

Governance Review: Men's Shed Blaenau Gwent Board of Trustees (April 2024 - November 2025)

1.0 Introduction: The Establishment of a Formal Governance Framework

Following its registration as a charity, the Men's Shed Blaenau Gwent Board of Trustees began the foundational work of creating a formal governance structure. The initial trustee meetings served a critical strategic function, establishing the fundamental operational protocols and decision-making processes for the newly constituted organization. This period marks the board's essential transition from an informal working group to a structured and accountable body, a prerequisite for long-term sustainability and regulatory compliance.

The first official trustee meeting on April 10, 2024, was a pivotal moment in this transition. The proceedings demonstrate a pragmatic approach to establishing initial governance, with the board making several key decisions to guide its immediate operations.

Foundational Governance Decisions (April 2024)

- **Volunteer Travel Compensation:** The board agreed to a standard mileage rate of 25p per mile for volunteers using personal vehicles for charity-related travel.
- **Meeting Venues:** A flexible approach to meeting locations was adopted, with the Blaina community hub, the Shed itself, and a trustee's home (Howard's house) identified as potential venues.
- **Initial Fundraising and Activity Ideas:** Early strategic discussions focused on community engagement and income generation, with ideas including selling items made at the Shed, creating a "Dog cafe" to attract visitors, participating in the Waunlwyd summer fayre, and organizing a sponsored walk.

These initial decisions established a baseline for the board's operational procedures and demonstrated an early focus on both fiscal stewardship and community engagement. From this starting point, the trustees began the process of codifying their meeting protocols to ensure more effective and equitable governance.

2.0 The Development of Board Meeting Protocols

A board's codification of its meeting protocols is a primary indicator of its transition from an operational to a fiduciary mindset. Such structures are essential for ensuring that deliberations are productive, decisions are transparent, and all trustees have an equal opportunity to contribute. This section analyses the board's deliberate evolution from informal, flexible arrangements to a formalised set of procedures for conducting its meetings.

The timeline of decisions related to meeting frequency and scheduling illustrates a responsive and pragmatic approach to developing this structure:

- **April 2024:** During the inaugural trustee meeting, the frequency, location, and timing of future meetings were left "TBC," allowing for flexibility as the new board established its operational rhythm.
- **October 2024:** The board resolved to hold meetings on a monthly basis. The specific date and time were initially arranged on an ad-hoc basis to determine the most suitable schedule for all members.

- **February 2025:** A formal schedule was adopted, with the board resolving to meet on the "First Thursday of every month" at 1:00 PM at The Shed.
- **April 2025:** Demonstrating procedural flexibility, the board agreed to change the regular meeting date to the "2nd Thursday of every month" to accommodate a trustee's availability and ensure their continued participation.

In addition to scheduling, the board formalized standards for conduct during its October 19, 2024 meeting, adopting a clear set of rules to cultivate a respectful and efficient decision-making environment.

Meeting Etiquette Rules (Adopted October 19, 2024)

- All present are to be fully respected at all times.
- Members are entitled to their views, and this must be respected.
- Outbursts, arguments, or any other disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated.
- The chair will indicate who is to speak.
- Only one person may speak at a time.
- Members wishing to speak must raise their hand (or use another agreed-upon signal).
- Contributions must be concise and to the point.

Further enhancing its commitment to shared accountability, the board also decided on October 19, 2024, that each trustee would chair the meeting for one rotation. The stated rationale was "To allow each member to experience the complexities of chairing a meeting," indicating a focus on collective development and distributed leadership. These codified procedures provided the necessary structure for the board to effectively allocate and oversee specific trustee duties.

3.0 Evolution of Trustee Roles and Responsibilities

The clear allocation and clarification of roles are fundamental to effective governance, ensuring accountability and leveraging the unique skills of each board member. This section traces the board's journey from assigning broad operational tasks at its inception to defining specific leadership positions and methodically addressing personnel changes. This progression reflects a maturing understanding of the strategic requirements of the organization.

The board's first meeting on April 10, 2024, established an initial framework for distributing operational duties among the trustees.

Initial Allocation of Responsibilities (April 10, 2024)

Responsibility	Assigned Trustee(s)
Booking Speakers	David Stevens
Booking Day Trips	Tracey Finch & Howard Davies
Meeting Notes	Shane Peters & Tracey Finch
Refreshments	Alan Sced & Byron Booth

Health & Safety	Howard Davies & Rob York
Website & Social Media	David Finch, Howard Davies, Tracey Finch
Finance	Byron Booth, Rob York, David Finch

Over the subsequent months, the board refined this structure, formalising key leadership roles and adapting to changes in its composition.

Creation of a Project Leadership Role

On August 14, 2024, the board appointed Dave Finch as "Head of All Projects." This significant decision centralized project oversight and streamlined decision-making. The responsibilities assigned to this strategic role included:

- Deciding on new projects.
- Overseeing the procurement of all equipment, materials, and tools.
- Selecting a lead for each specific project.
- Overseeing fundraising efforts.
- To be Informed of all Shed Business current or possible or future.

Transition in Financial Oversight

The role of Treasurer saw a significant transition during this period. The minutes from March 6, 2025, confirm that the board formally accepted the resignation of Byron Booth as Treasurer. Subsequently, the minutes from the September 11, 2025 meeting identify Robert York as the new treasurer.

Changes to Bank Signatories

Reflecting the change in the Treasurer role, the board passed a resolution on March 6, 2025, to update its bank mandate. This resolution removed Byron Booth as a signatory and added trustees Howard Davies and Shane Peters as co-signatories alongside the existing signatory, David Finch.

This progression in defining and adapting roles culminated in a forward-looking agenda item on November 13, 2025, for a "Trustee Roles & Skills Assessment," signalling the board's maturation towards a more strategic oversight of its own composition and capabilities as it navigated significant internal challenges.

4.0 Analysis of Significant Governance Events and Resolutions

Internal challenges, particularly those involving leadership transitions, serve as critical tests of a board's governance framework, resilience, and commitment to due process. This section provides an objective review of two significant events that occurred in March 2025—the tendered resignation of the Chair and the formal resignation of the Treasurer—and analyses the board's methodical response to each.

4.1 Chair's Resignation Tender and Reversal (March 2025)

The agenda for the March 6, 2025 meeting included an item for the selection of a new chairperson, prompted by the incumbent Chair, David Finch, offering to step down. In a candid explanation provided in the agenda, Mr. Finch stated his decision was made "Following several recent

conversations/confrontations regarding my attitude and lack of listening skills... I do not welcome the conflicting attitude and constant uphill struggle with others."

During the meeting, Mr. Finch formally requested the board accept his resignation. The minutes record that the trustees discussed the matter, agreed his reasons were valid, and in a demonstration of confidence, subsequently "requested that Mr Finch continue his duties as chair, to which he accepted." This motion passed unanimously, resolving the issue and reaffirming the board's support for his leadership.

4.2 Resignation of the Treasurer (March 2025)

At the same March 6, 2025 meeting, a letter from trustee Byron Booth was read to the board, outlining his issues with the running of the club. The board discussed the points raised and, while finding "a degree of validation" in some of them, concluded that they did not negatively affect the current operations of the organization. The letter was interpreted as offering Mr. Booth's resignation. To ensure clarity, the board documented three motions to accept his resignation as a trustee and treasurer, all of which were recorded as passing unanimously. The minutes conclude by noting the board's sentiment: "It was with disappointment that the trustees accepted Mr Booths resignation."

These governance events had direct operational consequences. The minutes from September 11, 2025, six months after the Treasurer's departure, highlight an urgent need to resolve issues with obtaining bank cards for the new treasurer and other trustees. The record explicitly states that the "delay is impacting greatly on the running of the Shed," underscoring the critical link between stable governance and smooth day-to-day operations. The board's ability to navigate these internal challenges paved the way for a renewed focus on maturing its governance practices.

5.0 Maturation Towards Strategic Governance and Policy

As a charity board develops, its focus naturally evolves from addressing immediate operational needs to cultivating long-term strategic oversight. This shift is essential for ensuring sustainability, compliance, and mission alignment. This section examines key milestones that demonstrate the Men's Shed board's deliberate and progressive move towards a more mature and strategic governance model.

The following actions provide clear evidence of this maturation:

- **Adoption of Formal Policies:** In direct response to the leadership challenges addressed during the same meeting, the board took the critical step on March 6, 2025, of formally adopting the "process of grievance resolution set out by the charity commission." This decision demonstrates a reflexive and maturing governance response, turning a moment of internal crisis into an opportunity to build more robust and compliant organisational infrastructure.
- **Investment in Trustee Development:** The board demonstrated a commitment to strengthening its collective capability by prioritising professional development. An agenda item for "Training for trustees" was set for the September 11, 2025 meeting, followed by an item for "Feedback from Trustee Training" on November 13, 2025. This investment in trustee development signals a proactive posture towards enhancing the board's effectiveness, a hallmark of high-performing governance bodies.
- **Focus on Strategic Direction:** The agenda for the November 13, 2025 meeting included an item to discuss the organization's "Vision & Mission." This marks a significant pivot from

debating individual projects and operational tasks to defining the charity's core purpose and long-term goals, which is a foundational element of strategic governance.

This deliberate progression—from establishing compliant policies to investing in board capabilities and defining strategic direction—illustrates a governing body that is actively maturing and positioning the charity for future success.

6.0 Conclusion: Summary of Governance Evolution

The period from April 2024 to November 2025 was a formative one for the Men's Shed Blaenau Gwent Board of Trustees. The available records document a clear and positive trajectory of governance maturation, commencing with the establishment of foundational operational protocols upon achieving charity status. The board systematically developed its procedures, moving from ad-hoc arrangements to a structured framework for meetings, conduct, and distributed leadership. It navigated significant leadership challenges, including the resignation of a key officer and the tendered resignation of its Chair, with due process and transparency. Critically, these experiences served as a catalyst for a discernible shift toward more strategic oversight, evidenced by the adoption of formal policies, investment in trustee training, and a new focus on defining the organization's vision and mission. The board's journey during this period reflects a resilient and developing governance body committed to building a sustainable and effective organization.

Statement of accounts

This statement of accounts summarizes the income and expenditure for **Men's Den / Men's Shed Blaenau Gwent** between **1st March 2024** and **1st April 2025**.

During this period, the organisation transitioned its primary banking from **Lloyds Bank** to **Virgin Money**. The total recorded income across these accounts was **£27,656.77**, while total expenditure was **£12,069.60**.

Income and Expenditure Summary

Month / Period	Income (Money In / Credits)	Expenditure (Money Out / Debits)	Primary Bank
March 2024	£417.50	£1,611.85	Lloyds
April 2024	£0.00	£893.23	Lloyds
May 2024	£338.00	£2,750.96	Lloyds
June 2024	£500.00	£657.46	Lloyds
July 2024	£1,658.35	£1,790.33	Lloyds
August 2024	£220.00	£895.85	Lloyds
September 2024	£330.80	£564.47	Lloyds
October 2024	£0.00	£273.00	Lloyds
November 2024	£1,890.00	£278.29	Lloyds
December 2024	No Data Provided	No Data Provided	N/A
January 2025	£20,429.97*	£350.00	Virgin Money
February 2025	£1,859.95	£550.80	Virgin Money
March 2025	£12.20	£1,137.86	Virgin Money
1st April 2025	£0.00	£315.50	Virgin Money
TOTALS	£27,656.77	£12,069.60	

Note: The January 2025 "Income" includes approximately **£13,698.96 in internal transfers from the Lloyds account and **£6,225.00** from David Finch's Revolut account to consolidate funds into the new Virgin Money account.*

Key Financial Observations

- **Major Income Credits:** Significant external funding included a **£1,000 grant** from GAVO in July 2024, a **£500 donation** from Tai Calon in June 2024, and **£1,850.00** in total payments from Blaenau Gwent CBC for Warm Hub funding in November 2024.

- A further **£1,800.00** was received from Blaenau Gwent CBC in February 2025. This was for Three projects with Family First to be provided during 2025.
- **Significant Expenditures:** Major costs during this period included **£1,200.00** to S. Wilstead in May 2024, a **£730.00** payment to JP Print in late May 2024, and **£435.36** for insurance in March 2025.
- **Account Transition:** The organisation effectively ceased using the Lloyds account by the end of 2024, moving a closing balance of **£648.96** into the Virgin Money account on 29th January 2025.
- **Final Balance:** At the close of transactions on 1st April 2025, the organization held a balance of **£19,947.96** in its Virgin Money account.

Based on the provided bank statements from Lloyds Bank, Virgin Money, and Revolut, here is a detailed list of the specific suppliers and individuals paid between **1st March 2024** and **1st April 2025**.

Facilities, Rent, and Utilities

The primary recipient of payments in this category was the local community sports hub where the organisation is based.

- **Blaina Community Sports Club:** Regular monthly payments for rent, "Men's Den" activities, and utilities (electric/water).

Construction, Hardware, and Tools

Payments were made to various builders' merchants and specialist fitting suppliers.

- **Screwfix:** Frequent purchases for hardware and equipment.
- **Philip Jones Timber:** Payments for timber supplies.
- **Gwillim Builders Merchants:** Building supplies.
- **DD Concrete Brynmawr:** Concrete supplies.
- **B&Q:** General hardware and marketplace items.
- **LB Supplies Ltd:** Specialist building supplies.
- **Brynmawr DIY:** Hardware.
- **DIY Centre Abertillery:** Tools and supplies.
- **Techtronic Industries:** Equipment.
- **Pipe Dream Fitting:** Plumbing or pipe fittings.

General Retail, Supplies, and Craft Materials

The organisation frequently used major retailers for project materials and operational items.

- **The Range:** Frequent purchases for general supplies.

- **B&M:** Supplies from the Brunswick, Cwmbran, and Weston-Super-Mare branches.
- **Home Bargains:** Retail supplies.
- **Poundland Ltd:** General retail items.
- **The Works:** Craft and stationery supplies.
- **eBay & Amazon:** Online marketplaces for various parts and equipment.
- **Lidl GB:** Grocery and household items.
- **Asda:** Groceries and superstore supplies.
- **Proper Job Worle H:** Retail Tools & supplies.
- **CDS T/A Wilko.com:** Retail supplies.

Professional Services, Printing, and Insurance

- **JP Print:** Printing services.
- **Wessex Insurance B:** Insurance premiums paid in March 2024 and March 2025.
- **S. Wilstead:** Professional Electrical services.
- **Bryan Alexander:** Professional Transport services.
- **Valleys Reclamation Lt:** Specialist reclamation services.
- **Regenerate:** CCTV Services.
- **Tristan Holt P:** Computer repairs & upgrade Payment via SumUp.

Individuals

Payments to individuals generally included reimbursements for expenses or specific services rendered.

- **David Finch:** Frequent reimbursements for project-related expenses.
- **Tracey Finch:** Reimbursements for Men's Den supplies and expenses.
- **Alyson Dale:** Payments for Waunlydd Events
- **Kevin Lewis:** Payments for Men's Den supplies. T-Shirts/Hoodies Etc.
- **Sara Morgan:** One-time payment in March 2024. Refreshments

Other Expenditures

- **Munchies Pizza:** Food for members/meetings.
- **Greggs:** Minor food expenses. Refreshments
- **Central Blaina:** Local store purchases. Refreshments
- **Ascona Enterprise:** Fuel and station purchases.
- **Weston Hospicecare:** Donation or shop purchase. Games Etc.

- **Alize:** Non-GBP transaction for supplies. Puzzle.

Here is a summary of the total amounts spent with these specific suppliers?

Between **1st March 2024 and 1st April 2025**, the total expenditure recorded across the organisation's accounts was **£12,069.60**. The following list provides a summary of the total amounts paid to the most frequent suppliers and individuals within that specific date range.

Major Suppliers and Service Providers

Supplier / Individual	Total Amount	Description
Blaina Community Sports Club	£2,750.00	Monthly rent and utility payments for "The Shed".
S. Wilstead	£1,200.00	Professional services payment made in May 2024.
JP Print	£1,067.00	Printing services across three separate payments.
Philip Jones Timber	£913.03	Timber and building supplies.
Wessex Insurance B	£860.73	Annual insurance premiums for 2024 and 2025.
Bryan Alexander	£462.00	Professional services payment in March 2024.

Retail and Hardware Totals

- **Screwfix: £261.24** was spent across eight transactions for hardware and tools between April and November 2024.
- **The Range: £244.96** in total was spent on general project supplies.
- **B&M: £200.00** was spent across various branches for retail supplies, including a significant £115.00 purchase in March 2025.
- **Home Bargains: £98.58** was spent on miscellaneous items.

Individual Reimbursements

These payments typically represent reimbursements for materials purchased on behalf of the organisation.

- **David Finch / David Robert Finch: £1,685.28** was reimbursed to David Finch for project expenses, including a **£315.50** transfer on the final day of the period, 1st April 2025.
- **Tracey Finch / Tracey Jan Finch: £297.64** in total reimbursements for "Men's Den" supplies and project costs.

These internal transfers should no longer be needed as the Cooperative bank has now supplied bank cards for the trustees that needed them. Where as in the past personal accounts were used to purchase goods online, needing reimbursements from Men's Den Accounts.

Note on internal transfers: Large sums transferred to David Finch's Revolut account (e.g., £5,000 in December 2023) or from Lloyds to Virgin Money (e.g., £13,698.96 in January 2025) have been **excluded** from these expenditure totals as they are internal movements of funds rather than payments to external suppliers.