

Chairman's Report to the AGM 6th November 2025 (period 1/10/24 to 30/9/25)

Charity Objects

The aims (objects) of Black Park Shed (the Shed) are:

1. **To promote social inclusion** for the public benefit by preventing people particularly but not exclusively, older men and women, throughout the South of England from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society through the provision of facilities in which they can meet jointly or individually to undertake creative, physical or recreational activities, learn or pass on skills and knowledge and support each other socially.

For the purpose of this clause 'socially excluded' means being excluded from society, or parts of society, as a result of one or more of the following factors: bereavement, financial hardship; old age or ill health (physical or mental).

2. For the public benefit, **the preservation and protection of good health** among people in the South of England, including those who are retired, unemployed or have health problems, through the provision of facilities for hobbies, recreation or other leisure time occupation including practical interests, skills sharing, the learning of new skills, and helping with community-based projects

The Shed submitted its annual return to the Charities Commission within the required timeframe.

Governance

The committee met a total of 12 times during the year, attendance is tabulated below:

Mark Lemon	Chairman & officer	12/12
Les Stone	Secretary & officer	12/12
Steve Barnes	Treasurer & officer	12/12
Tommy Musgrave	Vice Chair	12/12
Phil Parker	PAT testing, Training	11/12
Nick Sidhu	Health and Safety	10/12
Simon Kibble	Welfare	11/12

The non-officer roles are generic, however the above reflects the key focus of those Committee members during the year. The Committee members are also Trustees of Black Park Shed and are registered as such with the Charities Commission.

The Shed has policies covering GDPR, adult safeguarding, behaviour, health and safety, equalities and diversity. We also have comprehensive risk assessments.

Membership and attendance

We currently have a record 59 members and 4 Friends. We welcomed nine new members this year: Paul Hyland, David Miller, Dave Kundhi, John Butcher, Mark Ford, Graham Trafford, Ivan van Rooyen, Jeff Batsman and Jane Cox.

Most new member enquiries come via the web, word of mouth, social media, or after seeing us at our Christmas and Easter stalls. We also receive referrals from social prescribers of local GP surgeries.

It was with great sadness that we heard earlier in the year of the death of Derek Hooper, immediate past Chairman of the Shed, a well-loved member and mentor to all.

Total member sessions attended, excluding training, were up 18% year on year at 2233. This equates to over 11,000 Shed hours. This will tend to be a slight understatement, as some members forget to log in.

We are currently operating close to our daily workshop capacity of 15, therefore the committee decided at their October meeting to temporarily close membership, and invite potential members to join a waitlist. We successfully managed such an approach previously during Covid times.

Annual membership has once more been held at £20 p.a. with £3 per week attended.

Thanks to Jason for maintaining both our informative website, and the booking system. Thanks also to Les for his weekly photo updates which reflect the spread of our activities for prospective members, and help keep those who cannot attend feel connected. The lawn, borders and raised beds are maintained by Chas for the benefit of all members.

Welfare

Everyone is reminded of the free Friday coffee morning for Shed friends who are currently unable to fully participate in Shed activities. These have been well received, but remain slightly erratic in attendance. Obviously friends are always welcome to pop in for a cuppa and a chat, even if they can't make it on a Friday.

Attention is drawn to the extensive range of UKMSA Health and Wellbeing pamphlets published on the web, covering such topics as prostate cancer. This is an area where not as much progress has been made as was hoped in helping focus sources of advice to members' needs.

Projects

The committee try and ensure we all have an interesting mix of projects, while giving members lots of free time to undertake their own work. These give members a chance to acquire new skills, and get to know each other better. I will just give a flavour of this, as the full list is quite extensive.

Now a firm tradition, we held a series of most successful craft stalls at both Christmas and Easter. These have now become well known in the Colne Valley community, and have grown to be significant income generators. This year, Nas helped expand the stall to two other local events. They are great PR and have attracted several new members over the years. Thanks to Emile for all his work behind the scenes, and to those who help produce the goods and run the stall.

Due to their internal budget constraints, various projects we were pursuing with Bucks Council and Groundworks Trust, did not come to fruition. There has also been an increasing use of plastic signage in the parks, which is sad to see. So for the second year running, we had no work from these once substantial income streams.

Pete led various mini-projects for the Black Park Forest School, such as the halloween trail, a willow fence bird hide and component parts for various craft activities.

We supported local communities by completing new signage for Iver Bowls Club and the Alice Adams Foundation, repairing the allotment shed roof for the Slough Refugee Support Group, building planters and ancillaries for Ragstone Road Community Allotment, building a 'buddy bench' for The Harvey Memorial Playing Fields in George Green, research and advice for the Black Park VE Day trail. Finally, we supported the UKMSA / Diageo alcohol moderation message as detailed below.

We were awarded a grant from Buckinghamshire Council, Wexham and The Ivers Community Board, which enabled us to build a roof and sides for our pergola, thus creating a dry area for relatively dust free painting during inclement weather.

Our longest running project is the ongoing repairs and maintenance to San Remo's café chairs and table, led by Chas. This year we also refurbished some domestic furniture and café fixtures.

Refurbishing tools for the African focussed UK charity Work Aid is another long term relationship we continue to foster, headed by Les.

A special call out also to Jim who assists us with design and pricing of jobs, as well as all the work he does in his role as quartermaster.

Many thanks to all who have helped, which is pretty much every member at some stage.

Annexe

This is a regular agenda item for our committee meetings. Grant funding bodies have been approached to see if they may in principle support an application for assistance with costs. Chris Hosey made strenuous efforts to gain an ear at Bucks Council and produced a Heads of Terms Agreement for discussion. Unfortunately, at a meeting with Black Park management, it was made clear that the Council will not allocate any resource to discussing the Annexe until the lease comes up for renewal in May 2028.

Health and Safety

Health and Safety is led by Nick. The comprehensive H&S risk assessment continues to develop as necessary. A recent focus has been on the obligations and our expectations of external charities when we work off site at their location. This resulted in a simple contract template for such projects.

Our Health and Safety risk assessment and policy can be found on the members' google drive. Members should always bring any unsafe practices or concerns to the attention of Nick or a committee member.

Phil, assisted by John Gill continues with the rolling programme to PAT test relevant appliances. Our new member, Jeff, is also PAT qualified. Members should ensure Phil is advised of any additional electrical items brought into the Shed (both new and second-hand), and place a 'do not use' tag on it until logged / tested as necessary. These tags can be found on the mess noticeboard.

With respect to first aid, a further five members have now been trained which compensates for those whose certificates recently expired. This has helped avoid the issue where we had to close because no first aider was available.

Training

Phil and Ken have continued to expand the range of training courses made available to members. Courses were held on acrylics painting, shaker boxes, pyrography, wood carving, musical instrument making, sign-making, and first aid. Some courses have been run more than once due to high demand. In total 56 training slots were attended. Formal feedback, via course appraisals, has been most positive. All agree this is a great way to extend our skills and for Members to engage in fun and interesting activities. Importantly, skills learned have also enabled members to better support the Shed and its wider community.

Often the training courses train a member who in turn trains others, for instance the pyrography which Nas now assists members with.

Phil, Ken and Vinny wrote an impressive report for Rothschild Foundation, which recently enabled Tommy to secure a further £5,000 for additional training!

Courses will continue to be held approximately monthly on Wednesdays.

Upgrading our charity status.

Since March 2022 Black Park Shed has held standard registration with the UK Charity Commission - registered charity number 1198184.

At our 2024 AGM, members agreed that the committee seek the increased protections that a “Charitable Incorporated Organisation” (CIO) enjoys. After significant background work and form filling by Tommy, our application to the Charities Commission was accepted in June - registered charity number 1213662.

This is a change in Registration status with no changes to our Purposes, Trustees, Assets, policies and procedures, or day to day operations.

Until such time as Steve has concluded the painful and lengthy process of opening new bank accounts for this new entity we continue to operate under our existing registration. Once the bank account is operational the Committee will approve a transfer all assets and funds at bank to the new entity. Steve will talk to this in the Treasurer’s Report.

We are still Black Park Shed, and members will not notice any operational changes other than having to set up new online bank payments.

UKMSA links

We continue to be subscribe to and actively engaged with the UK Men’s Sheds Association (UKMSA), and make use of their expertise and knowledge sharing. We benefit from their various sponsor companies’ generous discounts and free offers.

In November, the Shed received a major UKMSA award, which I cover below.

In May I was asked by the London UKMSA ambassador to join him at the Annual DIY awards in London, as UKMSA was their nominated charity for the year. We manned a stall and chatted to leading industry figures over lunch, which gave an excellent opportunity for UKMSA to subsequently follow them up for a closer relationship.

In July we were approached by UKMSA to build a “buddy bench” as part of their “Mission Shoulder to Shoulder”. In addition, they asked if we would give up a day for filming a short alcohol moderation video being sponsored by Diageo, the leading alcoholic drinks distributor. Pete and John busied themselves building the bench while all the paperwork and logistics for filming was concluded. In mid-August, Timmy Mallet arrived with a film crew, for what proved to be a most exciting day. A follow up ITV interview was held at the Shed a few weeks later.

The buddy bench was subsequently located at the Harvey Memorial Playing Fields in George Green, with suitable acknowledgement of sponsors and ourselves.

All this gave excellent publicity not only to our Shed, and the UKMSA movement as a whole, but also in promoting the alcohol mediation message, supported by a webinar which was circulated to members.

Awards

In November 2024 we received the highly prestigious UKMSA Chairman's Award for outstanding service to the UK Shed movement. This award was given at an event hosted by the Speaker of the Houses of Parliament. The Award was the personal gift of the UKMSA Chairman, with Black Park Shed having been chosen out of almost 1,300 UK registered Sheds.

In November 2024 we were honoured to receive the Outstanding Group Award at the Proud of Bucks Award evening. This was in recognition of our own service to members and the extensive reach we have in helping others within our local community.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my fifth year as Chairman, and thank all those on the committee and Shed members for their support over this time. In particular, I would like to publicly thank Steve and Tommy who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the successful upgrade to our charitable status, and all the fiscal and procedural requirements behind it.

That concludes my annual report.

Mark Lemon
Chairman