

MENS SHEDS TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT 2018

The past year has been a very successful one in meeting our principal aims which are to provide worthwhile activities for mainly older men that are of benefit to the community. There are no major incidents to report and the project has engaged in no commercial activities.

The quality of the work produced over the past 3 years has raised the profile of the project and this has resulted in an increase in the demand for the work we undertake and the services we provide. Due to the restrictions that occupying a rented workshop for a couple of evenings each week impose, we have been unable to respond to all the requests for help. However, the projects we have undertaken have proved most satisfactory for the members that have been involved. The main beneficiaries of our work are the Cardiff & Vale Health Board and a number of schools. Our involvement with these cash strapped bodies has resulted in the provision of facilities that otherwise would not have been affordable, despite a real need existing in all cases.

Patients at a number of hospitals and pupils at a number of schools have clearly benefitted from the items made in the workshop and/or erected on the various sites. Additionally, a Scout Group was assisted by our providing storage racking and installing same. The members themselves have derived much satisfaction from their involvement in the various projects. Worthy of mention was a project that involved the vast majority of members; dozens of attractive wooden wig stands were produced, using timber purchased by the individual members. The Velindre Hospital known for their excellence in the treatment of cancer, were the appreciative recipients.

MENS SHEDS CARDIFF undertakes a wide range of training in the use of workshop machinery and hand tools and we have continued to train members of other Cardiff Sheds. In addition to the benefits that members derive from involvement in the various projects, members have access to the internal network of a wide variety of skills and experience found within the project membership. Amidst the group are engineers, builders, managers, an accountant, a clergyman, a doctor, a psychologist and a scientist, to mention just some.

It is widely acknowledged by the membership that the camaraderie and support found within the project extends to activities outside of club nights. Members rebuilding confidence following a stroke episode or illness, or bereavement, or premature retirement, are quick to acknowledge the real benefit that being involved with the project represents in accelerating their recovery and enriching their lives.

We are aware that the project is failing to fulfil its potential in a number of areas. We regret not being able to accommodate requests for help from a growing number of bodies and individuals. The aforementioned limitations imposed by a lack of workshop space, restricts further increase in membership numbers. We are having to refuse membership to individuals who would clearly benefit from what we offer, telling lonely or socially isolated people that they are on a waiting list is far from ideal and goes against the ethos of the project.

We have met with Cardiff City Council for support and provided comprehensive detail of the community based project, plus the fact that we have gained substantial funding subject to our finding a suitable site. Despite explaining the requirement for a community central site, of which there are several in Cardiff, we were referred to commercial property agents who offered expensive sites on remote business parks!

We have met with the new leader of the controlling Labour group in Cardiff. We remain encouraged by the interest and honesty he has shown which is a step up on the previous incumbent. The MSC

project received praise from a number of notable sources for the work carried out in making and installing items that will benefit patients at a number of hospitals in Cardiff. The garden service we provide has improved the appearance of areas where residents have restricted mobility. Walking groups have focussed on seaside areas where they incorporate litter picking and driftwood gathering into enjoyable exercise sessions.

The numbers of female members have increased significantly over the past year with the new members engaging in wood carving and similar activities. It has become clear that strong demand exists for the training and activities we provide both for the existing evening sessions and the proposed daytime access that a new project building would provide.

We shall continue to pursue the establishment of our own project building where daytime access would facilitate the introduction of several other activities for which demand has been established. We would not be in the unfortunate position of having to refuse access to members of the community who would benefit from becoming members of an increasingly effective group.