

After a traumatic end to our first year at Allertonshire school, with closing due to the Covid pandemic, the break in and theft at the school, and our forced decision to vacate the premises we began a new era.

The trustees searched the area at length with very little in the way of feasible premises until Larry made an approach to the Auction Mart. We must have hit them at the right time because they had recently decided that furniture sales were no longer profitable and ceasing those activities left an area of former cow byre vacant. The agreement we came to was that we take a 5 year lease with the option to roll on at the end of it. They gave us 6 months rent free and 12 months a 75% rent.

Those of you who were here at the beginning or have seen our progress slide show will appreciate the size of task we faced. We needed to

- concrete the slurry trough running the length of the floor
- Scrape down, clean and paint all the walls and roof beams
- Insulate the whole roof
- Install New Lighting and electrical power supplies
- Install a heating system
- Build a toilet, kitchen and provide water supply and drainage

And all in a time of lockdown regulations, social distancing with many of our members isolating for health reasons.

I am sometimes amazed and proud of the efforts of our members to rise above all that and in a year of two-days a week, 5 man working parties, accomplish every one of our objectives.

The result is, that whilst we were not able to operate in the manner we had in 2019 we are now ready for 2021 with a fully operating shed and ready for the future.

### **So what is our future ?**

We have two main aims, **Firstly** to make this a safe, friendly place to meet others and pursue old interests. I am particularly heartened by the number of old members who have returned after lockdown, affirming that for them we are doing something right.

**Secondly** we need to achieve a sound financial position. Our move to these premises was largely funded by a lottery grant, and a lot of our own labour. **But** – we need to ensure that we are financially self-sufficient ongoing.

Alan's financial report will explain the current state of our finances, which is pretty sound. – As you know we all pay a membership fee, most of which is spent on insurance cover, fire safety equipment and first aid, all of which we hope we will never need.

We also pay our subs each day we attend and that has to cover rent, electricity, gas, consumables etc which at present we nearly cover, but we are still on the 75% rent.

We don't want to increase fees, so the obvious solution is to increase headcount. I think 15 to 18 is the most we want to have at any one time although it depends on the mix of workshop and craft room projects.

You may have heard that the Northallerton Computer club, which used to meet at Zion church, has now become an associate part of the Men's Shed and they now meet here on Tuesday afternoons thus bringing in a little more revenue to help with energy costs.

Additionally it is hoped that we can start a Ladies day on a Friday, again they will become a part of the Men's Shed and operate the same way as we do on Mondays and Thursdays.

If we are successful with this we will become truly viable, but let us not forget that there are opportunities to make a small amount of money with the sale of items we can make and I hope some of you will be forthcoming with ideas and skills to help us to do that.

Thanks largely to Chris Riley, we have been very successful over the last two years, in attracting grants and donations for projects and equipment. On the assumption that this continues, I'm sure some of you will come up with ideas on how to spend the money so feel free to write them on the chalk board in the workshop.

Continuity is not just about the shed it is also about its members. Finding projects seems easy at the start but with time we all start to run out of ideas. So look around see what other guys are doing and if you fancy a go at something they are doing, don't feel too shy to talk to them about it.

Finally the success of this Shed depends on having day supervisors who can look after the day to day operations. It is not too onerous if plenty of us are willing to share the load, so if you feel that you would be able to please talk to one of the trustees.