

Chair of Trustees AGM Report June 2018 - 2019

Roles of a trustee:

Trustees share formal responsibility for the charity and must act in its best interests.

To that end I believe we have and always will act on the best interests of Aldridge Shed and I thought it would be good to remind ourselves of what part of our Constitution says of which you can find a copy on our web site under reports www.aldridgeshed.co.uk.

From our Constitution:

Aims and purposes: - *To provide a base or bases for its members to connect with others while participating in group, community or individual projects. - To provide opportunities for socialising in safe, friendly environments while at the same time endeavouring to provide the space, expertise and facilities for its members to pursue hobbies, crafts and creative activities. - To undertake projects which are acceptable to the group and which are of benefit to the individuals involved and the wider community. - To endeavour to assist its members to maintain or improve their health and well-being as a result of participation alone, while hopefully making new friends and enjoying working on a range of projects. It is hoped that this in-turn will have 'knock-on' benefits to relationships with 'nearest and dearest' and the wider community at large.*

The above could be classed as our vision or indeed our mission statement. I believe that over the last three years the Aldridge Shed has been open, it's committee and it's members have continually strived to do that.

For a long time, research has shown the negative impact loneliness can have on a person's general health and wellbeing. Sadly, there are reports of high rates of social isolation across the borough. Aldridge Shed introduces social connections and friendship building and, in some cases, can help members gain a renewed sense of purpose and belonging.

What members have said:

Becoming a member of the Shed has given Mira hours of enjoyment: *"I have mastered new skills I never thought possible and enjoyed the companionship of the other members. It has given me an aim in life and it is a brilliant way of getting people out of the house."*

Paul was introduced to the Shed two years ago following an accident at work where he broke his neck and was paralysed. Stuck in the house with nothing to do, he was understandably miserable. He says, *"I left school at 16 and have been in work ever since, working six or seven days a week. To go from that to lying in bed all day everyday was depressing. Joining Aldridge Shed has changed my life and my family can see the difference in me. I treat it like going to work; I get up in the mornings, make my sandwiches and come here all day, four days a week. It gives me a sense of purpose and the company and banter that I missed."*

Carrying out the purposes:

The trustees will have powers to (from the Constitution):

- Raise funds, receive grants and donations. - Apply funds to carry out the work of the group. - Co-operate with and support other groups and charities with similar purposes. - Do anything lawful and necessary to achieve the aims and purposes of The Aldridge Shed.

Reality - What been happening:



Last year we reported that we received from The Big Lottery Fund nearly £10,000, this was used to purchase a CNC router, pedestal drill, thickness planer, and dust extraction units for each machine amongst other equipment. Making Connections Walsall have been a great help with funding and putting our name out throughout the area to many organisations. (£2500) Aldridge Shed is well known and has a good press with the locality. Thanks, as always, goes to E & S Knowles, a local timber manufacturer who support us with wood donations.

Open days have been a great way of communicating our presence and inviting the community in to see what we are all about and it's heart-warming to see all the committee involved in speaking with potential new members, of which, many have joined the Shed as a result of these days and by people going away and telling others about us.

We have had editorial features on the Shed in November's edition of 'Live life local', and also a full-page colour spread in the January 2019 edition of the Pioneer magazine. As a result, new members have joined.



Hot off the press is that we have just been awarded £8000 off Making Connections Walsall – Budding Project for the period between 01/07/2019 and 30/04/2021. We need to have regular meetings with

MCW and give feedback of what is happening with the funds and how we are meeting their criteria for the award. To this end I feel we should form a small subgroup to focus on 'doing it right.' Most of the monies can be used for rent which is very welcome. My sincere thanks go to Mark Perry our trustee and Treasurer for his excellent input and support in helping me put the grant proposal together for this and other applications. Without his help I believe we would not have been as successful as we have been.



The Coop's Local Community Fund have awarded us £704.89 and we may receive even more in the near future.

Aldridge Shed is about 'people,' in particular, as my report earlier on states but to run and be successful we do need funds and we will continually strive to make sure we are, as an organisation, profitable and can leave a legacy for future generations.

Looking to the future we feel that as our membership is growing the way it is (new people joining almost on a weekly basis) we may soon outgrow our present premises and so we are currently looking for larger properties. At the moment nothing suitable has been found but this will be a topic for discussion over the next few months and we will keep you informed.

As Chair of Trustees I am very pleased with how the Shed has progressed over the past year. Our finances are healthy in as much as we are almost self-sustaining but without extra income from grants, donations and items we sell we would still be a little short of covering our rental and other commitments.

May I close in thanking all who have supported us through grants and donations, our committee for its continued commitment to Aldridge Shed and for our members for supporting us through membership and session fees.

Ivor Anderson