



The Silvers' Workshop

Charity Registration No. 1159283

Annual Report to the Charities Commission

2024

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General Statement.

This is our tenth annual report and reflects a period of consolidation for the Charity. We continue to have concerns about how long we may be able to stay within our present workshop. Our landlords have continued to seek Planning Consent to redevelop the plot, despite rejections from the Local Authority then the Secretary of State. Throughout this process, as in previous cases, we have had no approach from our landlords to explain their proposals, and we don't expect this to change. We continue to review local planning applications on a regular basis, fully expecting to find that yet another application has been made for our site.

Membership has continued to rise following the trend established in the latter part of 2023, and the Workshop is back to opening five days a week.

The Silvers' Workshop draws members from the wider Reading Area and is a member of the UK Men's Shed Association, with over eleven-hundred member sheds throughout the British Isles (Source UKMSA – March 2024).

Our aim is to provide a safe space for men to socialise, connect, converse and create, and by doing so help reduce loneliness and isolation which affects many older men.

Governance and Management.

At the end of 2024 we had eight Trustees who sit at least four times a year to review policy, finance and governance. All meetings are fully recorded and the Minutes, once approved, are made available to members for all to scrutinise and comment upon accordingly. This allows for openness and full transparency. During 2024, the Charity has been operating without a Secretary, but a number of members have assisted the Trustees and the Management Committee, ensuring that Meeting Agendas and Minutes are captured and acted upon.

Our Management Team consists of thirteen members, which includes the Trustees. This team manages the workshop on a day-to-day basis, implementing the policies and budgets set out and approved by the Trustees. The Management Team focus on matters relating to Health and Safety, Property, and Social, and seeking out opportunities for fund raising – including the management of projects to deliver goods for sale.

The Management Team meet monthly, except for August and work to an agreed agenda. All meetings are fully recorded and copies of the minutes, once approved are available to all members for all to read and comment upon, again, promoting openness and transparency.

All Trustees and Team Members give their time freely and no remuneration or expenses have been paid during this last year, other than expenses duly incurred whilst undertaking official workshop business.

No Trustee receives any benefit which is not available to the wider membership.

Membership.

Membership remains open to men who meet our objectives and can demonstrate their general mobility. Our membership has remained at 70 with the arrival of new members balancing the loss of members who have died or moved away. During 2024, we sadly lost 3 members who had played a significant part in the establishment of the Silvers' Workshop.

External Links.

We continue to work closely with both Reading Voluntary Action who offer us free advice and training and U.K. Men's Shed Association which gives us access to all Men's Sheds in the UK. Both the local community and local businesses are also very willing to help us to promote the Workshop and have assisted us greatly in the last 12 months. Our thanks go, in particular, to Laithwaite Wines, The John Lewis Partnership and ASDA Tilehurst for their continued support.

About this last year.

This year has again been about consolidation and rebuilding. We again held a family picnic at the local National Trust property, Basildon House, which was very well attended and enjoyed by all.

We have continued to look for alternative accommodation, but we have not been able to either secure anything suitable through bids to the local Council, nor on the open market. We will need to raise a significant amount of funds to secure a property in the area without the support of a significant benefactor, but we continue to do what we can by fundraising through attending car boot sales and holding open days.

As well as allowing us to sell some of our member merchandise to raise funds, opening the Workshop allowed members of the local community to come in and meet with members and to hear about the benefits that they have gained from attending the Workshop. Not surprisingly, we also attracted a number of new members from the event.

Projects.

With the struggle to find an alternative space, and a growing number of members returning to the Workshop on a more regular basis, making the most of our existing space became a priority during 2024.

We were fortunate to win a Lottery Grant of just less than £10,000 at the end of 2023 – part of which was for the improvement and operation of the Workshop – and the Trustees agreed that this should be used to weatherseal and extend the covered working space available at the rear of the Workshop. We also used the grant to purchase a Personal Appliance Testing (PAT) Kit, and training for some of our members, to remove the annual cost of testing our plug-in tools and appliances.

Men's Health & Well-Being.

Men's Sheds continue to make a significant contribution to the improvement of health and well-being of all members generally. This is true of The Silvers' Workshop where many friendships and skills have been made and learnt over the past ten years.

The Future.

This remains fluid, but we continue to look for suitable and affordable alternative accommodation, and speak with local councillors and press about our needs. As noted last year, we are still unable to objectively plan and set dates for events or long-term projects until our landlords share with us what they intend doing with the property and when.

Financial Report and Balance Sheet.

Overall, 2024 has been another positive year for the Charity, but it might have looked very different without a number of significant donations – some of which we expected, but some which were a complete surprise.

In December we were the beneficiary of a £11,600 donation from the Bereavement Team at Reading Borough Council, we also received donations from John Lewis totalling £2,666, The Co-op of £2,300, Caversham Masonic Lodges of £700, and £120 in memory of Dave Woodhead.

These made a considerable contribution to our Operating Surplus for 2024, as has the £2539 raised through public sales – both Car Boot sales where we have benefitted from selling surplus tools, and the stalls that we have run at Laithwaites and Visa to sell items that members have produced.

It is pleasing to note that even without this extraordinary income stream, our general expenditure would have been covered by our income from Membership Fees, and the Daily Attendance levy. Note that our Rent has been taken from Reserved funds in 2024, which has made this possible, and the Trustees have agreed to a proposal that we continue to pay our Rent from Reserved Funds going forward. This allows us to maintain our Membership Fees and Daily Attendance at £70 and £3 respectively for 2025.

Turning to our Expenses, the £990 for fundraising administration is the amount that we paid to Sarah Snow for submitting our application to the Lottery Fund for the £9908 received at the end of 2023.

There is significant expenditure associated with the materials for the repairs to the Lean-to, including two skips to remove waste associated with the building works, and the materials that we needed to buy. Most of this has come from Reserved Funds which has insulated our current account from the cost, but also reduced the amount that we have added to our “Capital Account” which we continue to use to set-aside against our expected change of premises.

Also from Reserved Funds, we purchased the PAT kit, including member training to use the kit, purchased and installed a network of smoke and heat alarms, and invested in the installation of the defibrillator in Hilcot Road.

While our General Office Costs appear high, this includes the rectification of a small number of bank errors in our favour, where we had received payment from members' accounts in error.

In summary, we ended the year almost £15,000 better than we started it, but as the Trustees have noted, this means that we have just about recovered to where we were before the Pandemic in 2020. Looking forward, we need to continue to insulate ourselves for our expected move out of Hilcot Road, and we know that we will incur some costs related to water ingress through the roof and in the Pazzard Room, but we have started 2025 in a healthy position.

Our Accounts have been submitted to independent review, as required by the Charity Commission due to our income meeting their threshold for this requirement.

The Silvers' Workshop
Charity Registration No. 1159283
Year ending 31 December 2024
Income and Expenditure Record as at 31 December 2024

Income	Unreserved Funds	Reserved Funds	Total Funds
Funds Brought Forward from 2023	4,878.29	42,975.52	47,853.81
Membership	4,632.50		
Daily Attendance	4,450.62		
Member Sales	647.00		
Public Fundraising	2,539.60		
Grants and Donations	6,321.80	11,600.00	
Legacies	-	-	
Other Charitable Activities	1,475.70		
Bank Interest	480.76		
Total Income	<u>20,547.98</u>	<u>11,600.00</u>	<u>32,147.98</u>

Expenditure	Unreserved Funds	Reserved Funds	Total Funds
Gas	510.09		
Electric	1,014.71		
Water	337.79		
Broadband	315.64		
Phone	93.48		
Rent		6,000.00	
Rates	204.60		
Insurance	576.15		
Waste Collection	1,116.00		
Card Commission Payments	79.61		
Other Trade Invoices	229.60		
Fundraising administration		990.00	
General Office Costs	377.95		
Machine Room			
Tools	180.43	432.00	
Consumables	687.33		
Other		2,314.98	
Property	995.05		
Mess Room	75.18		
Member Events	688.00		
Total Expenditure	<u>7,481.61</u>	<u>9,736.98</u>	<u>17,218.59</u>
2024 Operating Surplus:	13,066.37	1,863.02	14,929.39
Funds Carried Forward to 2025	17,944.66	44,838.54	62,783.20

I confirm that I have provided an independent review of these accounts for the Silvers' Workshop, and believe them to be a true and accurate representation.

Signed:

This completes The Silvers' Workshop, Annual Charities Commission Report for 2024, on this day

Signed

Barry Fowler
Chairman.