

Mens Sheds Cardiff Trustee Report

The Mens Shed project represents the community activity arm of a long established Woodcraft Club. The Club has rented workshop space for the past 33 years but as a result of Covid, access to that workshop ceased.

The Club reached capacity level with a lengthy waiting list and this prompted the search for a larger alternative venue. A positive alternative exists in Cardiff west, where a real need exists for the activities that the project intends carrying out. The closure of a community meeting place in the area just increased the need for the project.

During lockdown, the absence of an indoor meeting place prompted the introduction of activities that could safely be conducted outdoors. These included paired walking and accompanied allotment activities, the latter proving of real value, providing an opportunity for therapeutic support for many. Social isolation became a problem for many during the lockdown and this was not restricted to those in the membership. The level of anxiety and depression within the community increased significantly.

A number of groups who are seeking space to restart activities (post Covid) or indeed extend their existing activity base, have joined with Mens Sheds in making a C.A.T. request and the application is currently under consideration. The combined project would provide upgraded sports facilities, a music room to accommodate a community choir and a dementia choir and also accommodation for the introduction of a horticultural group. A workshop would also be incorporated into the development which would serve as a base for woodcraft and metal craft activities. This space would also provide facilities for a local kitchen garden project that would benefit the local community.

There has long existed a need for a place where “carers” could meet up for much needed respite with no cost/low cost refreshments provided. Since the application was made, a number of other groups have expressed an interest in becoming included in sharing the new facilities.

Were the application to be successful, Mens Sheds, with a more community focussed Trustee team, would seek to develop an effective Community Cohesion and Resilience Plan.