

Chair of Trustees AGM report June 2019 – Sept 2020

Who could have predicted since my last report all that was going to happen in this last year? I trust and hope you and yours have been and are well and not affected too much by the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Aldridge Shed was going from strength to strength with new members regularly joining until we reluctantly decided to close down operations on 18th March 2020 on Government advise. During this shutdown the committee organised telephone calls to members every two weeks or so to see if they were ok. It seems that this was very much appreciated. Well done to all involved in this important work of helping combat loneliness and social isolation. The committee had regular Zoom meetings organised by Ian Davis (Chair of Steering Committee) which were also well received.

We tentatively re opened on 4th July 2020 following government Health & Safety advise, including contactless temperature taking and contactless payment methods, for three days Tues, Wed, Thursday on a booking in system. In contrast we were open 5 days a week before lockdown. As I write we have dispensed with booking in as numbers are well within the H&S requirements and we are open on the morning of Mon, Tues and Thursdays and all-day Wednesday. This will be constantly reviewed.

A big thank you to Housing 21 who have waived our rent whilst we were shut down this has been a considerable help with our finances.

Also, thanks need to go to One Walsall namely Amy Saunders (Development Officer Walsall South) Amy has been keeping in touch regularly and emailing information on funding and planning for groups such as ourselves. John Morris (Localities manager East) as always has been a big support, always willing to help if needed.

UK Men's Shed Association (UKMSA) have always been available to help and guide if needed especially through Kate Gordon (National Shed Development Manager). As an aside, last year she asked Mark Perry and I to be Shed Ambassadors for UKMSA and the West Midlands in particular. The role involves helping and supporting new Sheds in the early days. To this end we invited Andy Street (Mayor of the West Midlands) to visit Aldridge Shed Oct last year to see what Sheds are all about. We were hoping to have further talks about how, with his support, we could expand the number of Sheds in the West Midlands. Unfortunately, Covid 19 has put paid to that for the time being but it's only on the 'back burner'.

Clean and Green have also been very helpful in storing a large amount of hard wood until we obtain planning permission and then erect an extra storage facility outside the Housing 21 complex where we are situated.

Even with the reduced membership at present we are still optimistic that the future is good for Aldridge Shed. Thanks, must go to all on the committee for how they work so well together and for the interests and future of the Shed as a whole. Special thanks for all the hard work and going the extra mile to our Chair of the steering committee Ian Davis and Mark Perry for keeping check on our finances making sure we don't make unnecessary purchases and are wise with the one's we do. Barrie Ashford has also been great help as our Health & Safety officer and makes sure we 'stick to the rules'.

The Future

Interestingly we have already had three new members join and personally I believe we will see an increase in membership in the next year and new friendships will be made but we will need to be proactive for that to happen.

Fundraising will probably need to be an ongoing need but not urgent as we are in a strong position financially but always good to be looking ahead.

Thanks to all who have supported Aldridge Shed in donations of cash, (please see financial report) but namely the Shaylor Foundation. Also, thanks go to the Coop and Making Connections Walsall for the grants that have been so helpful.

For all who have given tools, equipment, time and in whatever way you could. Thank you all it's been greatly appreciated.

We don't know what the future holds but I am positive with the team we have running the Shed it will go on encouragingly touching more lives and helping combat loneliness and social isolation.

Ivor Anderson