



Lislea Men's Shed AGM – Chair report 2025.

Wednesday 25th June 2025.

I am delighted to report, in my final submission as chairman of Lislea Men's Shed that we have had another positive and progressive year in which we have built upon the last number of years progress. Our new shed has become a landmark for other sheds where we have helped a number outside our immediate area to develop. We as a group, I believe are in a good place, opportunities are there which we will further build upon and develop.

To highlight some of the activities we were involved in during the past 12 months, in no particular order;

- Visit to Croke Park September 2024, a few months after Armagh winning the all-Ireland championship.
- Visit to Kilmainham Gael, in Dublin, November 2024.
- Morning with Rafferty Solicitors, Newry discussing Wills, Power of Attorney etc.
- Christmas lunch at Flagstaff lodge, Newry.
- Community Quiz night – December 2024.
- Stormont visit by several of our shedders, Feb 2025.
- First Aid course sponsored by Groundworks.
- Palates classes over 6 weeks during January and February 2025.
- Cookery lessons over 6 weeks supervised by Eileen Mc Givern, sponsored by Southern Health Trust.
- Sam Maguire visited the Shed in January 2025.
- Men's Health day exclusively at Lislea Men's Shed.

In addition to above, several of our group provide "Good morning calls" each Monday morning. This, to vulnerable and isolated people in the community. From last year where this activity was conducted outside the "shed" we have set the shed up with Laptops, internet etc to facilitate these calls which are organised by the Confederation of Community groups.

Sadly in January 2025 we lost our president, Tom Crawley. Tom was 92 years young at his passing. Tom had been president of our shed virtually since its creation. During his tenure he was the "go to" person at many of our events. As a father and grandfather he was respected throughout the whole community and will be missed by many. I am pleased to report that we supported Tom's wider family during the time of his passing, may I record again for his family our sincere appreciation for all that he brought to Lislea Men's Shed. May he rest in peace.

Also during this period our valued member Paul Murphy, lost his beloved partner Niamh Mc Keown. As with the passing of our President Tom, I am pleased to say that we supported Paul before during and after Niamh's passing. May she rest in peace. A quiz night was organised during November (2024).

During the past four years we have moved from part use of Lislea community centre to our present site which includes Shed with kitchen, meeting space, Internet, Solar panels for energy, interactive internet screen, workshop, polytunnel and storage container. With a fantastic amount of effort from everyone this all has been brought together to facilitate the physical and mental wellbeing of our members. Our main meeting day is Wednesday morning, with Gardeners meeting on Friday and Saturday afternoons. Because of the Monday morning "Good morning calls" our walking opportunities have become more limited, that is a topic that is currently under review as the weekly walk is as important for its physical

activity as the coffee / lunch break afterwards. Other activities such as woodwork are facilitated on an “as and when” basis.

In mentioning all of above I take this opportunity to offer my thanks to a specific number of our officers, To Graham Smith, our fundraiser. Without his detailed hard work we simply would not exist in the way we do today. Very many hours have been spent researching and applying for grants, thankfully with success, which has allowed the shed to develop.

To Gerard Quinn, our treasurer. Gerard’s monthly presentations along with his attention to detail has enabled the shed too work successfully within clear financial boundaries.

To Pat O Hanlon, our secretary. His efficient note taking and recording has provided an essential record of our meetings and activities.

To Joe Brady, our head gardener, Our landscape is the envy of other sheds and the wider community.

To John Mc Elroy our vice chair, whose experience, dedication and contacts has been vital to ensure we are informed of all relevant community activities.

Whilst each of the above have specific roles, I would also record that every one of our members plays a vital role which enables the shed to run efficiently and successfully. That applies whether they are founding or new members, each brings experience from their life background which adds value to the group.

In the last year we have added a new member, Liam Downey, Liam is most welcome and has settled in very well adding a variety of different skills to our group.

Gerard Markey has sponsored a beautiful polished stone sign now mounted adjacent to the perimeter of the shed.

The function of the men’s Shed is to support physical and mental wellbeing for men. To this end all of our activities, meetings etc are geared to endeavour to achieve this. Of course this all needs to be funded, it is worth (again) pointing out that in Northern Ireland, there is no government support for Men’s Sheds, unlike Sheds in the Irish Republic where significant financial support is available to sheds to cover costs of heating and lighting. For our funding we have traditionally organised a plant sale and coffee morning combined in the local community centre. This year we added a community day where we invited the local community to visit and offer much needed financial support.

Our shed and the site were developed exclusively by Joe and Moira Doherty and family. Without their very considerable support Lislea Men’s Shed would be a poor relation of what we have today. In closing, I would like to place on record our thanks to the Doherty family, also to thank all the members of Lislea Men’s Shed for their support to me over the last number of years. I firmly believe we have established a positive environment for men to share their experiences for the good of each other.

Martin Darling.