

Men in Sheds MK

Chair's Report – AGM 23rd May 2018

A roller coaster year

Early 2017 saw the prospect of the Shed taking on the lease for Unit 30. By the summer that was all off, then Feb this year saw Age UK and MK Community Foundation wanting it resolved PDQ. Negotiations were a bit tense. Result; end of March saw us being the leaseholders and a deal of 8 months free rental period towards the cost of us undertaking significant improvements we wanted to the Shed, better workshop lighting, roller door draught/water exclusion and improved heating.

As a previous subtenant of Age UK, with their background support, the umbilical cord has now been cut. We're now masters of our own destiny, along with the responsibilities that brings. No sooner had the lease deal been done, the workshop lighting failed. Good job we had that free rental period to pay for it. Instructions are going to the contractor as I write. The other work will closely follow.

The previous year had seen our insurance unceremoniously switched, a huge bump in premium and demands for some serious work on our welding bay. Thanks to Dave Sawyer, Graham, David and others for getting this area sorted. This year we have wrestled down the premium and achieved improved coverage.

We continue to grow

We had 100 members last year, with already more than that number this year. In large measure this growth can be attributed to the expanding Makerspace group in the Shed. They have brought renewed energy and innovation to the Shed. Thirty or so in number, they have significantly underpinned the financial security of the Shed and our financial reserves have increased, which bodes well for us taking on the lease.

Our traditional groups in the Shed, social recreational, model making, wood and metal working have remained stable with a flow of new members. Our community base projects have help us busy, notably the sign-making for the twinning between Wolverton and Ploegsteert in Belgium in memory of young Albert French of Wolverton, a WW1 casualty who lies there. Some Sheddors will be entertained as part of a summer visit to Ploegsteert.

Other community projects have included those for the Play Association, MacIntyre, and others are underway for Wolverton & Greenleys community, and "Planting Up" at Westbury Arts Centre.

The highlight of the year was the visit from MK Mayor, Councillor David Hopkins. We received much encouragement from him.

Thanks to all

It's Sheddors who keep the Shed going. So thanks to all and as ever to the Management Committee and trustees for the hard work they have put in. I would especially like to highlight Michael West for his industry in sourcing, at no cost, computers, furniture and fittings for the Shed, Les as Treasurer for his steady hand on the Shed finances and Nigel Pigott for his commitment to the role as Shed Secretary.

It's no news to most that I will be stepping down as Chair to more fully enjoy the delights of the Shed. Others may be looking to do the same. We continue to look for other members to join the Committee and Trustees in the running of the Shed. Don't be shy, step up.

