

BramShed Presentation for Annual Briefing – 20 Apr 22

Background

Brampton Men's Shed project was initiated in 2019, and for 2 years it endeavoured to find a suitable shed and then tried to build one on the Memorial Playing fields. For many reasons such as tree preservation, planning permission, building regulations, design specification creep, material cost escalation and, of course, Covid 19, the new build project was deemed infeasible in December last year. Fortunately, a property on Brampton Park, owned by the MOD but leased to Ermine Street Housing, was identified as suitable. Whilst it is not as big as new build Shed that had been planned, it meets most of our requirements, including an accessible toilet, and is adjacent to the Thrift Shop (with whom we share a garage for storage) and the Craft Club. So, after negotiating a very modest 'Licence to Occupy' fee, the 'BramShed' was launched in January this year.

Membership

To misquote the 'Field of Dreams' film, "Built it and they will come", and they certainly have. After just 3 months, the membership of the Shed is over 30 and climbing, plus we have a further 20-30 people on the 'interested' mailing list. Members have come from all parts of the village and all walks of life. We have a city banker as treasurer and hope a doctor will give us some health and safety guidance. But our keenest Shedders are some retired gents who live on their own, who find both the craft and the social aspects of the Shed has given them a new purpose in life and a new group of friends to share it with.

Progress

In the first quarter, the Shedders have done an incredible amount of work in refurbishing already donated tools and equipment, and turning the building into workshops, storage room and tea bar. Start-up funding from the Hub has gone towards covering the workshop floors, installing a stud wall and door – to separate the workshops from the hobby/social area and providing racks in the store room. Shedders are also installing a kitchen sink, upgrading the electrical system and installing new work benches. We are very fortunate to have a qualified electrician, a teacher of design technology, builders and a range of engineers and logisticians in the Shed doing this work to a high standard – all for free, because they enjoy doing it!

Funding/Equipment

Having cancelled the New Build project, much of the funding that had been promised was no longer available, however, through the Hub, the Parish Council has continued to support the Shed with a smaller but very significant amount to ensure we get the project up and running. Plus, we have also been given grant from the Evelyn Trust and some other donations. Our next phase is to use these funds to buy important equipment for the workshops – lathe, planer/thicknesser, dust extractor, etc. But we are also very grateful for practical donations such as workbenches, bandsaw, hand tool and materials, from villagers and the Shedders themselves. All helping to minimise costs.

Other Aspects/Future

The BramShed has created ties with the Ramshed in Ramsey and the Man Cave in Sawtry, as well as being a member of the UK Men's Shed Association. Networking for mutual benefit.

The benefits to the mental health of the members have already been recognised and we've had some positive feedback about some isolated senior men in the village.

We're engaged with Community projects: Wild Life Trust at Brampton Wood – Dormouse boxes. Montague House Care Home – potential to help with small items for roof garden or craft/hobby sessions. Given support to Afghan refugee families, by fixing bicycles.

Steve Hodgson
Chairman

