different types of glass cutters, before moving on to practising glass cutting techniques using recycled greenhouse glass. When everyone felt confident enough to progress to the coloured glass they were able to select colours and cut their shapes on two lightboxes, which were made from salvaged wood and built by the Shed.

"The members also constructed some leading-up boards to Shona's specifications—an essential item of equipment in all stained glass studios: the glass shapes and the lead strips into which they slot, are pushed tight against wooden batons and held in place with farrier's nails until the finished piece is ready to be soldered together. In just over three hours, participants learned to design, draw, cut, lead and solder their individual panels.

"The beginner's workshops were followed by a three-day advanced skills course. In addition to creating a personal piece, members were able to work together on a group panel. This was designed by Shona to include particular challenges in cutting and leading, with the intention that the panel could be completed after she had left the island, utilising their new mastered skills. In between working on these pieces, members were able to hear Shona describe how glass is manufactured and familiarise themselves with samples of the many textures and colours available which could be ordered for future projects.

"Shona also included a troubleshooting session covering common mistakes and demonstrating the best way to cut

challenging shapes and how to use a professional gas soldering iron. Shedders were also taught how to: attach hanging eyelets to their panels; weatherproof them with leaded light cement, and clean the glass and polish the leads with graphite.

"The sessions have been tremendously popular. This is a craft which fosters creativity, skill-building, and social interaction, and we aim to make it a permanent feature. Plans include selling products through the local Craft Hub, creating a sustainable income stream, and inspiring some to explore this as a rewarding hobby or even as a profession. The activity will complement our wood and newly-acquired skills in drystone dyke building, offering a whole new dimension for members, particularly and potentially for those with limited mobility.

"None of us could have imagined mastering a specialist skill so quickly with such impressive results!"

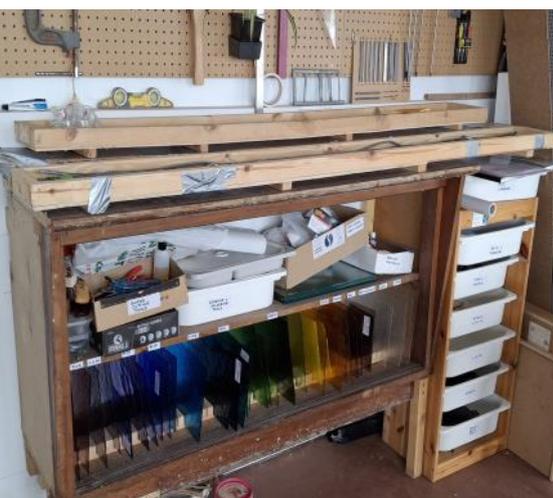
—Workshop participant—

"One of our most elderly members said that he has found a new hobby—one that he can do sitting down as he now finds standing for longer periods difficult. Another expressed that 'you can teach old dogs new tricks!'"

"In conclusion, this initiative embodies our own and the SMSA mission: fostering social bonds; improving health and wellbeing; and strengthening community ties. By embracing stained glass art, we are enhancing our Shedders' lives and contributing to the cultural and economic vitality of Sanday, cementing our small but important role in island life."

Shona McInnes said: "Sanday Men's Shed is a bright, sunny space with lots of windows—a perfect venue for working with glass. There was a great atmosphere in the Shed with lots of laughs whilst sharing knowledge and skills with such an enthusiastic and talented group! The highlight of the week for me was seeing everyone grow in confidence and watching members helping each other to complete tasks."

The Sanday Shedders



Bigger and better: Springhill Shed plans new chapter

Springhill Community Men's Shed in Shotts (formerly known as Shotts Men's Shed) may be one of Scotland's smallest Sheds, but its ambitions are anything but. Despite having just three regular members, this determined group is forging ahead with big plans to expand, improve health and safety, and increase their community outreach.

At the start of the year, Springhill Community Men's Shed made the bold decision to pause all ongoing projects. The goal? To implement comprehensive health and safety procedures for every tool, expand the working space, and set clear limits on how many people can safely be in the workshop at once.

Ray Elliott said: "We are only a small Shed with three regular members however we have visits from other local charities, dedicated to assisting individuals with additional support requirements, which are extremely popular.

"We had 17 people in the Shed one day for three hours—it was a very productive session but far too cramped. In my mind, 7-8 people is the absolute maximum going forward."

"The Shed currently consists of a 19ft square workspace with an 8ft extension used for timber storage and we have noticed many improvements that could be made so we decided to stop to carry out this vital work.

"We have made safety upgrades, including building handrails for the wheelchair ramp. An additional building, almost identical in size to the existing Shed, will help accommodate the increase in attendance.

"The additional building will also include a dedicated area for seasonal woodworking projects and serve as a social hub area for tea, coffee, and chat sessions."

Ray, who also serves as Secretary for two other local charities, has largely

taken the reins while fellow Shedder **Simon Fuller** recovers from illness.

"Simon's been off for many months unfortunately so I'm doing this all solo at the moment, blending admin work between three charities," Ray explained. "But I cannot refuse a challenge and will help where I can and am keen to recruit new members to help with the expansion plans."

Recruitment is now a priority, especially with new Shed Charity Staff Controller Diane joining the team. Diane brings experience in sewing and arts and crafts, with a hope to potentially align the three groups under one expanded Shed umbrella.

Ray added: "This year, the Shed also welcomed a carpenter, Danny, and his son, Jordon, both of whom do excellent work. We're also excited to have another new carpenter joining us soon.

"Sadly, one of the lads who struggled with his mental health passed away at the end of last year. His parents kindly made a generous donation to the workshop as a heartfelt thank you for helping their son enjoy his Thursdays with us. Ian was a dedicated worker who loved painting and sanding.

Despite many challenges, the Shed has still managed a project or two including:

- five types of garden planters
- a 4-foot-long bridge with planters
- children's furniture, including a storage box and small table
- a large mud kitchen and sensory table for a local toddler group
- display units, benches, jewellery boxes, and mini wishing wells
- restoration of an 8x4-foot oak table with ornate leg detailing

Ray has also been busy repurposing old fencing for future projects and even transformed a 1960s riverboat model into a 1940s torpedo boat.

One of his most touching projects was a handcrafted Celtic Cross made over the Christmas holidays. Commissioned through the Shed's



Ray and Simon on their radio show

radio show, the piece was a heartfelt tribute for an elderly man mourning his wife.

"I couldn't charge for it," Ray said. "It was a gift to a worthy gentleman, and it got me back into chiselling—something I hadn't done for over 20 years."

The Shed recently secured a grant that allowed them to purchase essential new tools, including drill sets, a planer/thicknesser, and a versatile drill stand. Continuous improvements to storage and workbench arrangements are also underway. "Gaining new tools for the Shed permitted Simon and I to finally take some of our own personal equipment back home.

Challenges still persist though. Tool misuse—such as overheating sanders—and space constraints remain concerns. Ray is also navigating serious health issues, including a rare form of cancer he has beaten twice and a pending hip replacement surgery with significant risks due to blood clots. "I should be dead really. Instead, I'm the one in a million who's still here."

As the Shed looks toward the future, the motto seems clear: down tools when needed, but never down spirits. Ray and his fellow Sheddors may be few in number, but their community impact—and determination—is immense.

"There's no rest for the wicked," Ray joked. "And, I must have been really wicked!"

HEAD TO THE SHED

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Rainbows return to Inverurie Men's Shed allotments

A splash of colour and joy returned to the [Inverurie & District Men's Shed](#) community allotments this spring as the local Kinellar Rainbows group—part of Girlguiding—joined the Shedders and volunteers once again to plant, learn and grow together.

The partnership between the Shed and the Rainbow girls, aged from 4 to 7, has blossomed into a true intergenerational initiative, combining years of gardening know-how with young budding gardeners' enthusiasm and sprouting curiosity. The allotments were alive with laughter, chatter and the clatter of watering cans as the children got their hands dirty alongside their Shed mentors. The Rainbows were inquisitive little growers, eager to learn from Shedder Graeme Sheperd and ask many questions.

Graeme said: "This kind of partnership is exactly what our Shed's community allotments are all about. It's more than just gardening—it's passing on knowledge, building confidence and creating meaningful connections across generations."

Kinellar Rainbow Leader Sue Woolley expressed heartfelt thanks for the experience: "We're so grateful to the Men's Shed for welcoming us back and sharing their time and expertise. The girls planted lettuce and cabbage and did lots of watering as it was a hot and dry day at the allotments. They learnt about spacing the plants out, digging a deep enough hole, putting the plant in and re-filling the hole. They helped fetch and carry the water and gave the plants a good drink. They also helped take the wheelbarrow to the field and back.

"The girls absolutely love being here—it's such a unique and valuable experience for them."

As the seedlings begin to grow, so too does a beautiful community connection—one that's rooted in kindness, curiosity and a shared love of getting stuck in and mucky outdoors.



Black Isle Men's Shed's intergenerational Pict project

The SMSA interviews former chairman of the Black Isle Men Shed, Steve Bramwell, to learn all about their latest intergenerational project highlighting the craftsmanship of the Pictish period in their local school.

Steve said: "Since the beginning of our Shed, we have always worked with local schools on many projects and have become well known for it. It is work that we all thoroughly enjoy, sometimes even more than the children!

"Our Shed's master turner and woodworker John Ruickbie is also a member of the [Highland Woodturners Club](#) which meets at Munloch Hall. Through the club, he heard from fellow woodworker Nick Simpson that the Munloch Primary School pupils were studying the Picts, meaning 'painted people', that inhabited northern Scotland during Roman times.

"Their teacher was also keen for the children to learn all about how the Picts used axes, adzes, gouges, knives and lathes to shape and refine wooden objects such as bowls and buckets.

"John suggested that our Shed come along to the school to present to the pupils on the cultural influences and traditions from the Pictish-era which continue to inspire creativity with wood today.

"He also offered to build a model of a mini pole lathe to demonstrate it to the pupils and also gift it to them as part of their learning.

"It is a project that brought the woodturners, the Shedders and the children together. It really floats our boat to work collaboratively to achieve our own and others' aims."

"John then approached George Smith, our member who offers green woodworking tutorials to our Shedders at our Feddanhill Wood site, to step in to help to deliver the talk to the children.

"On the day, we (John, George, Richard Evans and I) gave the talk to 38 eager pupils. We explained, using the scale model, how the lathe would work—using a pole and treadle, connected to a cord, to power intermittent rotational motion to turn a small bowl (pictured above right).

"The woodworking tools—blunted beforehand so no-one hurt themselves—were also passed around the pupils to have a closer look.

"The class was such a lively bunch, with lots of enthusiastic questions throughout in addition to learning more about the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement. They really enjoyed it, but I think again—like all of these intergenerational projects—we enjoyed it even more.

"It is a project that brought the woodturners, the Shedders and the children together. It really floats our boat to work collaboratively to achieve our own and others' aims.

"We look forward to working with more schools in the future".

Pictured (left to right):

George and John hold the attention of the Munloch pupils during their talk on the Picts; and the model of a pole lathe, created by John Ruickbie, which was gifted to the pupils for their project. John made all of the components based on an original Pictish-era design

Costco Aberdeen supports its local Sheds to grow

Thanks to the SMSA's ongoing strong relationship with their local Costco in Aberdeen, the Association frequently receives donation offers for nearby Men's Sheds. This time, the donation included a generous supply of plants and compost.

The SMSA reached out to nearby Sheds to see who could make use of them and the offers were snapped up in no time! The SMSA and Costco were delighted to see the donations be rehomed to not only support gardening activities at the Sheds but also intergenerational projects involving local schools and community growing initiatives.

Inverurie & District Men's Shed was delighted to collect bags of compost for their community allotments on Old Port Road and **Bridge of Don & District Men's Shed** collected several van-loads of plants and compost—and shared their bounty with fellow Shedders at the **Bucksburn Men's Shed**.

Costco Aberdeen Manager Teresa Wilson said: "Men's Sheds are incredible charities and a shining example of people coming together to improve their community. Costco has been located in Westhill, Aberdeenshire for 25 years now and we have always tried to donate to local community projects where we can. We are extremely proud to be able to work with the SMSA and support Scottish Men's Sheds."

Eric Bisset from Bridge of Don & District Men's Shed said: "We have five large outdoor planters and eleven smaller planters for our 'wee helpers' from Forehill Primary School so the compost and flowers will all be put to good use.

"The next week, SMSA got in touch with us again to collect more even plants including Hydrangeas and Calamondin—a small edible citrus fruit plant. The hydrangeas just needed a short back n sides, a good drink of water and a feed of plant food to perk up.

"It will be great to introduce the new Calamondin (Philippine lime) plants to the school children—many will have not seen them before as I had not heard of them. And, who knows we may also be able to introduce a new Calamondin smoothie recipe to our Shedders and pupils' taste buds too.

"We absolutely love working with the children, they're like sponges, soaking up every detail, whilst watering their shoes at the same time. Thanks to Costco, we're widening and nurturing their knowledge."





Scottish-Japanese Shed link grows in Dalkeith

Dalkeith Men's Shed played host to an international cultural exchange last month, welcoming Mr Masataka Abe, Cultural Consul at the Consulate General of Japan in Edinburgh, for a hybrid meeting with the Dalkeith Shedders and the Japanese Men's Shed 'Pokke Kotan' based in Sapporo joining online.

The visit on 23rd May 2025 marked another step in the growing connection between Scottish and Japanese Men's Sheds. It followed Dalkeith Shed Vice Chairman [Duncan Seymour's visit to Japan](#), which was featured in the April 2025 edition of *The Scottish Shedder*. As part of the exchange, the session included a live video link with Chihiro Sugimoto, representing the Pokke Kotan Shed in Sapporo.

The term 'Otokotachi no Koya'—a literal translation of 'Men's Shed' in Japanese—captures the same spirit of camaraderie and creativity found in our Scottish Sheds. Although still relatively new in Japan, the Shed model has been gaining traction as a way to tackle isolation and loneliness, mirroring the positive impact already seen across Scotland.

The day included a presentation by Duncan, who spoke about his recent visit to Pokke Kotan, followed by a lively Q&A with Sugimoto-san in Sapporo. Guests were then treated to a tour of the Dalkeith Shed's workshop and store, where

handmade wooden goods were on display and for sale.

Cultural Consul Mr Abe was full of praise for the Shed and its welcoming atmosphere. "It was a lovely and informative visit," he said. "I really enjoyed learning more about Dalkeith Men's Shed and the SMSA. Hearing about Pokke Kotan and Sheds in Japan was fantastic — and the live link with Chihiro Sugimoto was a lovely touch. I was especially impressed with the workshop and wish I lived closer so I could become a regular member!"

To mark the occasion, Mr Abe was made an Honorary Member of Dalkeith Men's Shed—a gesture he warmly appreciated. He expressed his hopes to return soon with his family for another visit.

And the international connections don't stop there — the team at Pokke Kotan are now seriously exploring a future visit to Scotland, with Dalkeith (and perhaps other Scottish Sheds) firmly on their travel wish list. Details are still to be confirmed, but as the idea gathers momentum, it could mark the start of regular cross-cultural Shed visits. So, keep your ears open — your Shed could be next to welcome our Japanese Shedder brothers!

Pictured right: During SMSA Development Officer Tim Green's recent visit to Dalkeith Men's Shed, Shedder Duncan Seymour presented the SMSA with origami butterflies from Duncan Seymour's trip to Japan and the Pokke Kotan Men's Shed.





Rosyth Shedder Iain Elder, who has multiple sclerosis (MS) completed a paddle board challenge—from Prestonpans down to North Berwick—last month to raise funds for three charities close to his heart .

On the 11th May 2025, Iain Elder took on a paddleboarding challenge—in aid of three charities [Leuchie House](#), the [Walk with Scott Foundation](#) and [Beyond Boundaries East Lothian](#)—as a tribute to his friend Sandy Henderson’s father Alex Henderson.

Iain said: “Mr Alex Henderson was a wonderful gentleman and I wanted to do this fundraiser in his honour and to raise awareness and funds for three worthy charities.

“Leuchie House is a unique respite centre where people with long-term conditions can have a respite break—a vital lifeline away from the difficulties of living with their condition. The respite centre in North Berwick offers 24-hour care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy support and tailored activities.

“Walk with Scott is a community-driven organisation supporting local organisations and the people of East Lothian in many different ways and Beyond Boundaries East Lothian (BBEL) provides opportunities for people with disabilities and mental health issues, living in East Lothian to participate in adventure sports and outdoor activities.

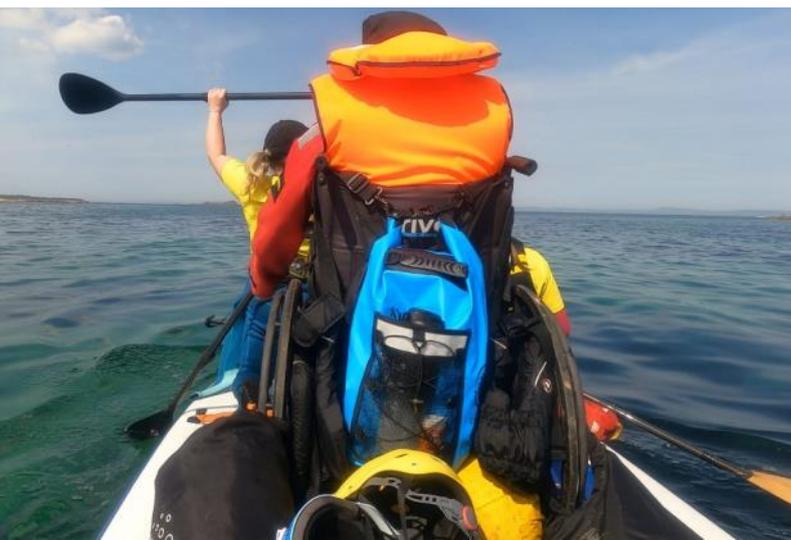
“These charities do an amazing job, helping people in need. BBEL is fantastic—supporting people of differing ages and conditions to get out on a bike or get on the water. Just look at what they are doing for me, a wheelchair on a paddleboard. Wow!

“On the day, we had assistance from Jess and the crew of the rescue boat and Mel at North Berwick Beach Wheelchairs who got me down onto the beach to start the challenge. The BBEL crew—Captain Steven, Amanda, Sophie, Lillie May, Adele and Sian—and I boarded the paddleboard at around 11am and navigated our way from West Beach North Berwick, 14.75 miles along the Forth for six hours, before arriving at our destination—BBEL’s HQ in Cockenzie. The weather was so kind to us but the wind could not make it’s mind up which way to blow.

“I am grateful to everyone involved—the crew, everyone who turned up to see us off and eventually to welcome us back onto dry land. Many of my fellow Shedder supported me through this challenge with encouragement and donations to the cause.”

At the time of writing, Iain had reached 85% of his £1,700 target.

There is still time to support Iain, and his three chosen charities, by making a donation through [JustGiving](#).





St Andrews Men's Shed: From vision to fruition

Two years ago, the Craigtoun Country Park site pictured above sat empty but [St Andrews Men's Shed \(SAMS\)](#) had a vision—for a custom-built Shed with fit-for-purpose workshop space, social area galore and gardens for its 50+, and growing, membership. This month, the members gathered for a celebratory lunch to mark the Shed receiving the final green light sign-off from Fife Council.

SAMS Trustee Adrian Snowball said: "This month, over thirty members gathered for a feast of pulled pork, veggie chilli, baked potatoes, coleslaw, guacamole and rolls—thanks to our Shed cooking wizards, Brad and Jay—to celebrate a massive milestone of our Shed being signed off by our local authority and seeing our vision finally come to fruition.

"It has been all go for the last two years. We have been extremely busy with numerous projects to get us into our new Shed premises. Our building, a former single-storey steel barn, was erected and we have been overwhelmed with the support shown by our community through the offers of help and donations to help us reach our goal.

"Through our membership, we have a wide range of skills for different areas of this project. Some members love the construction side, some prefer working in our garden to develop the plot of land, adjacent to the Shed, into allotments with polytunnel, a wood store and orchard for us all to reap the benefits of. Everyone plays a vital role.

"Through our appeal for support, [Morrison Construction](#) stepped in to help organise and then install our sewer connection and Sustainable Urban Drainage System at the site. The Morrison Construction team was exceptionally professional and we are extremely grateful for all of their help."

Henry Paul expressed his gratitude following completion of the work, stating: "The Morrison team have been excellent. It really has been a pleasure working with them, and we

had a lot of fun and banter along the way."

Adrian added: "This year, we saw our kitchen and accessible toilets installed, new fencing and gates—crafted by [Henderson Fabrication](#)—erected to keep our premises secure. Seeing it all come together in the final stages makes it all worthwhile.

"This month, our members received refresher fire safety training at the Shed thanks to ex-fireman Tim Swift—to keep everyone safe. Our community projects have not stopped either and the lads have been busy helping out St Andrews in Bloom to make our community look the very best it can be.

"Upcoming jobs in the next few weeks include: boxing in pipework in the toilets; fitting out the Turner's room; sorting the layout of the workshop machinery and removing surplus machinery. Seeing everything coming together and being near the finish line is hugely morale-boosting for everyone though—like when we moved in our metal lathe and kitted out our 'crew room'.

"We have such an amazing bunch of lads. Progress has been nothing short of outstanding and we could not have got here without the leadership of our former Chairman Henry Paul."

"Over the three years of the project, we are fortunate to have received a number of grants from national bodies, such as the National Lottery Community Fund and regional bodies such as the Fife Rural Development Fund and many local St Andrews organisations including St Andrews Community Trust, St Andrews University, The Old Course Hotel and the R & A." says Shed Treasurer, John Meek.

"Considering that less than two years ago the site was bare, it is truly amazing what can be achieved when you have the right team and the mindset. And, our new home is secured for at least the next two decades to serve this generation and the next."

[Read more about how Morrison Construction supported St Andrews Men's Shed overleaf](#) ➤





Morrison Construction supports St Andrews Men's Shed with essential drainage works

SMSA partner [Morrison Construction](#) recently carried out a considerable amount of work at St Andrews Men's Shed. What began as a donation of offcuts of wood quickly turned into supporting the charity with a crucial step to ensure their new facility was up and running as soon as possible.

Katie Strachan Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Manager at Morrison Construction said: "Morrison Construction works with the SMSA and Scottish Men's Sheds to donate surplus timber and materials to Sheds closest to our project sites.

"Morrison Construction recently collaborated with St Andrews Men's Shed. Initially, the charity was offered surplus timber materials from a nearby site, including plywood sheets and timber posts. However, the engagement with the organisation quickly evolved into something much more impactful.

"Upon us meeting with the Shed Chairman (at the time) Henry Paul, it was identified that their new facility at Craigtoun Country Park required crucial infrastructure work to connect water, sewer, and surface water systems.



"Although another Morrison Construction team had already committed to installing a soakaway structure, our team—recognising the significance of the charity and its aims—volunteered to undertake the remaining connection works.

"Led by James Davies, Senior Site Agent, and Kris Noble, Ganger, our dedicated team worked tirelessly over a two-week period to complete the necessary drainage connections.

"Their efforts ensured the workshop became fully operational, allowing the Men's Shed members to continue their valuable community work without further delays."

Reflecting on the successful partnership, Drew Mackie, Construction Manager, shared his thoughts: "Morrison Construction takes pride in supporting community-driven initiatives like St Andrews Men's Shed. Our team enjoyed collaborating with the charity, and it was fantastic to witness the positive impact their work has on the local community."

Katie added: "This project underscores Morrison Construction's ongoing commitment to giving back to the communities we serve. We would like to extend our thanks to the entire team involved, including Neil Smyth, Graham Thomson, Kris Noble, Ryan Nellies, Ryan Nelson, Richard Todd, Ross Hamilton, Jed McLean, Alan McManus, and David Sydserff, for their hard work and dedication."





Facing challenges and finding purpose: Owen's journey with prostate cancer and the power of the Shed

After receiving a life-changing diagnosis of advanced prostate cancer three years ago, Owen Neil (65) found strength through the support of [Prostate Scotland](#) and channelled his drive, determination and need for a positive focus into bringing a Men's Shed to his town of [Troon](#).

"I've always been a hands-on guy," Owen says. "I worked as an engineer and tool maker before moving into management in the electronics industry. I was lucky enough to retire at 55, but I like keeping busy. The joy of retirement for me was getting to take my time with projects I had wanted to do for a very long time with no deadlines—it was just me and my tools."

Out of the blue at age 62, Owen received devastating news when he was diagnosed with advanced, inoperable prostate cancer. "It hit hard. Especially as I had always been so healthy," he says. "And then I was told it was life-limiting. It came just as the Covid pandemic began, making everything even more isolating."

The news was as a complete shock to the entire family – Owen's wife of 40+ years, Avril, their two daughters and their partners (Amanda, Kirsty, Russell and Martin) and four grandchildren Elia, Rosie, Oban and Ivy.

After months of tests delayed by lockdowns, Owen began palliative hormone therapy and intensive radiotherapy. While grateful for the

chance at extending his life, the side effects took a toll. "The fatigue, the insomnia, the cold sweats—it was brutal. I felt like a shadow of my former self but I didn't want to burden my family. I was struggling and felt so alone."

Then came another big blow—psoriatic arthritis triggered after catching Covid near the end of his radiotherapy treatment leaving him in constant pain and almost immobile. "I was at my lowest point. My family were supportive, but they couldn't grasp what I was going through and that made them feel helpless too."

In late 2023, Owen's urology team pointed him in the direction of two new Prostate Scotland support programmes: [Living Well with Prostate Cancer](#) and [Prostate FFIT](#) (Football Fans in Training) and these turned out to be game-changers. The Living Well course that Owen attended ran for seven weeks at Ayrshire Cancer Support. "We tackled the real issues faced by men affected by prostate cancer—fatigue, urinary problems, the emotional side of treatment, side effects, relationships and erectile dysfunction, diet, and mental health. But the best part was being in a room with other blokes in

the same situation – they understood. We laughed, we shared, and for the first time in two and a half years, I didn't feel alone."

Then came the Prostate FFIT programme at Rugby Park in Kilmarnock—13 weeks of group exercise, diet advice, and camaraderie. "I struggled at first with my mobility, but within five weeks, I started noticing massive improvements. I stuck with the exercises and dietary changes. By week seven, I was off the painkillers and moving better than I had in years. It was genuinely life-changing."

Through both programmes, Owen not only regained physical strength but also built friendships and confidence. "I can't recommend them enough. The support from Prostate Scotland, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Ayrshire Cancer Support, and the Killie Community Trust has been incredible. These programmes gave me my life back."

With his energy returning, Owen saw a call for trustees for a proposed Men's Shed in Troon. He didn't hesitate. "Thanks to all the support I'd received, I was finally well enough to give something back. So up went my hand to volunteer at my first Shed meeting."

A year on, Owen is now the Shed's Vice-Chairman—and both he and the group are thriving. "I am still in a good position, enjoying and making the most of the remainder of my life and family which I adore, and engaging in new local community groups and activities - something I thought would never be possible again for me. My family see a huge change in me and I feel blessed to still be here."



Continued on next page...

PERSONAL STORIES

...continued from previous page (Owen Neil's story)

"We're building something really special here with [Troon Men's Shed](#). We may not have a physical building yet, but we've absolutely nailed the social side. Our fortnightly meetings at The Lighthouse Centre are full of chat, laughter and support. We've already got over 80 members."

"Troon was one of the only towns on the West Coast of Scotland that didn't have a Men's Shed. We were missing out and had to get with the times and prioritise the health and wellbeing of the men in our community. The SMSA has been a great support at the end of the phone whenever we need it and SMSA Development Officer Stewart Beck has even come to my house to visit and offer his advice."

Recently, the Troon Sheddars took on their first big community project—helping fit out the newly refurbished £2.4 million Ayrshire Cancer Support Centre. "We painted, we built furniture, we hung the pictures—everything was done by volunteers. It felt brilliant to contribute and support others facing cancer. It was extremely therapeutic and rewarding for all of us."

Now the group's mission is to secure a permanent Shed home. "We're in the middle of a Community Asset Transfer," Owen says. "I will not lie; it is a tremendous amount of work trying to get a Men's Shed up and running but we have begun this journey and are

determined to see it through. We are all enjoying it and can already feel the benefits and see the changes in the men attending, many with a variety of health issues.

"Our sights—and our hearts—are set on the old, run-down football changing rooms in Hosiery Park, Troon. We're currently working through the Community Asset Transfer process to make it the future home of our Shed.

"It's a big job, but we're up for the challenge and giving it our all. We're doing this not just for ourselves, but for the men of Troon today—and tomorrow."

Owen's story is one of resilience, hope, and the power of community. "I've got my life back in ways I never expected. I'm making the most of it with my family, my mates, and this incredible Shed. I feel lucky to still be here—and proud to be part of something that's helping others along the way."



Personal stories from the Inverclyde Sheddars

Working in partnership with The Beacon and artist Jenny Wicks as part of the Year of Storytelling (2022), [Inverclyde Shed](#) recorded over 40 audio clips from nine Shed members talking about their own stories of growing up, working and living in Inverclyde.

This collaboration explored people's connection to place through presenting the every-day and extraordinary life histories of members of the Shed, adding a more personal and modern dimension to the 'Ships and Sugar' legacy that is often associated with the area's history.

Bruce Newlands from Inverclyde Shed contacted the SMSA to promote these stories. Bruce said: "We thought our audio archive on our website would be a good one to share with The Scottish Shedder readers. Our members give their authentic voices to their life experiences through a period of significant industrial decline.

"We are keen that other Men's Sheds realise that it's relatively straightforward to do a similar archive for their own area and heritage and record and retain this wisdom. It's a great repository of knowledge, experience, laughter and tears and how these have shaped individuals and their community at large."

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

Aviation Preservation Society of Scotland: 'Sophie' soars once more

The Aviation Preservation Society of Scotland (APSS) is a group of retired aviation enthusiasts—engineers, teachers, surgeons, and more—who spent 24 years building a First World War Sopwith 1½ Strutter biplane named 'Sophie'. In September 2024, Sophie took to the skies for her maiden flight.

Founded in 1973, the APSS began by helping establish Scotland's first National Museum of Flight, restoring historic aircraft and engines, including the unique Napier Nomad hybrid diesel engine and a Bristol Bolingbroke bomber.

The members, mostly retired, would meet on a Wednesday and Thursday to be allocated their specific jobs or continue projects they had started—very much like a Men's Shed.

In 2000, inspired by the Imperial War Museum Duxford's restoration work, the APSS decided to build a flying replica of the Sopwith 1½ Strutter—an aircraft historically based at East Fortune during WWI and known for pioneering aircraft carrier operations on the Firth of Forth.

Building 'Sophie' was a slow, meticulous process. The mostly wooden aircraft required thousands of metal brackets and careful hand craftsmanship. Members met weekly, driven by passion rather than deadlines.

Mike Harper, Chairman of the Aviation Preservation Society of Scotland, said: "The ambition and vision of these members was so admirable. One of the members Len Hart said we didn't really think about the finished project. We just turned up every week and did the work enjoying the company and collaboration with fellow colleagues.

"He was right. Whether we realised it or not ever since the establishment of APSS in 1973, we have essentially been a Men's Shed years before the concept was thought of.

"There was no rush and no deadlines. The work was taken seriously—after all they were not building a replica to display... she was actually going to fly!

"In essence, this made the project more enjoyable. It gave the members something real and tangible with a

specific outcome that they could be very proud of.

"By 2016, the project was near completion but forced out of the National Museum of Flight due to space issues. Extremely disheartened by refusing to quit, the team moved to a nearby farm shed—now our Congleton Gardens Home—to finish Sophie, funding the work ourselves and with public donations.

"Work continued and there was also keen interest from documentary makers. 'Warbird Workshop' aired on the 5th May on More 4 but will be available to stream online.

"The original rotary engines were rare and complex, so the APSS fitted a modern Rotec R360 radial engine from Australia. Skilled members adapted a new electrical system to meet today's standards, blending history with modern technology.

"After overcoming many challenges, Sophie's first flight happened at RAF Kirknewton near Edinburgh in September 2024. Though weather limited operations, the team is now preparing for further test flights and certification this year, with public appearances planned.

"The first flight gave us enough information to carry out some small improvements. The Insurance has been upgraded and we expect clearance from the Light Aviation Association very soon. A period of five hours flying will be required for proper certification. Hopefully by the time you read this, we will be well into our flight testing program. Once we are satisfied with her performance, we can start planning her appearances.

"The APSS has also begun work on a new project—a Sopwith Pup biplane. Sadly, having taken a quarter of a century to complete this project we have lost a number of members along the way.

"They started out with the same enthusiasm and continued with dedication but unfortunately did not get to see her fly, but their memory is honoured with a commemorative brass plaque in the cockpit and they flew with her that day."

Beyond building aircraft, the APSS now promotes STEM education by engaging school children and sharing Scotland's aviation heritage with the community, including visits to and from local Men's Shed groups.





Black Isle Men's Shed transforms 'Beaulieu Elm'

The 'Beaulieu Elm', thought to be the oldest surviving Elm tree in Europe, once stood in the grounds of the Beaulieu Priory by the main gate. The 800-year-old tree succumbed to rot, Dutch Elm disease, damp and a winter gale back in January 2023 and became the property of Historic Environments Scotland (HES). [Black Isle Men's Shed](#) reached out to HES to request a piece of this ancient Scottish tree to transform it for their members' creative projects.

John Tuach from Black Isle Men's Shed said: "On the sad day when the fallen tree was put on the back of a trailer and taken away, many local residents from the village lined the streets to pay their respects to this iconic Beaulieu landmark.

"On hearing the news of the demise of the elm, a member of our Shed immediately contacted HES to ask if they would consider donating sections of the tree to our Shed and some time later, we were informed that our wish had been granted—along with other local Men's Sheds.

"The pieces were collected and stored in our container and after a year the wood was sufficiently dry to allow us to consider fashioning items from it which we could then sell to raise money for our organisation.

"Even though dry, some of the wood had been badly affected by

rot and damp so the amount of useable wood to work with was extremely sparse.

"The first item created was a simple small bowl on a plinth which was offered for sale through Facebook Marketplace by inviting bids. Almost as soon as the listing appeared, bids flooded in and the little bowl was sold for a price which amazed us and which reflected its rarity, uniqueness and relevance to the local area.

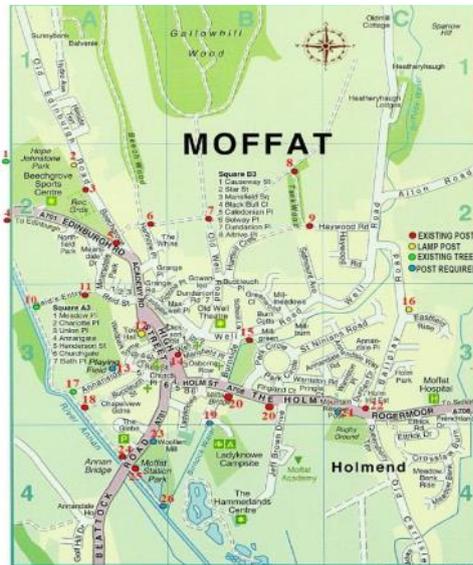
"Each item comes with a certificate of origin signed by our Chair and by John Ruickbie—our Shed's expert wood turner who created the items.

"Another small bowl and two clocks—one christened by members as 'Bart Simpson' on account of its spiky top—have now been created and will also be offered for sale very soon."

References to the Beaulieu Elm date back to medieval times describing the tree as a boundary marker for the land granted to the Valliscaulian Monks on establishment of the Priory, standing in the north side of the village square for centuries.

Before the demise of the elm, HES had carried out their first ever laser scanning of a tree and the 3D model can be [viewed here](#). HES has now planted two young Elm trees on the Priory site for future generations—one of which is thought to be a sapling of the ancient tree.





Moffat Shedders tackle dog fouling

Moffat Men's Shed has taken action to keep their community clean of dog mess by installing dog poo bag dispensers across the town.

The community-driven project, which stemmed from the growing concerns over dog fouling in the town, involved the Shedders creating dog poo bag dispensers out of drain pipes and fittings and distributing them all over Moffat.

The clean-up project is being delivered in conjunction with the Moffat & District Community Council and the dispensers are the brainchild of one of the town's creative problem-solving residents. And, local dog owners are tasked with topping up the dispensers if they see any which are getting low on bags.

Although it has been 22 years since the Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003 was introduced—applying to all land open to the public such as streets, paths, parks and sports pitches—it is unfortunate that this is still a

common problem in many communities. The intentionally unavoidable brightly-coloured dispensers, designed by the Shed, will act as a constant reminder for dog walkers to 'bag it and bin it' to keep this wonderful wee town as clean as possible.

It is hoped that the drain-pipe design—an extremely good way to repurpose old drain pipes—will inspire other Sheds and communities to introduce this idea in their own areas.



Buzzing with purpose: Inverclyde Shed brings beekeeping to STEM Festival

Inverclyde Shed created a real buzz earlier this month at the Inverclyde STEM Festival, inspiring young minds to bee-inspired and bee-lieve in the power of science and nature.

Beekeeping provides a rich context for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) learning tying into multiple disciplines—including biology, environmental science, engineering (building and maintaining hives), and chemistry when processing honey and wax.

The Shed branched out to the sweet venture several years ago and it has only gone from strength to strength—evolving from an activity for their community to an intergenerational learning opportunity.

The Shed's hands-on approach through its exhibition at the festival proved that learning doesn't always have to come from a textbook.

David Maugere from Inverclyde Shed said: "Our exhibition at the Watt Museum was a great success. We loved introducing the world of bees to eager young minds.

"When the festival organisers sent out a call for exhibitors, we leapt at the chance to help inspire and engage with young people on the importance of bees and pollination and the crucial role bees play in ecosystems and food production. We're educating and making a difference in our community.

"A big thank you goes out to everyone that visited our bee display, we are certain the kids enjoyed seeing the bees and taking away some educational goodies."

Get help with free support

I'd quit smoking before. But this time, I got help to do it my way.



QuitYourWay.scot

NHS
SCOTLAND

QUIT
YOUR
WAY
with our
support

Call, text, click or drop-in for free stop-smoking support

Research shows that men in Scotland are more likely to smoke than women, but less likely to reach out for help to quit.

It's a problem that disproportionately impacts men, especially those from deprived communities, where they're four times more likely to smoke than those from less deprived communities, and where one in three deaths are attributed to smoking.

The message from the health bodies is simple:

- call the national Quit Your Way helpline on 0800 84 84 84 (open Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)
- text a question to 07903 588 669 (open 9am -4.30pm). If you send a text outside of these times, you'll receive a reply the next working day
- visit [Quit Your Way Scotland](#) online
- [find your local NHS Pharmacy](#) and pop in to ask for stop-smoking support

Quit Your Way is a national service, open to all, that offers free nicotine replacement products and a variety of one-to-one or group support to stop smoking.



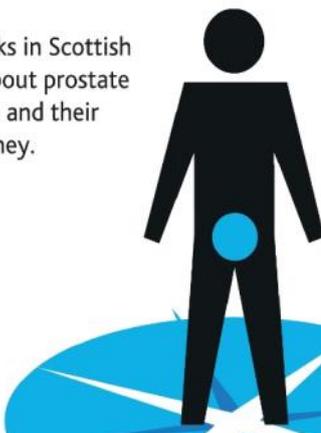
Prostate cancer?

Do you, a fellow Shed member or one of your family have prostate cancer?

Prostate Scotland run the Living Well with Prostate Cancer course in partnership with Ayrshire Cancer Support and Maggie's Centres across Scotland. Men hear from experts and meet others in a similar situation, learning how to live better with prostate cancer.

Prostate Scotland also delivers talks in Scottish Men's Sheds to raise awareness about prostate cancer and how they support men and their families through their cancer journey.

Find out more by emailing:
info@prostatescotland.org.uk



Living Well with Prostate Cancer course

The course has been specifically designed for men undergoing treatment for prostate cancer or when treatment has finished.

We take a look at side effects and how to minimise them, the practicalities of having prostate cancer and what you can do to live well. We also touch on the impact on finances and relationships, and everything in between!

A great opportunity to meet others in a similar situation and hear from experts. The course runs over seven weeks for an hour and a half and takes place at Ayrshire Cancer Support and Maggie's Centres across Scotland.

To find out more about a course in your area:

Phone: 0131 603 8660

Email: info@prostatescotland.org.uk

Find out more: prostatescotland.org.uk/support-services

This course is part of Prostate Scotland's COMPASS project which aims to help men across Scotland navigate prostate cancer and disease through a range of support and wellbeing services.

Find out more about Prostate Scotland and the help and support we offer at prostatescotland.org.uk or phone 0131 603 8660.



Rooted in Community: Meeting Centres expand across Scotland



Scotland is advancing support through the growth of **Meeting Centres (MC)** - hyper-local social

clubs offering emotional, social, and practical support for people with early to moderate dementia and their families. Based on 25 years evidence from the Netherlands, members describe them as “youth clubs for older people” and where “arriving feels like getting a warm hug.”

The Meeting Centres model, embedded in [Scotland’s Dementia Strategy](#), promotes person-centred care, community integration, and member-led activity. In 2023, the Meeting Centres Scotland (MCS) charity was established to support a growing network of 34 clubs and to realise their vision of ‘a Meeting Centre in every community’ by supporting communities to develop their own and join a valued learning network—see MC’s 11 Essential Features approach (pictured right).

The ‘Community Living Room’ Eskdalemuir, housed in the Old School Hub and Café, is shaped by local people and supported by the Upper Eskdale Development Group. Offering therapy rooms, a welcoming café, gardening, and creative activities, all set in rural countryside. It fosters wellbeing, connection, and belonging.

The Royal Victoria Hospital, Dundee hosts the UK’s pioneering hospital-based MC, providing a supportive space where members and families connect, join activities, and feel part of a community even while in hospital. Offering continuity and easing stress during challenging times, also serving as a student training hub promoting a “doing with, not for” approach to care.

The **Snowdrop Centre**, Lochgilphead, within the Multiple Sclerosis Centre Mid Argyll, blends creativity, compassion, and care. Offering therapeutic art, brain games to snowball fights and shinty. The MC ethos comes alive through members who co-design a space for those with long-term conditions live joyfully.

Dementia Friendly Tweeddale, a grassroots volunteer-led charity, offering Memory Cafés, music therapy, Brain Gym, peer support, and community fundraisers. Focused on

fun, dignity, and members leading, this MC is deeply rooted in local community and culture.

Summerhill Community Centre, Dumfries dynamic and community-led. Providing flexible, interest-based activities with a small team supported by many volunteers. Embodying a ‘for the community, by the community,’ spirit building belonging, peer support and combating loneliness - hallmarks of the MC approach.

The Economic Forum for Family Empowerment Scotland, Motherwell breaks down barriers for migrant and refugee communities. Rooted in cultural awareness and compassion, they challenge stigma, help families understand diagnosis informed to support informed decisions. This reflects the MC approach by providing psychosocial supports in safe, respectful environments where people feel heard and valued.

The Johnston, Kirkcudbright, led by local Development Trust, is co-designed with the community. Offering activities from drumming to yoga, it prioritises inclusion, meaning, connection, and family support. Strong Foundations for a new MC that can flexibly adapt to interests and needs.

Launching this month, The Wednesday Club, Inch - from **Friends of Inch Hospital** and community. Embracing the model with evidence-based training and strong local ties, it is supported by passionate, skilled staff and volunteers. Families will co-design a social club offering practical, personalised, and enjoyable support.

Past Times, Rutherglen is a church-led, volunteer-powered project welcoming up to 60 participants monthly for sessions such as ‘Musical Memories. Focusing on creativity, cognitive stimulation, and social engagement, they reflect the MC approach in a relaxed, welcoming setting and benefitting from the MC network’s support and training.

North Edinburgh Arts launches a **Dementia Social Club** offering based on local consultation. A focus on person-centred activity, inclusion and community engagement, staff and volunteers are receiving refresher dementia and MC UK training. Aligning with MC features by providing meaningful activities and opportunities for peer support and connection.

Getting Better Together, Shotts expanding health and wellbeing services with a MC rooted in local



collaboration. Featuring a strong Caring Matters programme, it offers respite, stimulating activities, and a dementia-friendly environment shaped by community voices and resilience.

Demonstrating what’s possible when care is local, inclusive, person-centred, and community-led. Based in everyday spaces - from schools, hospitals, churches to arts centres - Meeting Centres Scotland supports groups that help people live longer in their own communities.

Search the [MC Scotland local meeting centre map](#) and contact them if feel your Men’s Shed could work in partnership with them.



Stronger Together: How Men's Sheds and the NESCAN Hub can build a better future

The SMSA connected with the NESCAN (North East Scotland Climate Action Network) Hub, recognising the strong alignment between their values and the goals of Scottish Men's Sheds in building a more sustainable future. Here, NESCAN CEO Alison Stuart dives a bit deeper into the topic.

Alison said: "At the NESCAN Hub, we're truly inspired by the amazing work being done by Men's Sheds all across the globe. The Shed model focuses on community, wellbeing, and purpose and fits naturally with our vision.

"That's why we're proud to already have some Sheds involved—and we'd love to welcome even more Shed groups and their individual members—into our growing network.

"Men's Sheds are making a real difference: supporting men's health and wellbeing while also helping to protect the planet at the same time.

"Whether you're fixing up old furniture, repurposing materials, building bird boxes, or simply offering a cuppa and a chat to a fellow Shedder, you're already helping build healthier, more sustainable communities.

"At the NESCAN Hub, we want to support you to do even more—without changing what makes your Shed special."

What is NESCAN and the NESCAN Hub?

The NESCAN is a regional network of local people, community-led organisations, and non-profits that are or want to act to reduce and adapt to climate change in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

Whereas, the NESCAN Hub is a registered Scottish charity that supports communities in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire to take action—big or small—on climate change.

Some of the ways we do this are:

- sharing resources and news
- running events and webinars
- offering small-scale funding and larger grants advice
- providing in-person and online networking opportunities
- giving expert support through our local and national partners

Whether you're just curious or already running a green project, we're here to help. Joining NESCAN is **free** and brings you together with over 400 other groups and individuals driving real change.

Why Should Men's Sheds Get Involved?

You may not see your Shed as a climate group—but many of the projects that Sheds do strongly reflect climate-friendly living. Reusing materials, reducing waste, sharing tools, and building strong social networks are all actions that benefit people and planet.

By joining NESCAN, you'll gain access to practical support that can help you enhance what you're already doing.

Here's 10 great reasons to join NESCAN

1. Did you see that it's free to join? Membership costs nothing and opens the door to a wide range of benefits.
2. Funding support. Eligibility to apply for [SEED](#) and [LEAF](#) grants to help bring your ideas to life. Please note both funds are currently closed but keep checking the webpages for updates.
3. Greater impact. What you do already matters—joining amplifies your voice and reach (you can do this by sharing stories and photos with us for our newsletters, on our website and across our social media channels).
4. Skill building. Free training, toolkits, and guidance to strengthen your Shed's [capacity](#).
5. Peer support. Join our relaxed bi-monthly online gatherings to share ideas and learn.
6. Annual event access. Network and celebrate progress at our members' gathering.
7. One-to-one help. Book a free 15-minute social media session to boost your visibility.
8. On-the-ground support. Our Community Development Officers are here to help you grow.
9. Join flagship events. Take part in Climate Week North East and Envirolution Aberdeen.
10. Make a difference. Every contribution—no matter how small—adds up to real impact.

Let's Build More—Together

If you're part of a Men's Shed in the North East of Scotland, now's the time to connect.

[Visit the NESCAN website](#) to find out more and [join for free](#). And if you're already a member, NESCAN would love to hear what you've been up to. Together, we can build stronger, more connected communities that are good for people—and the planet.

So, what are you waiting for? [Join NESCAN today](#) and help shape a greener, more resilient North East—one Shed at a time.



Respond and Recover from Cyber Attacks

Response and recovery from a cyber attack is something that is often associated with large organisations and businesses but, as individuals we should also be prepared to the same extent.

Being aware of a threat allows us to better protect ourselves and helps us to respond and recover.



**POLICE
SCOTLAND**
Keeping people safe
POILEAS ALBA

Government, public services, education, healthcare, manufacturing, financial, energy and food supply sectors - remain prime targets for cybercriminals, who continue to find new ways to home in on and attack these critical services.

The rapid evolution of technology, and use of AI, has provided cybercriminals with new skills to attack and exploit weaknesses in digital infrastructures.

Phishing and associated Malware and Ransomware attacks continue at scale and in some cases, increased complexity.

It is essential therefore that we are prepared, at all levels, as individuals and as organisations. We need to be aware of the threat and able to respond to and recover from a cyber-attack.

If as an individual or organisation you have been victim to a scam or ransomware attack, where your network, device or accounts might have been compromised and files are encrypted, the links below will provide you with resources to support recovery.

[Respond & recover - NCSC.GOV.UK](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk) provides resources for you and your family, for sole traders, small organisations through to medium and large organisations supporting that awareness and recovery.

[NCSC Early Warning - NCSC.GOV.UK](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk) is another free resource for organisations. Supported by our colleagues at the NCSC, it provides early notification to the presence of malware and vulnerabilities affecting your network. The service delivers an average of 2,000 alerts each month to its users, offering potentially invaluable time to detect and stop a cyber incident. This service will complement your existing security control and should not be used as your only layer of cyber defence.

If you are unsure whether to [report a matter as a cyber incident](#), using the Report a Cyber Incident - Report a Cyber Incident - NCSC guidance will support your decision making.

If you have been a victim of crime, and it is not an ongoing emergency, you can report this to Police Scotland on 101.



**SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION**

Join the SMSA for FREE



**PRIORITISING MEN'S HEALTH
THROUGH SCOTTISH MEN'S SHEDS**

community | connections | **camaraderie**



[scottishmsa.org.uk](https://www.scottishmsa.org.uk)



**SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION**

Help **WAVE THE FLAG** for the SMSA and Scottish Men's Sheds Movement

There are many ways to support our vital work

Make a direct donation to the Association:



Donate while you shop online, at no extra cost to yourself:



Fundraising and social media events

You can raise funds for the SMSA through fundraising and social media events like [Facebook Birthday Fundraisers!](#)

Legacy donation

Become a guardian for future generations of Shedders by leaving a gift in your will to the Association. Start a conversation with the SMSA to discuss the difference this could make

SMSA is a registered Scottish charity (SC045139), its [Board of Trustees](#)—all volunteers that receive no remuneration for their time and efforts—passionately believe in the SMSA's vision for the people of Scotland. The charity's small [staff team](#) of passionate individuals work to promote and support the growth of the grassroots movement across Scotland. From speaking to hundreds of individuals requiring support to start their own Men's Shed; creating pathways and documentation specific to Scottish law; and lobbying policymakers on men's health and wellbeing.

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In Scotland, For Scotland

