

Mens Shed

Ageing research has shown that as men grow older they are less adept at maintaining friendships and are resultantly prone to being socially isolated from their peers. Currently supported by the Big Lottery Fund “People and Communities” project, the North Belfast Men’s Shed currently reach out to over 50 local men and provide a space for them to meet up and participate in practical activities in the company of other men.

These practical activities range from arts and crafts, woodwork, and gardening, as well as walking tours and regular excursions to places of local interest. In recent times the men have worked to help supplement the cost of some of these activities by making and selling goods in their shed workshop.



What support has NBEI provided?

Although the Mens Shed is currently reliant on core funding from Big Lottery, its programme manager was keen to explore how it could expand a small scoping study that was completed alongside the (North Belfast Social Enterprise Hub) which focussed on moving the Shed towards a **sustainable social enterprise model**

NBEI responded to this request by procuring the services of a consultant who have worked with Mens Shed to develop a robust **business plan**. This work has been completed in collaboration with a special steering group of men who volunteered to help the programme manager drive this part of the Shed project forward

NBEI have also supported the Shed programme manager in their search to locate a new premises that is fit for purpose and can house its growing membership base. This scoping exercise was also asked to identify properties that were around 3000 sqft, had on site car parking and occupied a bus route from Belfast

How has NBEI support helped and who has benefited so far?

- During April 2018, the Men’s shed moved into its new premises on Edenderry Industrial Estate. This has provided members with additional space that is also better suited to the projects needs, especially in terms of workshop space and accessibility;
- Participants of the shed have been regularly involved manufacturing ‘buddy benches’. Some of these benches have been sold privately to help generate funds to support the shed, whilst others have been donated to various local schools;
- The programme manager of the Men’s Shed also took part in the NBEI Digital sales and marketing programme. This support helped the project expand its online presence through the development of a Facebook page and a website. Increasing its online presence has helped to raise the profile of the project, shared its impact/outcomes with relevant stakeholders and also helped to recruit new members from the local area.