



The Silvers' Workshop

Charity Registration No. 1159283

Annual Report to the Charities Commission

2025

Index

General Statement	Page 1
Governance and Management	Page 1
Membership	Page 1
External Links	Page 2
About this year	Page 2
Projects	Page 2
Men's Health and Wellbeing	Page 3
The Future	Page 3
Financial Report	Page 3

General Statement.

This is our eleventh annual report and marks a year where we have concentrated on building partnerships and doing what we can to improve conditions within our Workshop area to the benefit of our members.

Despite a better interaction with our Landlord, the Trustees continue to have concerns about how long we may be able to stay within our present workshop, and consequently we are concerned about investing capital in the fabric of the building, but we also recognise that doing nothing would be a false economy.

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.

Membership has been relatively static during 2025 following two years of growth, but it is encouraging that we have continued to attract new members and welcome back a small number of non-attendees during the year. The Workshop continues to open to members for four hours, five days a week.

Governance and Management.

At the end of 2025 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 2025, the Charity has continued to operate 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 aim to 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.

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. During 2025, we have also connected with Reading Council's Older Persons' Working Group, which is chaired by the Deputy Mayor. This has allowed us to link with other groups supporting older people in the Community such as Age Concern, to hear their concerns and to ensure a greater awareness of the Mens' Shed community in and around Reading.

We have also taken the opportunity to further build our relationship with the Cancer Rehabilitation team at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, and have again attended two wellness events that they have run for patients and their partners. We have used these events not as opportunities to sell goods, but to share the wellness benefits and support that we are able to provide for our members.

The local community, councillors and businesses continue to help promote the Workshop and have assisted us greatly in the last 12 months. In particular we thank Laithwaite Wines, and The John Lewis Partnership for their continued support for the Workshop and our members.

About this last year

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. Trustees looked at two commercial properties this year, but it quickly became clear that we will need to raise a significant amount of funds to secure a property in the area, and that we cannot rely on the support of a significant benefactor on less-than commercial terms. We continue to do what we can by fundraising through attending car boot sales and holding open days, and transferring surplus funds to our Reserved Fund.

We again opened the Workshop this Autumn, which we branded as a 10th Anniversary event. As well as allowing us to sell some of our member merchandise to raise funds, opening the Workshop allows 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.

We were also invited to run a charity stall in John Lewis in Reading on two separate occasions to raise awareness of the Shed, and the benefit that we can provide for members.

Major Projects.

Internally, the project to weatherproof and insulate the extension to the lean-to at the back of the workshop became a priority and has allowed us additional indoor (rather than undercover) working space, including a "hot works" area.

During the year, members supported efforts to create goods for sale at various shows, including the Royal Windsor Rose and Horticultural Society Show, where we were guests on the Laithwaites Stand; and the Swallowfield Show where we had our own stand.

One of our members has concentrated on producing garden benches and chairs using cast metal bench ends that had been donated to us, and hard wood that we

have purchased to make the slats. These have proved very popular, but time (and space) consuming. Following the UK Mens' Shed Bench Campaign in the Autumn, we also received a commission for a Supporters' Bench to be used at Reading FC Home matches. This will be produced during 2026.

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 Reading Mens' Shed where many friendships and skills have been made and learnt over the past ten years. The health and safety of all our members continues to be a priority concern for our Trustees.

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 in previous years, 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. With this in mind, we are pleased that our Landlord took the opportunity to visit the Workshop in the autumn and meet with some of our Trustees.

Financial Report and Balance Sheet.

2025 has been another positive year for the Charity, but has required some careful stewardship of our funds. Total income for the year was £22,347 (2024 £32,148), and total expenditure £15,129 (2024 £17,218).

The £11,600 donation received from the Bereavement Team at Reading Borough Council at the end of 2024 was designated as Reserved Funds, and has been used to cover our annual rental costs, with the remainder adding to our "Capital Account" which we continue to use to set-aside against our expected change of premises.

In the late summer we were awarded a £3,000 grant from the Reading Borough Council Household Fund. This grant was for the provision of workshop tools and insulating the workshop area which needs insulation; and subsidising member benefits such as community buses, coach hire, speakers at members events, funding first aid courses for members and covering membership fees where appropriate. Consequently, the Trustees were pleased to authorise the expenditure on the continued improvements to the lean-to, and also the purchase of a new Mitre/Bevel saw, and a used Laser Cutter. The majority of the expense for the Laser Cutter will be included in the 2026 accounts.

2025 saw the end of the Council Covid subsidy for Rates, meaning that our Rates bill for the Workshop more than doubled to £475 for the year. At the same time, our 3-year fixed-rate Gas contract came to an end at the end of 2024, and our 2025 bill also doubled to £1,036. The majority of our other operating costs have remained relatively static this year.

In summary, we ended £7,200 (2025 £15,000) better than we started it, and we need to continue to insulate ourselves for our expected move out of Hilcot Road. We have delayed attending to damage due to water ingress through the roof and in the Pazzard Room, but we cannot continue to ignore this.

With this in mind, the Membership were asked to consider an increase in our annual membership fee to £84 per year (from £70). This was agreed at an EGM held in September, to take effect from the new financial year beginning 1 Jan 2026. The members also agreed that we should all move to monthly standing order payments of £7 to assist in the tracking and management of membership fees.

The Silvers' Workshop

Charity Registration No. 1159283

Year ending 31 December 2025

Income and Expenditure Record as at: 31 December 2025

Income	Unreserved Funds	Reserved Funds	Total Funds
Funds Brought Forward from 2024	18,179.89	44,838.54	63,018.43
Membership	3,595.00		
Daily Attendance	5,487.94		
Member Sales	1,091.50		
Public Fundraising	4,350.94		
Grants and Donations	2,178.15	3,000.00	
Legacies	-	-	
Other Charitable Activities	2,861.48		
Bank Interest	608.17		
Total Income	20,173.18	3,000.00	23,173.18
Expenditure	Unreserved Funds	Reserved Funds	Total Funds
Gas	1,036.25		
Electric	1,292.53		
Water	372.30		
Broadband	343.04		
Phone	93.48		
Rent		6,000.00	
Rates	479.93		
Insurance	576.15		
Waste Collection	364.00		
Card Commission Payments	109.99		
Other Trade Invoices	223.10		
Fundraising administration	411.95		
General Office Costs	283.94		
Machine Room			
Tools	1,587.55	-	
Consumables	974.22		
Other	349.00	543.49	
Property	526.20		
Mess Room	408.19		
Member Events	215.05		
Total Expenditure	9,646.87	6,543.49	16,190.36
Transfer to Reserved Funds	-20,000.00	20,000.00	
Funds Carried Forward to 2026	48,706.20	61,295.05	70,001.25
Surplus/Deficit	10,526.31	-3,543.49	6,982.82

This completes The Silvers' Workshop, Annual Charities Commission Report for 2025, on this day

Signed

Barry Fowler
Chairman.