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Not quite there yet.....

Hello everyone and Spring greetings from the Shed

Like me you were probably awaiting anxiously and hopefully the Government's 23 February announcement on the route out of lockdown in England.

Unfortunately, it seems my optimism about re-opening the Shed in March was misplaced. My reading of the route map suggests that if all goes as expected with infection rates, hospitalisations etc. the earliest we could now plan for a re-opening is **12 April**, assuming that we fall into the category of a community facility and that we are a support provider. This is endorsed by the Management Committee and is in line with the [advice from the UK Men's Sheds Association](#). If we re-open on this date we will still need to follow strict COVID safety procedures (face coverings, social distancing, ventilation etc.) and limit numbers in the Shed.

I realise that many Shed members will by that date have received at least one vaccine dose and might consider themselves to have some immunity. However few will have had the second shot by then – I certainly won't - and we therefore need to move with great caution until the promised unlocking of 21 June, and perhaps beyond, as some of our younger members, on the current schedule, will not have been vaccinated by then.

I am sorry to be giving this disappointing news at a time when we have not had a fully functioning Shed for almost a year. As soon as we are back to full operation – probably in June if all goes to plan - we will be convening an AGM for the election of officers and to receive reports on 2019-2021.

Post-COVID planning

As I have stressed in previous newsletters we need to plan for a post-COVID renewal of the Shed and members who are willing to serve on the Committee or to contribute in other ways to the regeneration and running of the Shed are keenly sought. I would like to thank the small number of individuals who have already come forward. We are also seeking to fill the vacancy for an external member of the Board of Trustees, so if you know anyone with an appropriate background who is likely to be sympathetic to the aims of the Shed and is able

to devote a small amount of time to meetings every two months then please let me know.

Visiting the Shed during March

As before, members who wish to visit the Shed individually to borrow tools or collect materials are invited to contact me at the email address below so that a convenient time can be arranged.

Men's Health

Peter Gallagher has asked me to draw attention to the availability of a home testing PSA kit: You can order this through the Bedfordshire Prostate Cancer Group website www.bpcsg.org.uk at a cost of £22.99 but if you have concerns about your prostate health you may prefer to approach your local GP service first. You might also be interested in [this event](#), broadcast by the UKMSA last week but still available. Well worth a watch.

Fundraising

The MK Community Foundation is once again running a Mad March Matched Funding event with the prospect that all donations made to the Shed through Local Giving between 15 March and 26 March will be matched by a contribution of up to £1000. So if you do not already donate through Local Giving, please consider doing so between the above dates, even if it's only a one-off, by following [this link](#).

I will write again if there's any change of plan, either by the Shed or the Government, but until April, best wishes to all Shed members and prospective members and of course, stay safe in the meantime - we are not quite out of the woods yet.

Nigel

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