

**LDC Name:** North Tipperary Development Company

**Lot Number:** 22-1

**Title of Case Study:** Men's Sheds in North Tipperary: SICAP response to an emerging need and development of supports for the sector.

**Thematic Area (Engagement Strategies with SICAP Target Groups/Communities, Collaboration/, Goal 1/Goal 2 Project) :** Goal 1 Project

**Target Group:** Older People and Isolation

## Summary

This case study looks at a need/issue that became apparent mid-way through the SICAP Programme, the response of the Programme Implementer to address the issue, the supports that were delivered to meet the need, and the insights and learning that arose because of this engagement, about the nature and depth of the need.

In 2021, NTDC realised that a high number of Men's Sheds in the region had closed permanently in the preceding years. The PI moved to address this need by assigning a dedicated SICAP Project Worker to support Men's Sheds.

This case study looks at supports that were delivered by the newly assigned SICAP Sheds Support team to assist Sheds in North Tipperary, and more generally, the work that was undertaken to build the resilience of the sector. The case study also outlines the process that was used to identify the sustainability challenges experienced by Men's Sheds. Finally, the case study enumerates conclusions and recommendations of North Tipperary Men's Sheds and the NTDC SICAP Men's Sheds team, on changes that are required to support the future sustainability and development of the sector.

## **Case Study: Men's Sheds in North Tipperary:**

**SICAP response to an emerging need and development of supports for the sector.**

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## 1. Introduction

Since the first Mens Shed opened in Ireland in 2008 the Shed movement has grown exponentially and is now an integral part of many communities. The Sheds have been shown to benefit not just the men who participate, but also the communities in which they operate (Power et al., 2022). The value of Sheds has been quickly recognised by communities and there are currently 435 Sheds on the island, more Sheds per capita than any other country in the world.

However, in some ways, Men's Sheds have been a victim of their own success – the roll-out of structures to support the operation of Sheds has not kept pace with the grassroots establishment of Sheds themselves and over the last decade, many Sheds have closed for want of basic supports. We don't know the rate of attrition of Sheds in Ireland. While the number of Sheds currently operating is high (435), this gives no indication of the additional number of Sheds that were established but subsequently ceased to operate. In North Tipperary, 6 Mens Sheds closed permanently between 2016 and 2020. The following case study reviews how NTDC SICAP responded to this trend and the measures that were put in place to 1) reverse the trend and 2) promote development and long-term sustainability of the Shed sector in North Tipperary.

## 2. Context

*"In many Sheds you go to, you will find someone who will tell you that the Shed has saved their life"*

*Mike Jenn, President, UK Men's Sheds Association*

The benefits of participation in a Men's Shed are widely acknowledged and include mental, physical and social wellbeing, as well as a broad range of benefits to the community. The Men's Shed movement is growing rapidly in Ireland. As a concept, Men's Sheds are well recognised and valued in the community and broadly appreciated and supported, in general terms, by both the public and public/3rd sector agencies. However, translating all that goodwill into practical, targeted supports hasn't always followed and on the ground it transpires that running and maintaining a Shed is a significant undertaking on a voluntary basis, supports are lacking and Shed sustainability is an ongoing challenge.

At the heart of the question of Shed sustainability is the fact that ultimately, running a Shed is a complex and onerous undertaking being delivered by volunteers in their free time.

It may appear that the same could be said of many different community organisations, but on deeper analysis it becomes clear that Men's Sheds are different from other community groups in a number of significant ways (see section 4 for details). Sheds don't have any staff and are instead generally managed, organised and run by one or two volunteer leaders, typically working 20+ hours per week without pay. A question arises about the long-term sustainability of this organisational model and a pattern is frequently observed where a Shed leader becomes burned out, leaves the Shed and a little later the Shed closes.

In 2021, NTDC SICAP first observed the involved and demanding nature of running a Men's Shed and the consequent trend of Shed closures that was happening in North Tipperary. NTDC SICAP responded by creating a new (part-time) role of *SICAP Men's Groups Community Support Worker*. The remit of the role was twofold: to provide ongoing support to existing and new Sheds (and other Men's Groups) in the region, and secondly, to identify the sustainability challenges for Sheds that were causing the high failure rate, and to identify solutions to these challenges.

### 3. Process of engagement to identify the challenges of running a Men's Shed

A survey was undertaken with existing North Tipperary Sheds to identify challenges they were experiencing.

The SICAP Sheds team also engaged with the former leaders of Sheds in the region that have since closed, to build understanding of the reasons they no longer operate.

The SICAP Sheds team also engaged with the Shed community in the wider region, namely through participation in three networks:

A. The NTDC SICAP team initiated the ***Mid-west LDCs Men's Groups Development Network***, comprised of representatives from:

- North Tipperary Development Company
- South Tipperary Development Company
- Clare Local Development Company
- Offaly Local Development Company
- West Limerick Resources
- Ballyhoura Development Company
- PAUL Partnership Limerick

The objective of the network is to work collaboratively to develop and sustain vibrant Men's Sheds sectors in our regions.

The network focuses on two distinct elements within this objective:

- i. Development and sharing of best practice for Sheds, to maximise their chances of sustainability long-term.
- ii. How we as LDC workers can best support Sheds within our available resources

The network meets twice annually to share knowledge, experience and sometimes resources (e.g. training curricula).

B. In conjunction with South Tipperary Development Company (STDC), the NTDC SICAP Sheds team established the ***County Tipperary Men's Sheds Network***. This network meets in person twice annually for workshops and meetings related to Shed management and governance. The network also has a facebook page administered jointly by Project Workers from NTDC and STDC (<https://www.facebook.com/countytipperarymenssheds>).

C. A further network was established for the Shed leaders from North Tipperary. The ***North Tipp Men's Sheds Network*** communicates and collaborates via Whatsapp on an ongoing basis and runs periodic meetups.

The *North Tipp Men's Sheds Network* also has a "***Sustainability Group***", comprised of the SICAP Project worker and Shed leaders with a particular interest in development of the Shed sector in North Tipperary. The group was established to look specifically at the issue of Shed sustainability, weaknesses with the existing operational model and possible solutions.

As a result of the work of the *Sustainability Group*, a joint study is being undertaken by NTDC SICAP and the Technological University of the Shannon "to identify and quantify the

administrative/organisational support needs of Men's Sheds, referring specifically to the Men's Sheds in North Tipperary".

A literature review was undertaken to look for published academic research on Shed sustainability. Little research was discovered, apart from Glasgow University's 2021 *Sheds for Sustainable Development Project* (Kelly, Steiner, Teasdale & Mason) which focused on "supporting Men's Sheds in Scotland to be both financially and socially sustainable".

The 2022 University College Cork study, *"Mens Sheds and the Sustainable Development Goals: Local Responses to Global Challenges"* (Power, O'Callaghan, Kenny & O'Connor), also references some of the challenges of running a Shed.

#### 4. Challenges identified.

The conclusion of the Glasgow University *Sheds for Sustainable Development Project* (2021) is that "as volunteer-led organisations... Men's Sheds sustainability... can be ***precarious***"

The study identified the most prominent challenges for sheds as the **acquisition of suitable premises**, ensuring **financial sustainability**, their ability to **recruit new members**, and dealing with members with **complex health needs**.

The study recommends that "Sheds would benefit from external support and assistance with such tasks."

From engagement conducted by NTDC SICAP with Sheds in North Tipperary, the 3 primary challenges identified are **premises, funding and the volume of work involved in running a Shed**.

##### 4.1. Premises

*"many [Sheds] struggle with inadequate premises and insecurity of tenure"*

(Power et al., 2022)

A Men's Shed needs its own dedicated premises. Due to the nature of the project activities that take place in a Shed, it is generally not possible for a Shed to be established in a shared space.

A Men's Shed needs access to a premises at zero or nominal cost. Securing a premises at commercial market rates is not a realistic option for Sheds.

A Shed therefore needs to secure a building (or a site for a building) either as a donation or from a community or public sector organisation.

Tom Cullen of Thurles Mens Shed argues that *"Government Departments, such as the Office of Public Works, should engage with Local Authorities to facilitate the use of vacant lands and buildings, where possible, to support Men's Sheds."*

Nenagh Mens Shed is currently in unsuitable accommodation and has been actively trying to secure a premises for over two years. Ted Knight, Chair of Nenagh Men's Shed (NMS) attests to the impact that NMS could be having in the town - *"with a proper premises, Nenagh Men's Shed could have much more impact... it could be supporting far more men in lots of different ways...a proper Mens Shed would be so beneficial not just for the town but the surrounding areas"*.

#### **4.2. Funding**

A significant challenge for Sheds is the precariousness of their finances due to not having secure access to funding. Sheds cannot plan on a long-term basis because they do not have a long-term source of funding. The reality is that some of the North Tipperary Sheds would have to close at short notice if a funding stream could not be identified in any particular year.

The running costs of the Sheds in North Tipperary are c. €2500/Shed/annum. Sheds are not cash rich as they generally operate on a donation basis only, to avoid cost becoming a barrier to participation for their members. Most Sheds do not have €2,500 on deposit and are therefore dependent on availability of grant funding to cover their costs at year-end. For the last few years, luckily, grant funding has become available but there are no guarantees in this regard and existing Sheds have no idea whether or not they will receive funding next year.

Furthermore, community grants are generally for capital expenditure only and typically don't cover operational running costs. Since Covid, some community grants have included operational costs as eligible for funding but for how long this will continue is unknown.

*"This Shed was in grave danger of closure in September 2020, at the height of the Covid pandemic, with a bank balance of €39.59c. ...our continued sustainability was in jeopardy. Our need for guaranteed funding to survive is a must, we do not want to have to face that crisis again"*

*Tom Cullen, Thurles Men's Shed*

#### **4.3. The volume of work involved in running a Shed.**

At present many volunteer Shed leaders report that they spend over 20 hours per week on Shed business. This operational model is probably not sustainable.

*"Some day I'd love to become a member of Mullinahone Men's Shed"*

*Christy Sheehan, Secretary & General day-to-day Manager, Mullinahone Men's Shed*

As well as the above three priority concerns for Sheds, several further challenges were also identified:

#### **4.4. Insurance**

As with other community groups, insurance is a significant concern for Sheds. Sheds however have the additional considerations of the high age profile of their members combined with their use of power tools and saws in a workshop environment. Also, despite persistent efforts, one of our Sheds has been unable to get clarity on the question of personal liability of committee members in the event of an accident in the Shed. Consequently, that Shed almost disbanded earlier this year when they failed to elect a committee due to fears around this question.

#### **4.5. Recruitment**

Recruitment is an ongoing challenge for Sheds in two separate areas:

##### **i. Membership Recruitment**

Men are hard to engage and most Sheds express the desire to have more members. Covid has had a significant impact on membership with most Sheds reporting reduced numbers since then. The high age profile of Shed members (the average age in one of our Sheds is 78) inevitably means that some members will, at some point, no longer be able to participate, therefore the Shed needs to be continually recruiting just to maintain its numbers.

##### **ii. Skills Recruitment**

Sheds struggle to recruit volunteers with the necessary skillsets (e.g. administration, governance, health & safety, insurance, fundraising, marketing, leadership, management, committee skills etc) both for the running of the Shed business and also to fill officer roles on the governing committee. The Glasgow University study found that Shed Members were *“mostly retired (some with their own health issues or disabilities) and did not want to take part in ‘work-like’ tasks that mimicked their time in employment”*

#### **4.6. Diverse and multi-faceted requirements of running a Shed**

*“Running a Shed is like running a community group, a health care service and a workplace all rolled into one”*

Gerry Duggan, Borrisokane Men’s Shed

A Mens Shed is *not* a healthcare initiative, it is first and foremost a community group (one with a specific set of features which have been found to be conducive to the support and engagement of men, e.g. autonomy, single gender, project-based activities). However, some Sheds have evolved to include features which place them in the realm of healthcare provision.

For some of its members, a Shed is *more* than a community activity and is in fact, a health intervention. While participation in any social or community group can be beneficial for mental health, the Shed offering differs in that many of its members are coming together, not primarily due to a shared hobby or interest, but rather because they find themselves with a lot of spare time on

their hands, and find connection, identity, value, support and also hobbies - in the Shed. Some Sheds are open several days per week providing supports to a membership of largely vulnerable individuals (vulnerable due to age, disability, mental health, social isolation etc), a reality which places some Sheds in the realm of de facto health service provision.

North Tipperary Sheds have received referrals from:

- GPs
- HSE Health Promotion
- HSE Community Mental Health
- Public Health Nurses
- Vincent de Paul
- Age Friendly
- Local Nursing homes
- Refugee Support Programs

*“He had a serious illness for some time before he passed away. But his GP said that the Shed extended his life by at least 3 years.”*

Widow of Thurles Men’s Shed member

One of the North Tipp Sheds has employed the specialist services of an Occupational Therapist and made modifications to their premises to facilitate their members, such as installation of ramps and disability toilets.

*“Sure if I wasn’t in the Shed, wouldn’t I be in a nursing home”*

*Tim Quinn, Thurles Mens Shed*

### **Workplace Considerations**

The operation of a workshop in a Men’s Shed brings with it a number of workplace-like considerations, such as having and maintaining the following:

- a. H & S Policy
- b. Safety Statement
- c. Equipment PAT test certificates
- d. Member H&S training certificates
- e. Member Manual Handling certificates
- f. Member Tools proficiency certificates
- g. Member Abrasive Wheels certificates

*“I go to bed worried about the Shed and when I wake up, I am still worried”*

Anonymous. Member of leadership of now closed North Tipperary Shed



## 5 SICAP Activities undertaken to support Men's Sheds in North Tipperary

The SICAP Men's Sheds Support Worker serves as a first point of contact for Shed leaders with any queries that arise in relation to the running of their Sheds. The support worker helps Sheds find funding streams and apply for grants, helps with promotion/marketing of Sheds, organises courses, sources tutors, liaises with various bodies on behalf of the Sheds etc

*"We can honestly say we would not be as functional today without the driving force that is [Support Worker] to help us navigate the roadway."*

Gerry Duggan, Borrisokane Mens Shed

*"Some of the Sheds would have ceased to exist without the advice, co-operation and assistance always freely available from NTDC."*

Michael O'Brien, Silvermines Men's Shed

*"[The Support Worker] has been an invaluable support to our shed, without his support we would not be a shed!"*

Bernie Lonnergan, Moycarky Borris Littleton Mens Shed

As well as supporting individual Sheds with day-to-day operations, the Sicap Sheds team also focused their resources on projects that benefit the North Tipperary Sheds collectively:

**5.1.** To reduce the administration workload of Sheds, a **Governance Folder** was compiled containing a document organisational system plus template documents for many documents common to all Sheds. The Governance Folder covers the following subject areas:

- 1) Admin
  - a. Constitution
  - b. Membership Forms
  - c. Social Media Consent Forms
  - d. Shed Ground Rules
  - e. Tax Clearance Details
  - f. PPN
  - g. IMSA
- 2) Health & Safety
  - a. H & S Policy
  - b. Safety Statement
  - c. Equipment PAT test certificates
- 3) Member Certificates
  - a. H&S training certificates
  - b. Manual Handling certificates
  - c. Tools proficiency certificates
  - i. Abrasive Wheels certificates
- 4) Insurance
- 5) Finance and Funding
- 6) Meetings and Minutes
- 7) Miscellaneous
  - a. County Network

The Governance Folder was issued to Sheds at the County Network meeting on March 16<sup>th</sup> 2023, at which a workshop on governance was also delivered. The Governance Folder is a live resource, and it is envisaged that it will be discussed, revised and updated periodically at our Network meetings.

## 5.2. PC's for Shed's Project

The SICAP Sheds team secured funding of €16,327 from Tipperary ETB's REACH programme to setup two PC workstations in each North Tipperary Men's Shed, as a measure to support digital literacy.

The Sheds provide a unique opportunity to promote digital literacy. The two primary factors that contribute to digital exclusion are not having access to a computer/internet and not having the confidence or experience to conduct ones business online. So, while individuals may for example have access to a computer in a library, they are still faced with the problem of not knowing how to use it.

The environment of a Men's Shed is one of camaraderie and mutual support where men come together to spend time in each other's company and help each other where they can. This peer support network provides a unique opportunity to promote digital literacy and the IT workstations have to date proven a valuable addition to the Sheds.

## 5.3. Shed Outreach Initiative

The SICAP Men's Shed team helped Thurles Men's Shed (TMS) to design and deliver its Outreach Initiative. The project was a collaboration between Thurles Men's Shed, NTDC SICAP, Tipperary ETB and Local Link.

*A Mobile Phone & Computer Skills Course* was organised for April 20<sup>th</sup> 2023, and men from the hinterland villages of *Kilcommon, Upperchurch & Drombane* were invited to become temporary members of TMS and participate in the course. Transport to TMS was provided free of charge by Local Link with pickup from participant's homes. The project was advertised in the respective parish newsletters and community leaders and the older persons agency Alone were asked to identify potential participants. The tutor for the course was provided by Tipperary ETB and the project was administered and co-ordinated by NTDC SICAP. Nine men from the target areas attended and three continued as members of TMS after the course ended. For further details see Appendix C -Outreach Initiative Assessment.



Participants on Thurles Men's Shed Outreach Project

#### 5.4. Regional post-Covid Reopening event for Sheds

In September 2021, in conjunction with our LDC partners from the *Mid-west LDCs Men's Groups Development Network*, the SICAP Sheds team (with assistance from Thurles Men's Shed) organised a regional event to encourage men to re-engage with their Sheds. The event was attended by Shedders from Tipperary, Limerick, Clare and Offaly. (See Program of events Appendix A)

#### 5.5. Best Practice Study Tour.

As two of our Sheds are in the process of seeking or setting up new premises, it was considered that it would be a valuable and worthwhile exercise to visit an example of a successful Shed with a premises that functions well to meet the needs of its members. Dooradoyle Men's Shed in Limerick city was established in 2022 and currently has 80 members. Rather than trying to repurpose an existing building for their Shed, Dooradoyle secured a small piece of land and installed temporary buildings. Their premises consists of 7 modular rooms linked together to form a rectangular space. The result is that they have a functional building with separate areas for their various activities and which, critically, is also a warm, bright, pleasant space to spend time in. The SICAP Sheds team arranged a study tour and 19 participants from Littleton and Nenagh visited Dooradoyle Mens Shed on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023.



Nenagh and Littleton Sheds study tour to Dooradoyle Men's Shed, Limerick.

#### 5.6. Establishment of an Emergency Fund

The North Tipperary Sheds, through their Sustainability Group have requested establishment of an emergency fund that could be availed of by Sheds if needed. The fund would be used by Sheds that don't have the resources to pay their operational costs in the event that grant funding does not become available in any particular year. The SICAP Sheds Support team has commenced engaging with companies in the region to investigate the possibility of them supporting this fund as part of their Environmental Social Governance (ESG) programs. The team is also engaging with philanthropic funds in this regard.

## 5.7. Tús Program

An initiative that we are currently embarking on but one in which we have great hope for the future is the roll-out of the Tús community work placement programme to Men's Sheds. Two of the major challenges experienced by Sheds are, absence of staff on the ground and secondly, a sense of isolation that can be felt by Shed leadership. Participation in the Tús program could help Sheds in both regards - not only would it provide 20 hours per week of staffing but also, the weekly visit of the Tús co-ordinator to participant Sheds could serve as a conduit between Shed leadership and the LDC.

To date we have not been able to find anyone among the membership of Sheds who was eligible to join the Tús programme (largely due to the high age profile of Shedders) but as the eligibility criteria of the Tús scheme recently changed to also include individuals on a disability payment, we are now hopeful of identifying suitable and eligible participants in the near future.

At a recent educational event for North Tipperary Sheds (Cloughjordan EcoVillage, Nov 14<sup>th</sup> 2023, copy Programme of Events Appendix D) we held a presentation on the Tús programme and the opportunity for Sheds to participate. Since then, a number of Sheds and individuals have expressed interest in exploring the idea further.

**5.8.** The SICAP Sheds Team established the **Roscrea Direct Provision Men's Shed** in Nov 2022. The Shed is co-ordinated and managed by the SICAP Sheds team as the membership in this case are generally not residing in the area long-term. The primary activity of the Shed has centered around a *Bike Repair Project*. As the Direct Provision Centre is one hour's walk from Roscrea town, having a bike is something that many of the men are particularly interested in. Funding of €3,023 was secured from Tipperary ETB's REACH Program for the purchase of tools, equipment and spare parts. The bikes for the project are collected locally by Roscrea Lions Club and the tutor for the bike maintenance training is provided by Tipperary ETB.

## 5.9. Recognition Awards

The SICAP Sheds team felt it was important to give public recognition to the dedication of individual Shed leaders.

The membership of each Shed was asked to nominate someone from their Shed for an award, in recognition of their work and dedication on behalf of the Shed.

At a recent event for North Tipperary sheds to mark International Men's Day (Nov 19<sup>th</sup>), the awards were presented to the Shed leaders.







North Tipperary Men's Sheds get-together for International Men's Day. Workshop on how Men's Sheds activities link to the Sustainable Development Goals.



Roscrea Direct Provision Men's Shed Bike Repair course



Silvermines Mens Shed Summer Trip 2022



Borrisokane Mens Shed Summer Trip 2023

## 6 Conclusions

There is strong consensus on the impact and value of Sheds and the benefits to men from participation in a Men's Shed (see Appendix E - summary from research study which enumerates these benefits). However significant challenges exist which threaten the long-term sustainability of Sheds. The imperative now is to identify how best to support existing Sheds to ensure their continued operation and to promote the development of new Sheds to increase the reach and scope of the sector.

*"We are only just touching the tip of the iceberg... the plan is to eventually have a Shed that every man and woman in the UK can turn to should they want or need one"*

*Mike Jenn, President UK Mens Sheds Association*

6.1. **Category Assignment** . Mens Sheds need to be recognised and acknowledged as a **distinct category** of community group and supported accordingly. Sheds are unique in their complexity due to features such as their need for a dedicated premises, the crossover of their activity into healthcare provision, the workplace type responsibilities pertaining to running a production workshop and other complexities outlined in Section 4 above.

6.2. **Funding:** Sheds need access to a ring-fenced, multi-year funding stream to cover operational costs. Under such a fund, support for operational expenditure would be a priority for Sheds over capital grant aid as the capital requirements of Sheds are relatively low and there already exist a number of funding streams that Sheds can access for capital support such as HSE National Lottery grants, Leader funding etc

6.3. **Administration/Organisational support:** The provision of workshops, training or signposting to information is not a sufficient level of support for Sheds – the Sheds need hands-on, boots-on-the-ground support of someone actually doing some of the work for them. This could take the form of, for example, Sheds being eligible to participate in the Community Services Programme, or as an interim measure, access to a certain number of hours of administration/organisational support each week.

NTDC has commenced a study in conjunction with Technological University of the Shannon, “to identify and quantify the administrative/organisational support needs of Men’s Sheds in North Tipperary”. The results of this study will help us to formulate the support package required to meet the admin support needs of Sheds and help the SICAP Sheds team to advocate for same.

6.4. **Ongoing project.** This project is a work in progress, and we will continue to work to develop supports for the Sheds in North Tipperary, within our available resources.

However, we feel that the question of how best to support the Shed sector needs to be considered at a national level and a strategy decided upon.

Power et al (2022) point to the emergence of different support models internationally:

*“In Denmark, unlike many other countries where sheds are developed at community grassroots level, men’s sheds were developed and funded as a national initiative with the specific purpose of improving the health and wellbeing of men of all ages over 18, and to tackle the unmet need for some socially isolated men to be able to reintegrate into society and participate more within their communities.”*

6.5. The **flexibility of the SICAP Programme** was an important factor in facilitating NTDC, the Programme Implementer, to respond in a timely manner by pivoting and realigning resources to meet the emerging need.

6.6. **Impact:** The number of Sheds in North Tipperary has gone from two to six since the creation of the SICAP Men’s Sheds Support Worker role. Most Sheds agree that they are in a relatively improved state of health in terms of their governance, activity levels and reduction of isolation felt by Shed leaders. However, several feel that their continued operation is still precarious due to the various challenges outlined in section 4.

## References

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Heinz, M & Houghton, F. Irish Men's sheds serving as therapeutic landscapes for older men

Psychiatry Research Communications Journal [www.sciencedirect.com/journal/Psychiatry-Research-Communications](http://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/Psychiatry-Research-Communications)

Mike Jenn interview <https://restless.co.uk/health/healthy-mind/mike-74-on-the-importance-of-mens-sheds-in-giving-men-purpose-identity-and-friendship/>

Mid-life Men Podcast "What about making a motorbike?" Mar 17<sup>th</sup> 2023 <https://www.mid-lifemen.com/what-about-making-a-motorbike-with-the-uk-mens-sheds-association/>



## Appendices

## Appendix A: Mid-west Regional Men's Sheds Gathering

### Mid-west Regional Men's Sheds Gathering, Sept 26<sup>th</sup> 2021

- 1) Bus from each county
- 2) Staggered arrival at Thurles Men's Shed from 11 to 12pm
  - a. Short tour of Thurles Men's Shed (purpose built facility)
- 3) Continue to Cabragh Wetlands (5km) for **Event & Walks**
  - a. Marquee
  - b. Music
  - c. Soup & Sandwiches
  - d. 1-2 pm 10 minute talk by representative from each region: (MC Michael O'Brien, Silvermines Men's Shed)
    - i. Thurles Men's Shed on
      1. how they financed their build and
      2. Thurles Shed as hub for other local Sheds
    - ii. Ennis Men's Shed on their successful recruitment drive
    - iii. Adare Men's Shed ref their Reeling in the Years Project
    - iv. Joe ref Men's Initiatives in Offaly
  - e. 2-3 pm Guided walks of Cabragh Wetlands
  - f. 3pm Tea/coffee biscuits
  - g. 3:30 depart

## Thurles Men's Shed Outreach

Thurles Men's Shed are inviting men from Drombane, Kilcommon & Upperchurch to try out participating in a Men's Shed and join us for the following free course

### **Mobile Phone & Basic Internet Skills Course**

*Learn how to get more out of your phone  
and how to do your business online*

*\*\*\*Free Door-to-door Transport with the Local Link Service\*\*\**



✓ Sessions over 6 weeks

✓ Thursday mornings 10:30 to 12:30

✓ Starts April 20th

#### **Location**

Thurles Men's Shed, Stradavoher, Thurles

Please contact Mike Ryan **087 222 6298**  
for further details



**Interim Assessment**  
**Shed Outreach Initiative**  
**Thurles Men's Shed (TMS)**

**8/5/23**

**INTRODUCTION**

As a consequence of an initiative by Michael Ryan, SICAP, NTDC to extend the 'Shed Experience' to areas where no shed currently exists, an Outreach Initiative in collaboration with TETB Community Ed Programme and the Local Link Bus Service is being piloted by TMS.

**OBJECTIVE**

To afford an opportunity to men in the Catchment Area of Upperchurch, Drombane and Milestone, to benefit from the Social Inclusion and Community support that a Shed has to offer.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

A TETB Community Ed Course was framed to give the men an opportunity to engage in a way that was:

- Socially Inclusive
- Group focussed
- Enjoyable

**OUTCOMES (to date)**

**Community Educational Model**

The TETB Course duration is 6(six) weeks and this report is submitted after Week 3.

One of the litmus test of the success of Community Ed. is recurring attendance. This Course has exceeded all expectations. Eoin Costelloe. Comm. Ed Coordinator and TETB Tutor, Catherine Ryan have framed the course around the individual. This approach is what makes Community Ed. more suited, as it is not constrained by syllabi or QQI certification.

**Take-up**

A small catchment area is being used in the current piloted scheme and the take-up has been very satisfactory.

Recurring attendance, at a percentage of 90%. is far greater than any TETB Course that TMS have participated in since its formation in 2014.

## CONCLUSION

It is expected that the Course will be extended beyond the 6 week duration to facilitate the learner.

It is the intention of the Shed to afford this group every opportunity to continue to participate in other shed activities.

Additionally, Moycarkey/Borris/Littleton Men's Shed (MBLMS) have invited TMS to join the next TETB funded Genealogy Course scheduled for autumn.

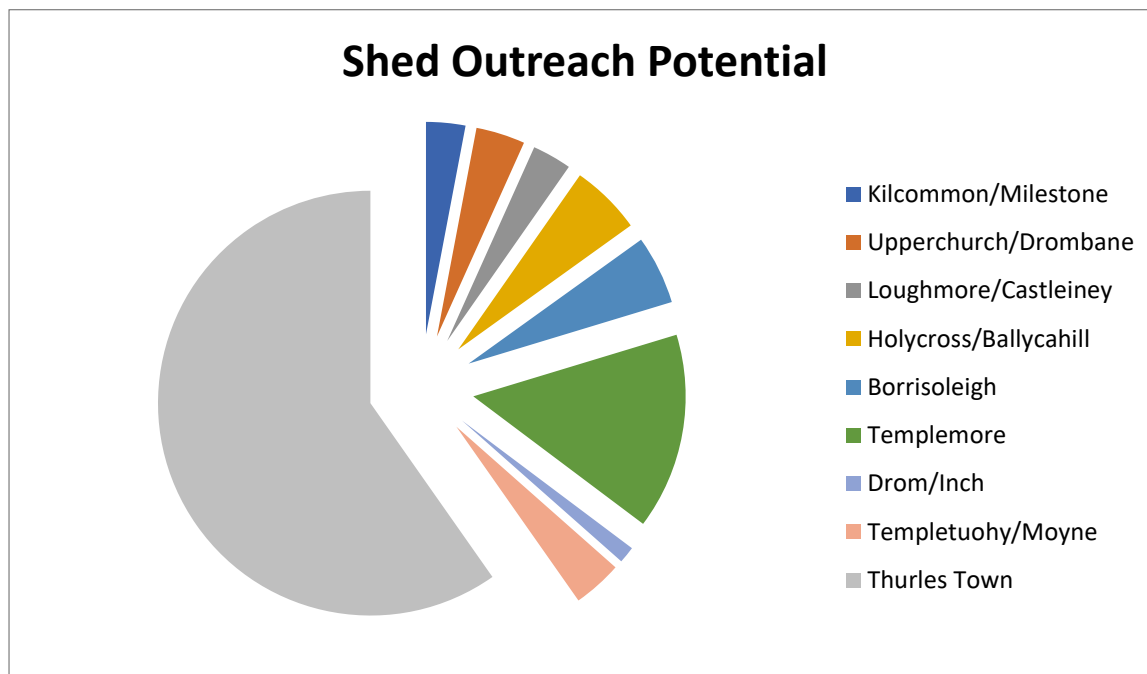
We are conscious that structured shed activity is NOT sustainable nor is it necessary to enjoy the 'Shed Experience'.

It is hoped that the men will continue to come to the Shed on an individual or group basis going forward.

Tom Cullen

Thurles Men's Shed

### Appendix 'A'





# **North Tipperary Men's Sheds Educational Get-together Cloughjordan EcoVillage**

**Nov 14<sup>th</sup> 2023**

**10 :00 Welcome Tea & Coffee**

**10:30 Tour of the EcoVillage Farm**

**11:30 Men's Sheds Meeting (upstairs in WeCreate building)**

**1. Sustainable Development Goals and the role of Mens Sheds**

⇒ identify eco-projects undertaken by Sheds and ideas for new projects

**2. Tús Programme –**

⇒ Tús Programme Co-ordinator Seamus O'Sullivan on how Sheds can avail of the Tús programme

**3. Recognition Awards**

**4. Update from the Sheds**

**1 pm Lunch (and music) in the cafe**

**1:45 Digital Fabrication Lab Tours & demonstration. ( Two groups, max 15 per group)**

Technologies include 3D printing, CNC Milling, Circuit production, Laser, Precision Milling and Vinyl cutting

**3:30 Depart**

## Appendix E: Benefits of participation in Men's Shed

### Benefits of participation in Men's Shed

(from *Men's Sheds in Scotland: the potential for improving the health of men*, Journal of Public Health Policy)

#### 1) Mental Health

- Increased confidence through taking part in practical activity and learning and sharing skills and from social interacting with others where they may have not done so previously.
- Decreased depression from having something to do and a focus in life, as well as opportunities to socialise and share experiences of depression with other men. · Increased feelings of happiness from having something to do and look forward to
- Increased feelings of happiness from having something to do and look forward to, and from having a sense of pride, achievement and satisfaction from making things and helping others. ·
- Increased relaxation, escape and calm from being able to escape from personal issues outside of the Shed, and a chance for respite for those caring for others. ·
- Increased sense of purpose from having something to do and something to look forward to, especially after retirement. This was particularly related to having increased opportunities to get out of the house, keep busy and socially interact with others.

#### 2) Physical Health

- **Improved mobility** from increased physical activity at the Shed and decreased sedentary behaviour from not sitting at home with nothing to do. This was felt to impact on their overall energy and stamina levels.
- **Decreased alcohol use** as a result of attending a Shed (as a sober environment). This included some members who had issues with excessive alcohol use and addiction.
- **Recovery from physical illness or injury** through sharing experiences and gaining help and support from other Shed members, and having something to do that distracted them from symptoms.
- **Improved health knowledge** through health visitors coming to their Sheds to talk to them about physical health issues, such as stroke prevention and male cancer awareness in a space where they felt safe, secure and supported to discuss such issues.

#### 3) Social Wellbeing

- **Increased social support** from other members for personal issues or health problems, as well as support with taking part in activities and completing tasks. This was seen as a way of overcoming adversity, such as health issues, without having to seek formal external help.
- **Increased social networks** through meeting new people and forming new friendships. An opportunity to socialise and share experiences with other men was viewed as just as important as taking part in practical activities, especially after retirement.
- **Increased feelings of social inclusion and a sense of belonging** from coming to the Sheds because of the informal welcoming and supportive environment. This was often described as 'camaraderie' and 'comradeship'.
- **Decreased social isolation and loneliness** as a result of coming to a Shed, meeting people and socially interacting. In particular, those who were alone through loss of a partner, or had difficulty leaving the house.