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Hello Shedders and Makerspacers

This just a brief lockdown special edition of the newsletter to keep in touch with everyone during the Shed's extended closure.

So to answer the first question everyone will ask: when is the Shed going to open again?

We are awaiting government and UK Men's Sheds Association advice later this month. The [latest statement on the UKMSA website](#) is not particularly encouraging and yesterday's government announcement does not offer much hope, at least for the next three weeks. It's clear, however, that before we can open we will need to ensure that all possible steps are taken to protect our members, especially the more vulnerable. As well as observing all the usual rules about social distancing and probably the wearing of face masks we will be putting in place hand sanitising stations. A one-way system for movement between upstairs and downstairs has also been suggested, as has the possibility that the social group will move to the large Makerspace room in order to preserve social distance. This will of course not be the Shed as we have known it but I'm sure most people will welcome the chance to return. Of course those who have been instructed to stay at home because of their health conditions will need to exercise extreme caution before deciding to return to the Shed.

We will of course be in touch again as soon as we are able to announce a re-opening date. My best guess at the moment is that this will be sometime in July. In the meantime Committee members remain willing to open the Shed if you wish to borrow any tools or need materials.

Just because the Shed has been closed does not mean that everyone has been idle. The Makerspace has co-ordinated a [huge 3D printing effort](#) to produce protective visors for health and care workers in Milton Keynes. This has been made possible by a £1600 grant from the Milton Keynes Community Foundation for the purchase of materials and to date over 3000 visors have been produced.

It appears that few Shedders have taken the opportunity to use the message board on our website at meninshedsmk.org.uk or the [MK Shed's Facebook page](#) as a means of keeping in touch. It would be good to hear about what everyone has been doing to stay sane during the lockdown so please let us know.

If you have a Facebook account I can highly recommend The [UK Sheds](#)

also available from the latter.

It is great to hear from our Treasurer John Orme that the majority of people who were donating regularly to the Shed through Local Giving have continued to do so throughout the closure. This is great news for the Shed's survival. However, since the closure we have received bills of well over £5000 for rent, insurance and other services. If those of you who were donating through the demijohn felt able to make regular or even one-off donations [through Local Giving](#) – however small - this would make a big difference to our financial health. Thanks.

Finally, I'm pleased to say that we have received no reports of Shed members falling ill with Covid-19. Our Chair, Ron Bowles, has been in touch by phone with some of our more vulnerable members and they are all getting through with support from family and the community. I hope this is indeed the case and that we can all get through this uninfected.

Until we meet again, very best wishes to all Shedders and their families.

Nigel Pigott
Secretary, MK Men in Sheds
nigel.pigott@meninshedsmk.org.uk



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info@meninshedsmk.org.uk

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