



# **SOUTHERN MEN'S SHED NETWORK**

**INAUGURAL MEETING – TUESDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> January 2016**

**Present:** Andrew Pottinger (Chairman – Portsmouth Sheds), Angus Ross (Secretary Portsmouth Sheds), Stephen Redrup (Acting Co-ordinator Southern Shed Network) + Southern Region Shed Representatives (About 40 Total).

## **1. Welcome and Introduction**

**Andrew Pottinger** welcomed everyone to the Stacey Centre (Copnor) and explained that the meeting had been called to discuss the idea of setting up a Regional Network of Men's Sheds. He handed over the Meeting to **Stephen Redrup** who explained that he had sent out invitations to some 30 Sheds within a 50 mile radius of Portsmouth. Would it be worthwhile – eg: to share ideas, resources, skills? Would we need a Structure, Officers, Regular Meetings, etc?

## **2. Review of Sheds**

Representatives of each Shed described progress to date:

**ALTON:** Started Feb 2015, Found a possible location (Alton Malting Centre). Now looking for a suitable Architect to help set up 3 rooms. Funding looking good: Insurance a problem: Planning a mix of Shed Members plus Volunteers for external work in the community.

**ANDOVER:** Been going since Feb 2015. 33 Members. Shed full of machinery.

**Brian Cooke** is involved with the **National Association of Men's Sheds**. Insurance is a problem nationally. They are looking at the Scouts Association and others to find out how they go about it. A Chief Operating Officer has just been appointed who will handle Health + Safety, Insurance, Money, Applying for Charitable Status, etc. Sheds are growing rapidly – 2 every week.

**COLDEN COMMON:** Started July/August 2015. 17 Members now busy doing things. Workshop set up in part of the Village Hall. Insurance secured at £70 pa. Trying for Charitable Status – first application refused.

**COPNOR:** Started Sep 2015. Now 9 Regular Members. Brand new Log Cabin Shed, plenty of machinery. Plenty of work for the Stacey Centre and for the Community. Garden for fresh fruit and veg. Polytunnel and Beehives coming this year.

**EASTLEIGH:** Started early 2014. Originally 4 Members – now up to 21. They now have a Licence for 7 years and two 28' Workshops "at the bottom of someone's garden" plus other sheds for storage. Projects have been for pre-schools (Benches etc), Planters for the Railway Station, Refurbishing of Rowing Boats. They have Comprehensive Insurance for £318. They also run a 'Repair Café' – 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the Month in the Community Centre (sponsored by Eastleigh Borough Council).

**ELMBRIDGE:** Not present.

**GOSPORT:** Started Oct 2013. Originally in two Fort Blockhouse Casemates – until closed, owned by English Heritage. Now setting up Workshops in disused schoolrooms at St.Vincent College and looking for bigger space. Currently 90 Members. Insurance costs £600 pa. They have achieved Charitable Status and are applying for Gift Aid on Subscriptions. All Members will have to be CRB checked – and this is likely to cost £400/500.

**HAMESH:** Currently 30 Members with a nucleus of 8/10. They have a 3-year Lease on three Large Rooms, set up for Workshops and Meeting. Funded by a Local Free Newspaper. Insurance Costs of £800 have been quoted. Projects: Odd jobs for the local Businesses.

**HAVANT:** Started Sep 2014. Regular Attendance of 20/22. Very lucky to have been given a building by Havant Borough Council. Original funding came from MIND – they set out to be a ‘Social Organisation’ rather than for ‘making things’. Projects: Benches for Local Organisations, etc. Insurance: £400/500 pa.

**HAYLING:** Started Nov 2015. 21 showed up for the Launch. Now 37 Members – but no shed. Likely that they will get a site (rent-free) at the British Legion – with use of the Club facilities.

**POOLE:** Running for 18 months. Currently 24 Members + Regular Visitors. Use of a garage connected to the Boys’ Club – now fitted up as a workshop. They got an initial grant of £2000 – and have been getting GP Referrals. There is a possible offer of a plot by the Local Council on which they could build their own shed. Projects: For the Community, National Trust, Dorset Wildlife Trust, etc.

**NEWPORT:** They have received a grant from the National Lottery. There is a 5-year Plan for 15 Sheds in the IOW. Schools are interested in ‘Engineering Sheds’.

**OLD PORTSMOUTH:** Started Jan 2015. Currently 20 Members – 14 Regulars. Original help from the Cathedral in setting up. Now established in three formerly derelict rooms at the back of St.George’s Church. Workshops have been built and machinery installed. They have done building repair work in the Hall and redecorated the Social Area. Projects have included a Santa’s Sleigh for the Round Table. They have a Constitution, Aims and Objectives: more of Social/Fellowship/Friends organisation rather than for ‘making things’. Space is limited and they are looking for new/bigger premises, while trying to keep friendly with the Church. Insurance (Contents and Public Liability has been arranged for £450).

**READING:** Started Feb 2014. 50 people at the first meeting. Currently 24 Members. A Local Charity gave a grant of £2000 and they called themselves the ‘Silvers Workshop’. They achieved ‘Charitable Company’ status and this has made searching for premises easier. Originally they rented space in the (closed) Jackson’s Department Store building. Now they have space from a local Pharmacy – set up and going Sep 2015 with ‘Grand Opening’ planned for Easter 2016. They have been very successful at getting donations. Insurance costs: about £450 – excluding tools and off-site work. Membership subscriptions are £60 pa + £2 per day.

**ROMSEY:** Started Sep 2015. Core group of 6 Members. Constitution, Health + Safety etc all sorted. Looking for premises – originally offered space in the Community Office (but no ‘dirty work’ allowed). Now in discussion with Network Rail for two Railway Arches. Insurance Cost: £263. Projects: Pre-school furniture.

**SOUTHBOURNE:** Started in Spring of 2012 – after a challenge by the Vicar to ‘get out into the Community’. Space was offered by Age Concern (locally) in the cloakrooms of a 1950s school. In Spring of 2013 they received a start-up grant of £2500 from West Sussex County Council and opened up to the Community. By early-2015 they were becoming ‘too popular’ – and new space was needed. They have now expanded into

a Charity Shop next door, having built a chalet for the charity to move to – and created wood and metal workshops. Offering ‘Health and Well-being for Men’ – they now have some 30 Members and meet four days a week. Subscriptions are £5.00 pa and £2.00 per week.

**VENTNOR:** Started in May 2015 with help from the Council. Currently 15 Members - and new people are showing up. They have the use of a local hall with space for Coffee and machinery and a collection of tools. Now looking for new space. They have a Constitution. Insurance is covered by the Council.

**WATERLOOVILLE:** Originally, HCC provided a lease on an old pavilion in the Recreation Ground at Cowplain. SSE helped out with their Community help Team (10 people) and shifted 8 tons of rubble into skips. Power and Water have been laid on and the place has been open since Feb 2015. Projects have included Trek Cart for the Scouts, Santa’s Grotto, Central Heating. Projects for the Community bring in some revenue from Bird Boxes, Planters, etc. First year Insurance was £237 – but now that the building has been refurbished (and valued at £130,000) a premium of £800 is being asked.

**HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (Abigail Walton):** HCC are interested in the Men’s Shed movement and have some funds available. They are happy to provide ‘administrative support’ for the Southern Network. They are trying to meet with all the local sheds - their main interest is in the rural areas. City, Town, Parish Councils and Housing Associations are all possible sources of funds.

### **3. Southern Network of Mens’ Sheds**

The Chairman thanked all contributors for this review of Men’s Sheds in the South – and moved on to discussion of the proposed Southern Network.

The idea is for a Forum of Shed Representatives from various places – to share ideas, experiences and resources. Would we call it a Network or a Forum or an Association? A Network implies some kind of ‘log-in’ facility for exchange of ideas. There is a National Association of Men’s Sheds (UKMSA) which looks at common issues such as Insurance and Training.

The Chairman suggested a ‘Southern Web Page’ with drop-down facility to individual Shed pages.

An ‘Association’ would require a Constitution, Officers, regular Meetings, etc. It was generally agreed that a looser form of association would be needed.

**It was then generally agreed that we would form a Southern Men’s Shed Network which would be:**

**“A Network of Shed Representatives from the Southern Region to help and support each other through the sharing of Experiences, Ideas and Resources”**

Discussion followed on the boundaries of the new Network. Originally we had chosen a 50 mile radius of Portsmouth. **Brian Cooke (UKMSA)** told us that we could expect new groups to be starting up on the fringes – eg: at Poole, Brighton- and that we might end up eventually as County Networks. There is no need for a limit at present – and no intention to exclude Sheds outside the 50 mile radius.

**It was generally agreed that the current List of Sheds was OK.**

**Break for Refreshments**

#### 4. Areas, Issues, Working Groups required

Chairman suggested we should look for areas or items of common interest and form groups to work on them.

**Sharing Resources:** This is something we can start doing right away. Sharing Ideas, Experiences, Skills etc.

**Financial:** This is a key area – Insurance, Corporate Discounts, Funding generally. Three Working Groups could look separately at these.

**Promotion/Support for new Sheds:** West Sussex have a 'Shed Section' to encourage and support Sheds. The Charity Commission has a person who deals with Sheds.

**Website:** Standard Documentation for use when setting up Sheds, Correct wording to use when seeking Charitable Status, Risk Assessments, Health & Safety. Website Forum could be used to highlight problems and ideas. We have a basic website available: **SMSN.org.uk** This will be extended to include a forum and suitable additional pages and links.

**Regional Shows/Exhibitions:** This would be an idea 'for the future'. Reading Shed are planning a stand at the Air Show and possibly a Social Event. A Working Group could be on the lookout for suitable events – for example: Trip to London to the Model Engineering Show - for which a minimum number of people might be needed to hire a coach.

**Other Ideas:** Help with Planning Application and Building Regulations (Help may be available through the NMSA. Exchange Page on the Website. Swop-shop facility for Tools and Materials. Training Groups -getting someone in to give training on: Grants/Funding, Planning, Use of Machine Tools, Mentoring, Legal Representation, Correct wording for Liability (Insurance).

#### 5. Network Structure

**Meetings:** It was generally agreed that we should arrange meetings 3 or 4 times a year. Meetings would be rotated between Sheds. Location need not necessarily be at a Shed – but at a convenient location nearby. Copnor (Portsmouth)) would be the 'Default Shed'.

**The next meeting would be at the Havant Shed (on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April) – chaired by John Worley.**

**Volunteers:** The Chairman called for volunteers to work on and to lead the Working Groups.

**Coordination:** It was generally agreed that Steve Redrup would lead the Website team and would act as 'Electronic Coordinator' for the Group.

**Funding:** This would be a 'Communicating/Working Group' – There would be no need for separate Funding. Costs are likely to consist of Room Hire and Refreshments for which donations would be invited.

#### 6. Any Other Business

Silvers Workshop in Reading have 3 pallets of nails if anyone wants some.

Sheds who are interested are welcome to give me a call or visit on one of the days we are open.

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**Meeting closed at 1550.**