



# HANDBOOK for MEMBERS

and information for those thinking of joining

## About Us



Men In Sheds is a place which fosters health and well-being, primarily for men. It does this by providing facilities enabling people to meet socially, pursue hobbies and practical interests, share skills, learn new ones, help in community-based projects and develop new ideas.

The Shed started in March 2012, with modest beginnings, and now occupies a large industrial unit leased to it by the Milton Keynes Community Foundation. We are affiliated to the UK Men's Sheds Association, which provides practical support to the 800+ Sheds throughout the UK. In turn we collaborate with other Sheds and a range of other organisations in the area.

We engage in community-based projects, working with, for example, schools, town and parish councils and allotment associations. Our members also support the Milton Keynes Repair Café and the Milton Keynes Museum.

We have more than 100 active members and many other supporters and collaborating organisations. These include the Milton Keynes Community Foundation, Age UK Milton Keynes, Milton Keynes City Council, B&Q and Wickes. The Shed is an independent charity. It operates on a co-operative basis; all members have an equal say, there are no paid administration or supervisory staff. Shed members take the responsibility to run it on a day-to-day basis. There is a Management Committee and Trustees responsible for guiding the Shed in what it does, raising money for its operation and above all seeing that it stays a viable and safe environment.



Since 2015 we have incorporated the MK Makerspace, with which we share resources, tools and knowledge



## About Us

### Activities

The Shed has good attendance for the social gatherings on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings for a chat with tea, coffee and biscuits . Current Shed activities include but are not limited to

- Woodworking
- Metalworking
- Model Railways
- Model Making
- Electronics
- Computing
- 3D Printing
- CNC and Laser Cutting
- Painting
- Craftwork

### Opening Hours

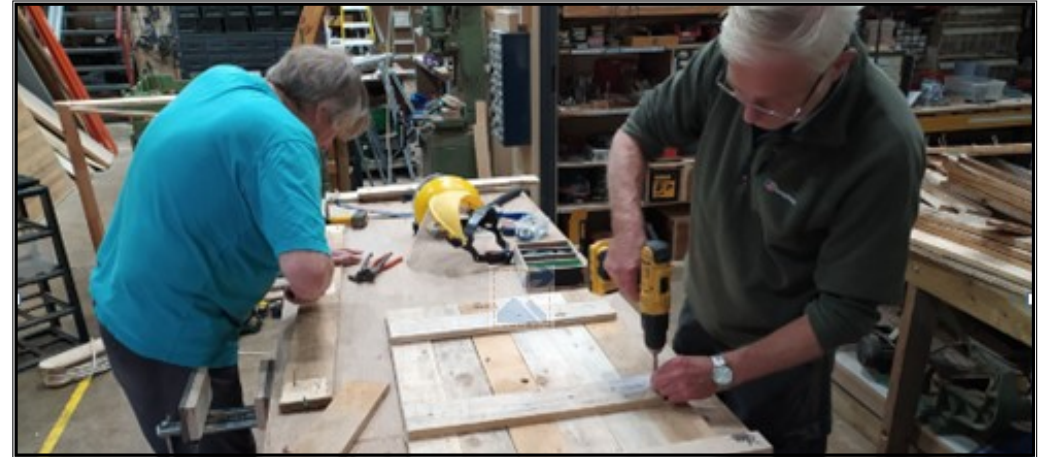
We are usually open on the following days, and at other times by special arrangement:

<b>MONDAY</b>	09:00 - 17:00, 1900 - LATE
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	09:00 - 17:00, 19:00 - LATE
<b>FRIDAY</b>	09:00 - 17:00

**If you haven't done so already, please come and visit us!**

## Membership

**Meet us; get to know us and help us to get to know you. This booklet should explain a lot about the Shed. Sit down with us, ask questions and have a conducted tour. Tell us what you want to do in the Shed, what skills you have, what you would like to learn and what you can contribute.**



If you decide to join, please fill out a Membership Form and pay the £2 annual membership fee. We will ask you to agree to abide by our Code of Conduct and Health and Safety rules. These are summarised on pages 5-8 of this booklet. We will provide you with a name badge. Please wear it. It lets others know your name. On the reverse side of the badge will be your emergency contact details, should you ever become unwell. It also shows you're a current member of the Shed and permitted to use Shed facilities.

If you plan to use the workshops, and especially the large fixed machines such as the table saw and band saw in the woodwork shop and the lathes, milling machines and welding equipment in the metalwork shop, you will need to go through our accreditation process to ensure that you can work safely. This process applies to everyone and is irrespective of any previous experience you may have. Members who wish to access the workshops will also be required to pass a general workshop safety test.

If you have additional needs, any notable health issues or disabilities or need someone along to support you, please let us know. Members do their best to support each other but you must appreciate that the Shed operates on a volunteer basis and we have limited skills and resources to support those with complex needs, such as dementia.

## How we are funded

**The Shed has a lot of outgoings: rent; insurance; utility bills (electricity, water, telephone, internet access); and tea/coffee and workshop consumables. On top of this there's the purchase and repair of our tools and equipment, materials and work area fittings. All this adds up to an annual cost of more than £20,000—and rising.**

Although there's a nominal annual membership subscription the Shed is in the main funded through member donations. We ask that all members donate a minimum of £5 per week in cash, or better still a regular donation of £15 per month (£20 for Makerspace members). This will help to keep the Shed financially secure.

We well understand that there will be those whose financial circumstances mean that their ability to donate regularly is limited. So we accept that there may be months when you just don't have the means to donate; however, the Shed's survival depends on the support of its members.

Monthly direct debit payments through Local Giving are our preferred method of receiving your donations. Please ask for separate instructions "How to make your Men in Sheds MK donations through Local Giving" (see link at the end of this booklet). The Shed also benefits from Gift Aid if you declare yourself a taxpayer. This represents an extra £2.50 from HMRC for every £10 donated. One-off donations can also be made through Local Giving.

Occasionally there are Matched Funding opportunities from the MK Community Foundation for one-off donations made through Local Giving. This gives a big boost to our funds. The Community Foundation also runs an annual prize draw.

We know monthly direct debits don't suit all. An alternative is to deposit your donation in the cashbox. Enter your name in the book at the side and tick that you have made a donation.

We continue to be given a lot of materials, mainly wood. Feel free to use it, but don't be greedy. If you use a lot, especially hardwood and plywood, which are expensive, please make a modest contribution towards its replacement.

Besides occasionally going short on tea or coffee, the Shed will run out of other things. There's the need to buy new equipment or make repairs. If you identify something which needs replacement please approach a Management Committee member for approval. If it is agreed to go ahead with the purchase, you can either do this yourself and claim reimbursement (using an Expenditure Claim Form), or for larger items ordering and payment will be arranged by the Shed.

## Working with others

Shed members come from many backgrounds and walks of life. We try to treat everyone equally and with respect. Verbal or physical abuse will not be tolerated. We have a Code of Conduct (available on request) which sets out our expectations of members' behaviour and the actions that may be taken if the Code is breached.

**Respect other members.** By all means enter into friendly banter with others but we ask that you consider their situation or circumstances. Please be particularly sensitive to people's emotional state and any religious or cultural beliefs they may hold. Members may also have neurodiverse conditions such as autistic spectrum. The Code of Conduct sets out in more detail our expectations of members.

**Respect a person's work.** Don't criticize it. It's fine to show an interest in their work: what are you making? Do you need anything for it? Friendly advice that there might be alternative methods or facilities in the Shed for undertaking the work is generally well-received.



## How the Shed is run: making your voice heard

Management Committee meetings are normally held on Mondays every two months. They are open meetings so you can attend and if invited to do so, submit proposals and offer points of information. You can submit items for the agenda at any time. An Annual General Meeting is held in September. Committee members, trustees and officers are elected at this point but committee members can also be co-opted at any time. There is a 'rogues gallery' of officers and committee members in the lobby, together with their contact details.

## Health & Safety at the Shed

All members are required to make themselves aware of health and safety rules and procedures applicable to the Shed. Read the signs displayed around the Shed and the guidance in this Handbook. Each member is responsible for working in a safe manner, considering not only their own safety but also others around them. For detailed guidance on any aspect of safety at the Shed a comprehensive Health and Safety Manual is available on request.

Sign in when entering the building (full name in capitals, please), sign-out on leaving so we are aware of who is in the building in the event of an emergency.

Make yourself aware of emergency exit points from the building, first aid stations in the workshop and in the craft area and the location of the fire assembly point at the front of the building.

In case of fire, press the nearest alarm button and shout, "fire". Leave the building by the nearest safe exit and meet at the fire assembly point. [Do not attempt to tackle the fire unless trained to use the equipment.](#)

Fire alarms may be occasionally sounded. If this is done with prior notice then it will be a Fire Alarm Test and building evacuation will not be required. Should no notice be given, then it is either the real thing, or a Fire Drill. In either case you must speedily evacuate the building.

In the event of an evacuation of the building follow the instructions of the Fire Wardens. Keep all designated walkways, doorways, stairs and stairwells free from obstruction; deal with and report any hazards.



## Preventing and reporting accidents

If you see others working unsafely, tell them; it's your duty. You're saving them, yourself and maybe others from being harmed. If an accident happens report it to a First Aider if present. Minor cuts etc. may be dealt with using the supplies from the First Aid Station. More serious injuries should be immediately referred to a doctor, hospital or emergency services. The Shed is fortunate to have an automatic defibrillator in case of an emergency. This is located in the passageway through the craft area.



All accidents, both big and small, are to be reported in the Accident Book, which is kept in the office.

We have a Lone Worker Policy which states that nobody is allowed to work in the workshops on their own; at least two persons must be present at all times.

## Hazardous substances

Hazardous substances (paints, stains, solvents etc.) should be stored in the assigned cabinets. Waste flammable materials, including used rags, paper etc. are to be disposed of off premises as soon as practically possible.

## General workshop safety and good practice

**Safety footwear must be worn at all times within the workshop areas when in operation.** Limited access in normal (closed toe) footwear is permitted only in the walkways marked with yellow floor tape.

**Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)** including, visors, goggles, gloves, dust masks and ear defenders are available in the workshop. Special clothing and masks are available in the welding area. When working, locate and use the appropriate items.

Most benches are for two-person working. Share them when needed. Don't hog work space or other Shed facilities. No more than two people are permitted at a machine at one time unless instruction is taking place; others must maintain a distance of at least two meters. Only one person may operate the controls of a machine at any time.

You may only use workshop power tools if you have been accredited to do so. We have developed an Accreditation Procedure. You will be given details of this when you first request to use a machine. Even when accredited to use a machine, ensure you work within the boundaries of your skills and knowledge.

**Don't interrupt or distract others**, especially when working on machinery. You can cause an accident.

Ensure any power tool you plan to use carries a current green PAT test label. Before use always check power tools for any wear and tear.

If you plan to bring your own power tools into the Shed for personal use, **ask first**. Some equipment we won't allow e.g. chainsaws. All personal equipment must be PAT tested before use in the Shed.

Many of our handheld power tools are now battery operated but if you wish to use a mains-powered tool, use the overhead power supply booms or wall sockets for powering tools. Only in exceptional circumstances use extension leads. Trailing cables present a significant tripping hazard.

Use the dust extraction equipment whenever possible. Dust can spoil other areas of the Shed and is also a major health hazard. We now have a dedicated 'dust room' for activities likely to create significant amounts of dust and chippings, especially sanding.

After you have finished with a machine, switch it off before moving away or leaving the area. **Never move away from a machine while it is running.**

**Return tools, including drill bits and cutters, to their assigned storage. There are lists in locations stating which tools should be stored there. You move it, we lose it!**

### ALWAYS CLEAR UP AFTER YOURSELF.

#### Project storage

Space in the Shed is at a premium. As appealing as the idea may be of adding more tools and materials to the Shed it is important that you obtain permission from the Management Committee before bringing in additional items. If you plan large projects in the Shed, obtain permission from the Management Committee before starting.

When you have finished for the day, take your work home or clearly mark it up with one of our Project Information and Storage slips and store it in the projects rack.

**Benches must be left clear unless agreed in advance** e.g., paint is drying or glue setting.

As for your own property; it's safer to lock all valuables away. Leaving things out is entirely at your own risk.

## Shed facilities

### Kitchen

Please keep the kitchen tidy, wipe up spillages immediately. There's no one to clear up after you. Put all used cups, plates and cutlery in the dishwasher. Follow the instructions on the dishwasher and help to load and unload it.

Tea, coffee, sugar and milk are supplied out of Shed funds; however, it doesn't get into the kitchen by magic. If ingredients are running short, take action to replace them. You will be reimbursed if you restock regular supplies. Biscuits are usually donated by generous members. Only tea, coffee, milk, sugar and biscuits are for communal use. If you have anything special of your own, mark it with your name. Perishable items will be thrown out at the end of each week.

Help us to recycle. Put all waste, whether it is kitchen, office or workshop waste in the assigned bins. Or better still, take it home, it saves us a job and money.

### Washrooms and toilets

We have washrooms on the ground floor with designated disabled and female facilities. Like all Shed facilities members are responsible for making sure they are kept in a clean and respectable condition. This means that every member must be mindful of others and clean up after themselves. If provisions such as soap or toilet rolls are running low, please alert a Management Committee member.

### Computers

Computers in the admin area and social space have standard Office applications installed and are available for use by the members through guest accounts. Internet access is available through all machines along with Wi-Fi throughout the building. See your name badge for the Wi-Fi password. *We ask all members to use the internet responsibly and not to access websites that may cause offence to others.*

There is no facility for storing work you create on the PCs; use your own USB data stick or cloud account to store your work.

Files to be read on a Shed PC must be scanned for viruses to minimise the chance of infecting the computer. Software may only be installed on PCs by those with Admin rights. All software and materials used on PCs must be properly licensed.

The Shed does not have a television licence. You must take care not to access live TV or iPlayer on the Shed's PCs.

### Image sharing

Please request and read Shed policy on taking pictures of members. If you wish to share anything on social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) you MUST seek the prior permission of any individuals appearing in your images.

## Other things you need to know

### Keeping informed

if you have given us your email address you will receive regular Shed newsletters. The Makerspace also runs a messaging system called Slack, that a number of us use regularly to share information and ask questions. It is free to join and can be accessed via [MKMakerspace.co.uk](http://MKMakerspace.co.uk)

### Finding the tools you need

We try to ensure that all tool storage in the Shed is appropriately labelled. Nevertheless, until you find your way around, it can be hard to find the things you want. Don't hesitate to ask other members if we have a particular item and if so, where to find it.

### Shed merchandise

The Shed sometimes holds a supply of Shed-branded polo shirts, sweatshirts, fleeces and caps for sale to members.

### Access to the building

There are several keyholders for the building. They are responsible for unlocking and locking-up. You may need to make a note of a couple of names and telephone numbers in case someone fails to open up or if you need out-of-hours access, for example if you have left something behind. You'll find these listed in the Shed entrance lobby.

### Loan and sale of equipment

The Shed holds workshop and garden tools, for example a chainsaw, pressure washer, hedge trimmer and numerous power tools, which are available for short term loan. If you wish to borrow anything please enter it in the Loans Book which is located in the social space on the ground floor.

The Shed may from time-to-time have a stock of tools and machines which are surplus to our needs, for example band saws and routers. These are normally available for sale to members. If you wish to buy anything please ask a Committee member.

### Parking

Cars can be parked in front of the building; temporary parking is permitted at the rear of the building for the purpose of loading and off-loading vehicles only. Cyclists may lock up their bicycles at the front of the building, providing this is done in a manner that does not obstruct the entrance to the building.

### Visitors

We welcome visitors but it is important that all persons on-site register in the sign-in book for health & safety purposes. Some areas of the building present hazards, such as machinery in the workshops, so we ask all visitors to please be mindful of and obey any signage.

## Shed contact details

Unit 30 Burners Lane  
Kiln Farm  
Milton Keynes  
MK11 3HB  
01908 267126 (Answerphone when closed)

Web: Shed: [www.meninshedsmk.org.uk](http://www.meninshedsmk.org.uk)  
Makerspace: [www.mkmakerspace.co.uk](http://www.mkmakerspace.co.uk)  
Email: [info@meninshedsmk.org.uk](mailto:info@meninshedsmk.org.uk)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/MenInShedsMK](https://facebook.com/MenInShedsMK)

Please don't hesitate to approach a Shed member for advice on anything or to help you identify the right person to speak to. We are a friendly organisation but there isn't always someone available to do a full induction.

