



Southern Men's Shed Network

Tuesday 16th August 2022

www.smsn.org.uk

Hosted by Fareham Men's Shed

(Venue: The Great Barn, Mill Lane, Titchfield (PO15 5RB))

Present: (approx 25 from 17 sheds)

Apologies:

Steve Redrup (Portsea) chaired the meeting; Angus Ross (Portsea) took the meeting notes.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Welcome announcements and safety notices were given by Chris Nixon (Fareham).

The chairman (Steve Redrup) opened the meeting at 11:05 and welcomed everyone.

He thanked the Fareham Men's Shed (FMS) for hosting the meeting and for their generous hospitality.

He further explained that this meeting would not include formal presentations, but a number of items for general discussion.

2. Shed News / Updates

Fareham.

Chris Nixon pointed out a recent project (Castle Structure at the back of the Room) which was a model of a Masonic Castle for the Royal Order of Scotland. This project had been completed by a refugee from the middle east, on behalf of ROS.

Chris also mentioned that Fareham Shed would be moving shortly as a result of the Festival theatre's current expansion (but still accommodated by a new space in the Theatre).

Fareham are also finding it difficult to keep contact with members (other than face to face). At times they get poor or no response from members when using email. Thought of using Facebook or WhatsApp groups, but there appears to be little enthusiasm from the members to use these medias. Leaving the question of, what is the best way to communicate with the members.

It was also mentioned that Fareham Men's Shed have, from time to time, open meetings and presentations which other sheds members are welcome to attend. Please see Fareham Website (www.farehammensshed.org.uk) for more information.

Fareham also have a number of decommissioned gun butts available to anyone who wants them.

Contact Chris Nixon at chris@thenixons.me.uk

Havant.

Currently at 60 members and open 5 days per week. With new membership, hope to get up to 90.

Biggest concern is the rise in Energy Costs (a general theme amongst most of the sheds) which is expected to go up at least 70%. As a result, they may have to increase membership fee to help cover the extra cost.

Current annual running cost of the Havant Shed is estimated at approximately £3000 per annum.

Fareham mentioned that some sheds are in a favourable position as their energy costs are incorporated in their current leases, but in the case of Fareham, they have a solar energy system which is a net contributor to the grid.

Reading (Silvers Workshop).

Reading Shed estimate their annual running costs to be around £10,000 due to a significant rent required for their premises. This also gives them concern as their Tenancy Agreement is due for renewal soon (where next?).

They have also noticed quite a slow start in getting members to actually start using the shed again after Covid.

Although they have 65 members, they only have a core attendance of about 10.

There was some discussion about how to get members to attend again. Various suggestions made, but the main suggestions included putting on a social event (e.g. Bacon Butty Morning) to encourage members to visit which may then help to get them to become regular attendees again.

Reading also mentioned that they had given some assistance in the setting up of 2 sheds (Wokingham Shed and Wokingham Without Shed).

Basingstoke.

Basingstoke consists of two sheds. One is a portakabin based in the grounds of the local academy and a newer one attached to the local community centre.

They are starting to see a number of applicants from Social Services resulting from Social Prescribing. Unfortunately, not all referrals are capable of working with some of the machinery without supervision. This, of course, gives us a problem as our members do not want or are not trained for the required level of supervision needed. Again highlighting that we are Caring but not Carers.

Basingstoke are also noticing only a slow return of members to the shed after Covid, again with only a core attendance of approximately 10 people.

A call for Help or Ideas. Basingstoke started a project a few years ago, with help from Hampshire Council, called "[Shed-in-a-bus](#)" click to see website. The project is now at a stage where the bus has been purchased and been through its conversion (Workshop upstairs, Social Area downstairs). It is currently being sent for MOT testing and is ready to put to work.

The problem is that the main lead on this project has had to retire from all Shed duties and activities, due to stress.

As a result there is no-one at Basingstoke, prepared to take the project on to its next phase.

They are now looking for ideas, or even interested groups who would like to take on the Bus.

Anyone interested or with suitable ideas, please contact Basingstoke Men's Shed www.basingstokeshed.org.uk

Shirley (Southampton).

Although Shirley Men's Shed have been around for four years, they have finally built and opened their new shed.

Opened on 14th July 2022 by the Mayor of Southampton, they currently have 25+ members and open 2 mornings a week. They hope to increase this with more members. <http://shed.stjamesroad.co.uk/>

Weymouth.

Weymouth Men's Shed have also recently opened a new shed (9th July 2022) in the grounds of Bincombe Valley School in Littlemoor. Currently only 3 paid up members, they are actively looking to build their membership and discussed, at the meeting, ways this could be achieved.

Woking.

Based at an Anchor Care Home, their main issue currently is still Covid. Mainly due to the stringent rules required by the Care Home. Still having to perform Lateral Flow Tests when attending. Managed to keep 10 members during the main covid period but are now about 25 members. They are fortunate in that their rent is a token amount which includes rates and energy. But, they do host Solar Panels which they believe nets Anchor about £500 p.a.

Hayling.

Another newly opened shed. Having been a couple of years in the making, Hayling finally opened their shed on the 4th May 2022. With a total of 92 members, they regularly have 20 to 25 attendees. Varied activities also include an Art Group and a Friday Social Coffee meeting. They are finding it difficult to keep in touch with missing members, as not all members open their emails or are prepared to join WhatsApp groups. Currently considering a "Buddy" system. Since opening, the Hayling Shed is now being accepted as part of the community.

Church Crookham.

Currently 35 members, but they have a limit of 15 people in the workshop. This, unfortunately, means they have about 20+ on a waiting list to use the workshop. Something they are trying to find a way to eliminate.

They also have plans to open a second shed on the opposite side of Fleet (which may help the waiting list). They have the land and, with existing overheads, could be virtually cost free. One of the ideas is to possibly have different resources available at the two sheds so that the usage can be spread between the two sites, hopefully reducing the need for the waiting list.

Andover.

Andover Men's Shed is losing their site and need to move out by November 2022.

As a result, they are currently looking for sites and funds for a new home. A frequent problem for both new and old sheds. At present they can only find commercial premises which are looking for anything around £2000 per month. Something that is just not possible or sustainable. Council have stated that they cannot help at present. The search goes on!!

3. UKMSA Ambassadors Update (Graham Gowman)

Graham noted that the same problems keep coming up time and again, as supported by some of the current updates and discussions. Typically: Costs, Communications, Insurance, Sites etc.

Some new sheds are finding Schools to be a new possible option for shed locations.

Care homes have started to appear as possible sites but can create major difficulties due to the homes nature and procedures.

- Note: UKMSA Membership has recently increased to £40 p.a.
- UKMSA announced a new partnership with first aid providers. Three of the major providers of first aid training in the UK – St John Ambulance, St Andrew's First Aid and St John Ambulance Cymru.
- Supporting a campaign with Bayer UK for Prostate Cancer Checks.
- Competition (November) for "Not A Lego Man"??? – further details will be available later this year.
- Possible New Networks...

It seems to be accepted that most people would rather not travel above a certain distance (possibly 20 miles). As a result there is more talk about creating new networks with a more local catchment area.

West Sussex is already on the process of forming a network and now Poole Men's Shed is attempting to gauge interest in forming a Dorset based network with an initial meeting in October 2022.

- UKMSA are planning an updated website to be launched in January 2023.

4. Discuss the possibility of a multi-county Southern Shed Fest 2023? Gerry Johnson

[Gerry Johnson](#) explained that he was a UKMSA ambassador for the area which includes West Sussex.

As part of his duties, he is involved with West Sussex Council who are actively involved in promoting the creation of sheds in the West Sussex area. Recently they talked with him about making the Men's Sheds idea more visible to the public and wondered if some kind of Shed Fest open to the public would help to publicise the cause.

Through his newsletter he has attempted to put the idea to the West Sussex sheds, but with little response.

But, he wondered if considering a wider area and including Hampshire in a joint Shed Fest, given some of the success from the past (at Isle of Wight – July 2019 and Weald & Downland Museum May 2019), would create more interest and more possible content.

There was some general discussions regarding scale, location, content and cost which is probably too much detail to include in these minutes. So we will attempt to summarise the general conclusions.

- There was general (but cautious) interest in the idea but would depend on the scope and resources required.
- Gerry is willing to make a significant contribution but cannot do this all on his own. We need volunteers to form an initial Concept plan, outlining the scope and form of the event, and the means of organising the event (preferably as part of a larger event which is already being organised).
Interested parties, please contact Gerry at gerry.johnson@ukmsa.org.uk
- Some of the points discussed (but to be determined) include: -
 - Need a location near to the Hampshire / West Sussex border.
 - Need a team to help plan and organise the event.

- Look for other organised events which the Shed Fest can be part of, rather than organise our own.
- Look for possible sponsors and contributors, e.g. Axminster, St. John's Ambulance etc.
- Look for a possible contact in Hampshire Council
- Decide main objectives of the event e.g. Public Awareness of Men's Sheds?

At the end of the discussion, there was a show of hands which indicated good support.

It was concluded that we need an initial team to **produce a concept** which hopefully will encourage others to join in. Then we can develop a main team to work on the organising of the event.

If you have any further ideas of how we could best go about this please write them down and bring them to the next meeting, or even better post them on this Forum -

You can always start a new topic, I would suggest using the forum as this may stimulate further ideas & discussion.

5. Bad News / Good News? – (Graham Gowman)

As a result of recent, unfortunate, events experienced by Graham Gowman, he gave a short chat about the good news that we rarely hear about. Showing that the world isn't really as gloomy as the news reports seem to insist. The main point being that Bad News is constantly being reported and makes the world appear as though that is all there is to know. But, there is a terrific amount of good news which rarely gets reported or is only mentioned as a minor item. He included a number of examples of good news items which don't get the publicity they deserve.

So take heart, there is still a lot of good stuff out there. **Men's Sheds being one of them.**

6. What else can our Network / Meetings do for local sheds (Steve Redrup)

What can SMSN do for local sheds?

The Network has been operating for over 6 years (except for Covid) and in that time we have heard similar problems and questions being raised from time to time as new and existing sheds go through similar steps and events.

The typical questions relate to: - Finding a Site, Grants & Funds, Insurance, CIO Status, Health & Safety, and IT etc.

Steve Redrup is suggesting that it might be a good idea to create a central register of members that have specific skills that could help other Sheds in defined geographical areas. This list could be kept as a Directory on the SMSN Website.

One suggestion was to have volunteers with a particular knowledge (i.e. applying for CIO Status), who would be prepared to help local sheds in a given area (i.e. West Hampshire).

From these volunteers we could create the directory, which shows a list of Knowledge Subjects (i.e. CIO Status) and within that subject have contact details of suitable volunteers for a given area.

This was received with general agreement.

Actions Required: -

- Generate a list of possible Knowledge Subjects
- Generate a list of suitable Geographical Areas
- Obtain volunteers prepared to offer support for a given Subject / Area
- Construct a Directory and Update the SMSN Website

Please contribute ideas for the above items and either email me (smsn.coordinator@gmail.com) or post on the SMSN Forum (www.smsn.org.uk/ForumGeneral). These will be discussed at the next Network Meeting.
What can we include as regular items for future Network Meetings?

There was a general discussion as to what additional subjects we should consider as regular on-going items for our Network Meetings.

A couple of suggestions were made, but generally agreed that further ideas were needed for the next meeting. Initial suggestions included: - Feedback from support directory (from previous section), local publicity.

Actions Required: -

- Further suggestions for regular topics for Network Meetings

Please send ideas for the above items either by email (smsn.coordinator@gmail.com) or post on the SMSN Forum (www.smsn.org.uk/ForumGeneral). These will be discussed at the next Network Meeting.

7. AOB

A number of items came up for discussion under AOB, summarised below: -

- Basingstoke's Shed-in-a-Bus Double Decker Bus, needs ideas or new home!
Suggested that it could be made into an article in Shoulder-to-Shoulder, as other areas may have a similar idea but are in need of a bus.
- How to publicise a (new) Shed to attract new members. Suggestions included: -
 - Facebook
 - Possible Shed Fest
 - Local Magazines / Newspapers (like Pompey Pensioner in Portsmouth)
 - Local Radio
 - Links to Local Community Centre
 - UKMSA has an A4 Flyer and A6 Leaflet available on their website
 - Other local groups on Facebook

8. Next SMSN Meeting

Date of the Next Meeting is yet to be confirmed.

It is hoped that the meeting will be in around mid-November.

Volunteer Hosting Sheds required. Please contact me if you can offer a venue.

9. (2:10pm) Meeting closed.

The meeting closed with Steve Redrup giving "Thanks" to Fareham Men's Shed for hosting, with a special Thank You to the people who provided the refreshments and thanked everyone for attending.

NOTE: Viewing the contents of the SMSN (www.smsn.org.uk) Forum does not require registration but to post new content, you must register on the forum to gain update rights. Also, any new posts will automatically be included in the weekly newsletter which is sent to all emailing list subscribers (currently over 120).

Anyone can subscribe (Newsletter, Meeting Notices & General Notices) through our website (www.smsn.org.uk)