



Westhill & District Men's Shed

Make friends, share interests and help our community

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1 Why this document?

We are often asked for advice on how to start a shed and more recently this has changed to 'how do you run your shed?' This is how we do it, it works for us. Probably 95% is solid but is still changing and probably always will. This is not to say it will suit your shed, if some of it does and it saves you time then great, but we hope you will just pick bits out and get back to us with your improvements. Any comments, things missing etc. are welcome.

2 Cool Runnings

Our shed is run, as far as possible, with no pressure and no deadlines. We are mostly retired men and have had our fill. The shed is a form of relaxation and a chance to talk with other men. The atmosphere, often commented on by visitors, reflects this hence: Cool Runnings.

The other aspect is "there are no bosses, we are all volunteers" in our model of how to run a shed. There is a structure however because decisions need to be made, efficiently, that apply across the shed.

3 What is the shed for?

The Shed is a place where men can meet and socialise. However it has a practical side using the workshop for individual project or projects where the shed helps the community. It is this combination that makes Men's Sheds popular with men.

Men can at major changes in their lives lose their friends (retirement, bereavement, moving to be nearer family support for example). Women are much better at making new friends, joining activity groups, charity work and evening classes.

Men's Sheds are a rare example where men will go because they are attracted by the practical nature of the shed. We follow that up by making it a friendly place to go. There is plenty of work for men to do but it is important that we avoid deadlines and pressure; being mostly retired men we have had our fill of those.

The shed is apolitical and secular, independent and is not a service provider. Our policies (section later in the document) make clear what that means in various circumstances.

Government, local authorities, social workers and charitable grant-givers appreciate the benefits to society. In a recent study of Westhill Men's Shed the Social Return on Investment (reduction in costs to society due to men having a brighter outlook and remaining healthier, less loneliness and depression, improved relationships at home and including monetary value generated by the shed) versus the cost of running the shed (£5000 p.a.) is expressed in pounds as a 10:1 benefit.



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The low cost of running the Shed has two major parts; one that all the men are volunteers and secondly Aberdeenshire Council, recognising the benefit to residents have leased the building at a peppercorn rent.

4 Formal Organisation

Everyone is a volunteer. This makes the shed very cheap to run- assisted by Aberdeenshire Council who rent the building to us at a peppercorn rent. The difference between costs and income is made up by producing our own income (commissioned work, tool sales, raffles etc.) and grants.

4.1 Trustees

The shed has up to 10 Trustees forming the board. Meeting every 6 weeks or so and making the decision needed to keep running smoothly.

We are all volunteers and everyone is entitled to their opinions and we will take these into account where possible. However there is a hierarchy so that decisions can be made with the board setting the main direction, keeping an overview of the shed, ensuring solvency and filling the legal requirements.

4.2 Safety Supervisors

We then have a pool of Safety Supervisors. One is on duty whenever the shed is open and our opening days are balanced with the number of supervisors so that a duty is required once per fortnight; opening three days each week we need 8-10 supervisors for the 6 sessions to allow for times when men are unable to come to the shed.

Supervisors are proposed by existing supervisors after observing members in the shed. What we are looking for is someone who works safely themselves and gets on well with others. A supervisor does not have to be an all-round expert in the workshop the key is that they should have sufficient competence to recognise when some activity is not being done safely; then they should have sufficient authority to ask a man to stop and solve the problem and for this to be accepted.

When on duty they are also responsible for keeping an eye on everything happening in the shed, welcoming new men to the shed and, if the men are going to become members, giving the induction- emergency procedures and checkout or training on any machines the man needs to use. Further information is given later in this document.

Supervisors also take in commissioned work from the community; ask for help to do whatever needs doing- from hoovering, buying biscuits and milk or tidying up.

There is an opening and closing procedure for supervisors to follow. This includes checking the workshop looks ready for use and fire exits are clear.



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4.3 Supervisors meetings and routine maintenance

Supervisors have regular meetings, about every 2 months, to discuss any issues. There is also a table listing each machine and some shed overall activities (testing fire alarms, checking fire extinguishers checking mains wiring including emergency stop and RCD operation).

Each machine has a routine testing procedure (unplug, check through adjustments and condition, fix any problems and finally power up and test). This procedure is listed in a document per machine. We aim to test each machine at least quarterly and more often for those that are used more often.

All supervisors have a first aid certificate or will get one at the next course.

4.4 Incoming donations and Project management

Incoming donations and commissioned work are recorded where they are likely to require work in the shed. A mower that needs repair or a broken chair would fall into this category; the tag attached allows anyone finding the piece to discover where it came from, what is required to happen and that the lead person will coordinate the effort.

Item	Who From Name, Tel, address.	Date in	Work needed and notes	Lead person	Costs £	Paid? Tick
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See the Policies on Commissioned work for our pricing strategy.

5 Informal organisation

We find that men coming to the shed want to get involved and be productive (the vast majority anyway). This is often based on their expertise so a woodwork teacher becomes the go to person for the woodwork workshop. The IT guy looks after the PCs, the natural fundraiser fundraises.

Donations of tools are received, sorted and moved on by the guys interested in that.

There are only a few that are prepared to do the paperwork, keeping the books, writing the annual financial report and filling in the return for the regulator (OSCR), applying for funds and writing the resulting reports, responding to queries, keeping the list of members etc. This is arguably the area where being a men's shed has its most difficulty. Breaking the tasks down does work; so dealing with the donations and petty cash as a task has worked OK.

Much of this is organic, happening naturally over time. An occasional push is needed to get someone started.



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6 The Welcome and Workshop induction and Membership process:

6.1 Welcome

On first coming to the shed we think it is key to welcome men to the shed, show them round and see what they are interested in. Everyone is alert to a man coming in for the first time. We find out what interests them and if possible ask them to assist with an ongoing job. A man needs to leave having achieved something practical. A sign in book is completed each time a man comes to the shed but this is usually the only paperwork needed unless they are so taken they want to get right in to it.

We do not make a charge for use of the Shed; we do this so that cost is not a reason for someone to be unable to use the shed. If our circumstances change we may change this.

6.2 Shed procedures

On a subsequent visits we also ask each man to sign in and note what he intends to do (workshop, health talk, meeting etc.). Knowing how many are using the shed and for what purpose is used for reports back to funders, publicity etc . It also allows an interaction with the other volunteers in the shed.

They are asked to complete a **Welcome Form**. This records his name and address, emergency contact details and any medical conditions he thinks we should know about. Part of this process is pointing out the fire exits and safety arrangements.

If he intends to use the workshop then a workshop Induction is carried out and recorded on the **Individual Training Record**.

6.3 Individual Training Record

This is also form based and is on the reverse of the welcome Form. This starts by a general emergency briefing followed by workshop specific rules for safe practice; emergency electric cut-off points, personal protective equipment location and use, the safety notices displayed by each machine and importantly that he must be checked in by a supervisor for EACH machine he intends to work on.

It has a table starting with Safety that includes:

- Emergency procedures (fire alarm, exits, assembly point)
- General workshop layout (includes the metal flammable liquids cupboard, steel bins for waste power, emergency stop buttons etc.)
- Personal protective equipment location and range available.

The next section covers use of hand tools and is a check that they know how to use chisels etc. safely. Should this not be the case they will have a short lesson followed by observation during a practical. If satisfied the supervisor signs the section, otherwise recommends more training.



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Then each machine is listed and a discussion held on what experience they have and what machines they want to work on. Where the supervisor is competent to assess they will do so or ask the man to contact the right supervisor.

There are two ways to go from here:

- 1) If they say they are competent then the man is asked what the hazards are; the steps he will take to mitigate the hazards and a run through how he would operate the machine. If this is satisfactory they are signed off.
- 2) If they are starting from no knowledge then a supervisor will go through how to use the machine safely. This is followed by observation of the man and when competent they are signed off; the supervisor signs the training record on his Individual Training Record for that machine.

Some machines are very complex and are only used with a supervisor assisting until they and the man are comfortable with it.

The supervisor will continue to keep an eye on all activity and 'remind' men to use PPE or whatever is necessary to keep everyone safe..

The records are kept in plastic folders and any supervisor can check the competence record for any man.

Occasional audits of attendees training a check that records are up to date are taken.

6.4 Membership

While all men coming to the Shed are loosely referred to as Members there is a Membership form. This is optional but on completion entitles men to vote at the AGM. Members applying must be ratified by the Board.

This may well be a complex way to do it but this allows control over who is a formal member and protects us against a hostile takeover. We may have over cooked this one!

7 Insurance

Running a shed with all volunteers it is possible to just have public liability insurance. Any accident would be covered under this.

We feel we need more and so have cover for trustee indemnity, personal accident cover for supervisors and trustees, legal expenses.

The majority of the cost is the public liability, in 2015 we are paying £730. Details of who with if we have a conversation about it.



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8 Policies

We have developed a number of policies or guidelines. These formalise the thinking behind the statements and by being written for use by others mean we can explain our rules easily. In summary:

- 1) Working outside shed is discouraged. Primarily because we are aware of competing with local traders and as a charity of volunteers could take their livelihood from them. We do make exceptions- where another charity has tried to employ local traders and failed, judgment is made on a per case basis.
- 2) Men coming to the shed should be able to look after themselves or bring their support, of either sex.
We make it clear we are not a service provider and are not trained social workers. We also do not have disclosures for working with the vulnerable or children, a responsible person must be in attendance.
- 3) Commissioned projects. These come into the shed and are discussed by a board member or supervisor, ideally in consultation with other shedders. We will take projects for local individuals and for other charities generally. Some projects for commercial companies are undertaken on rare occasions. We must remember that men come to the shed because they enjoy it- they are usually willing to work hard but deadlines and pressure must be avoided where possible.
If a project is accepted the pricing algorithm is cost of materials plus an estimate of the hours needed times 10 and a donation. We explain that without payment very soon the men's shed won't be around to ask. The resulting price may be varied based on a view taken of the person asking (retired individual or a charity catering for the disabled would be examples where the prices would be discounted). Also if judged to be the right thing we will just ask for a donation.
- 4) Tool Donations policy. Incoming donations are first offered to the shed to see if they are needed in our workshop. If not they are then offered to shed members, put into the tool sale, recycled or skipped.
- 5) We have not yet needed to use a disciplinary procedure.

More detail available on individual application to Westhill Men's Shed.

9 Building facilities:

9.1 Fire

A fire assessment was carried out by a council employee as we took over the building. We will need to get this refreshed periodically. This includes fire extinguishers and we have arranged for an annual inspection and refill/renew where needed.

Fire escapes are checked for being clear by supervisors and hazard tape placed on the floor to show the area that must be kept clear.



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9.2 Electrical

As the building was previously a library, emergency lights, fuses and disconnection devices are all installed. For the workshop we masked the existing 13Amp sockets so they cannot be used. We then put in an overlay system, with emergency cut-off switches and RCDs.

10 Other

10.1 Pat testing

To sell anything electrical it needs to be PAT tested. Initially we relied on electricians doing this voluntarily but soon found that with our tool sales we were imposing too much on them. We now have our own PAT tester and anyone who is familiar with electricity can learn the methods needed.

10.2 IT and computing

There is an IT donation programme that is subscribed to by many companies. They donate the software and services free of charge. The scheme is administered by tt-exchange and they distribute the software for an administration fee. You need to register with them and then, for example, the full Microsoft Office suite is available for £25.

10.3 Cash Donations

The "red can" sits on the desk and invites people to contribute to the tea and coffee fund and any other donations also go in here. Green can donations are for tool sales. Records are kept in the safe with the petty cash box and transferred to the bank as it builds up; items of up to £20 can be claimed using petty cash and are recorded here also.

10.4 Tool sales

They are held about 4x a year from whatever we don't need to use in our own workshop or have repaired. We hold them in Westhill at the shopping centre where there is a community space for these events.

10.5 Local Fundraising

This ranges from raffling signed shirts, applications to funding bodies (council, lottery, businesses, private funders),

Income comes from commissioned projects and tool sales.

10.6 Workshop operations

We have a detailed Workshop operations manual. The contents are listed here and a sample copy is available for download.

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11 Sample Welcome Form

In the spirit of making the shed a welcoming place the initial form to join is called a Welcome form.

WELCOME FORM

Full Name:

Address:

Telephone:

.....

.....

email:

HEALTH AND SAFETY

1. Your safety in the Shed is of upmost concern to us and we want all our users to leave with the same body parts they came in with! Therefore we ask you to make this promise:

When working in the Shed I will only undertake activities when I know I am competent to do so without endangering myself or others. I will not undertake activities if to do so would be contrary to any medical or professional advice I have received. I will only operate tools machinery after I have received instruction on their safe use. Any faults with machinery will be reported to the Safety Supervisor on duty in the Shed. I am aware that the final say on issues regarding safe work in the Shed lies with the Safety Supervisor.

Sign only if you understand and agree to these conditions.

Signed.....

Date.....

2. In the event of an emergency, who would you like us to contact?

Name:

Relationship:

Address:

Telephone:

3. Optional: If you have any health issues you think we should be aware of (e.g. eyesight, deafness, diabetes, epilepsy, mobility problems, medications, blood disorders) please inform us.

.....

.....

4. If you carry an SOS or Medic Alert card, please give details:

.....



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12 Individual Training Record

Before working in the workshop each man must have a safety induction.

Name:

We understand that there is a wide range of expertise among the people who use the Shed. We wish to respect all our users and encourage the sharing of skills and the learning of new ones. Therefore we have this checklist to recognise your areas of competency. It is common sense (and an insurance requirement) that we make sure that the tools are used safely.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AGREEMENT When working in the Shed, I undertake to work safely and not endanger either myself or other users of the shed. I will only operate machinery AFTER I have received instruction on its safe use. Any faults with machinery including wiring or plugs will be reported to Safety Supervisor. Any incident of cuts or injuries is to be reported. initialled _____ dated _____

	Date	Initials of trainer
1 Personal Protection		
Safety Briefing (electrical safety, fire exits and keeping them clear, tackling fires etc.)		
PPE: ear, eye and breathing protection		
Use of dust extraction, gloves		
2 Hand Tools		
Safe use of saws, Battery powered machines		
Chisels		
Mains powered hand tools (planer, jigsaw)		
3 Hazardous fluids (handling use storage)		
4 Drill Press (use of machine vice)		
Etc. per tool		

Notes relating to numbered lines.

1. Safety briefing= fire exits/assembly point, electric cut-off buttons, fire extinguishers, ???

All men understand that we don't know whether they are competent to use a machine and there has never been a problem running through this check.

Each tool will have a Safety Summary sign associated with it- standard format (Hazards, Safety, Procedure).

If a man says they are competent, cover the sign and ask what the hazards are, how he would reduce them and how to use the machine safely. On passing this a brief run over the tool and observation during use are sufficient.



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If they are new to the machine run over the signs points and then give a training course at the machine.
