



KILCOCK COMMUNITY MEN'S SHED

History:

The idea of men's sheds started in Australia in the 90's and quickly spread throughout that country, eventually arriving in Ireland around 2009. Based on the concept that 'the shed' has, traditionally, been a place where a man can go for some quiet reflection or to work on that little project that never seems to get finished. Men have the option to go to their local men's shed where there is a wide range of tools, plenty of (mostly) helpful advice and good company over a cuppa.

A men's shed is a place where all men, regardless of age, background or ability:

- Are respected, valued and belong, and can comfortably use and pass on their practical skills and knowledge
- Learn through doing stuff together – each man is a teacher and a learner, each having different levels of skills, professional and practical, to share collectively.
- Can come together and help out in their community.
- Can just come and have a chat and a cuppa if that's all they're looking for.
- Can work together and talk about things that are important to them, and can improve their own wellbeing by keeping physically, mentally and socially active.

Established in August 2014, to cater primarily for older/retired/unemployed men, the Kilcock Community Men's Shed has made huge progress and achieved much in its relatively short history, thanks in no small part to its dedicated and loyal members. The KCMS is affiliated to the Irish Men's Sheds Association and there are now over 400 sheds all over Ireland with some 12,000 members. Currently, there are thirty six members in KCMS.

The premises we use is provided by the Kilcock Conference of St. Vincent de Paul and the rear section and first floor has been completely refurbished by the members of KCMS. The support and goodwill of the local community has given the project a huge boost and is much appreciated – in particular, the support of the Kildare Integrated Services Programme, also local businesses as well as Kildare County Council and the Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board.

Early in 2015 the members commenced work on the premises in Church Street. This consisted of an annexe or shed which was crammed with builder's rubble (from work on the main building) and unwanted donations of clothes, toys, bedding, kitchen utensils etc., the roof was leaking and the walls damaged and there were no windows. To take out the rubble, it was necessary to cut out a large hole in the wall (later adapted and fitted with a double patio door) and almost ten large skips were filled and removed.

The old roof was replaced and new soffits and gutters were fitted. Pathways were installed and the walls plastered and painted. Internally, a new floor (concrete) was fitted and a timber ceiling and a temporary power supply was put in. The walls were repaired and painted, and a double glass patio door and window were also installed.

In the meantime, the garden was cleared and the very poor soil was revitalised with rich manure and several loads of rich topsoil. Fruit trees and several types of vegetables were sown along with potatoes and some flowers were included also.

Early in 2016 the Men's Shed were given the use of two large rooms on the first floor of the main building. Again, these rooms were in serious disrepair and needed major refurbishment. Walls were plastered and painted, new windows put in, and a new floor laid. A kitchen, a social area and a large area for training, meetings or other activities is also provided as well as toilet facilities.

SHED ACTIVITIES:

There is a well equipped workshop with tools and equipment such as lathes, saws etc., which facilitate activities such as woodturning, carpentry, bog-oak sculpture and plaster art. Up cycling of waste material such as pallets and even empty glue cylinders is prioritised. Fruit and vegetables are grown in the garden and used in the kitchen. A number of computers and laptops are provided for members use and there is a social area for those who want to simply relax and/or read the paper. Social activities are an important aspect of the Shed and we regularly go on trips e.g. The Guinness Store, Collins Barracks, Kilmainham Gaol, Titanic Centre Belfast, the Ploughing Championships, as well as visits to other sheds. There are also social evenings such as barbecues, or a visit to a local hostelry – we've even gone to the dogs! Literally (in Newbridge).

COMMUNITY:

From the beginning, we have had huge support from the local community and many of the tools, furnishings, utensils etc., have been donated. In turn, our members have contributed to the community by, for example, repairing and replacing over 50 planters for the Tidy Towns Committee, making up wooden patrol boxes for the local scouts, participating in clean-up days, maintaining flower beds and repairing furniture donated to the SVdP. The members have also carried out repairs and refurbishment work in St. Coca's Church and constructed the Christmas Crib. In 2015 Music Teacher Eimear Crehan helped the men to set up a choir in memory of her late Dad Anto who was a founding member of the Shed and we have held a number of public concerts in the town to raise funds. Last year we recorded a twelve-track cd which reached number one in the online "Easy Listening Charts".

FUNDING:

The Kilcock Conference of St. Vincent de Paul contributed significantly to the cost of refurbishing the premises and we have received some grant aid from Kildare Co. Co. as well as private donations. We also ran concerts featuring the Shed Choir and the SUSO gospel choir in 2015 and 2016. Members pay an annual sub of €30 and breakfast is provided each day for €2. There is an unlimited supply of tea/coffee and biscuits. We are also planning to install a lift to accommodate disabled or physically challenged members in 2018

TRAINING:

A survey of members is carried out early each year to establish which training courses and activities would be most practical. With the help of the Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board we have arranged training in woodturning, Gardening, Computers, Mindfulness, Food Safety and CPR and we are currently in discussion with them re courses in health and Safety, and photography.

Our Mission:

KCMS works towards a situation where all the members have the opportunity to improve and maintain their health and wellbeing. The members are supported and encouraged to realise

their own potential and to take ownership and responsibility for the projects and activities undertaken in the shed.

Our Values:

- **Honesty and Openness:** Everything we do is transparent and accountable to the members and to the local community.
- **Equality and Inclusion:** Our shed is a place of belonging, participation, democracy, mutual respect, companionship and community for all members.
- **Leadership:** We demonstrate and promote leadership in everything we do.

The aims and purposes of KILCOCK COMMUNITY MEN'S SHED are as follows:

- To provide a venue for members to meet and connect with others while participating in group and / or individual projects.
- To provide opportunities for friendship and socialising in a safe environment while at the same time the space, expertise and facilities for men to pursue hobbies, crafts and creativity.
- To undertake projects, acceptable to the group, which are of benefit to individuals, groups and the broader community.

Benefits accruing are:

1. Members will have the opportunity to meet and socialise in a 'man to man', 'shoulder to shoulder' environment.
2. An atmosphere of 'doing things together' will allow members to share their skills, to learn new skills and generally socialise and develop friendships in a friendly safe environment.
3. Members from all walks of life are welcome to join. The bond that unites them is that they are interested in doing something meaningful with their time.

The proposed types of projects to be undertaken:

- Personal
- Group
- Community

KILCOCK COMMUNITY MEN'S SHED is NOT a commercial entity and does not wish to take work from local businesses. Because of this, we will only undertake projects and / or make products that do not have a commercial value.

KCMS may provide services and make items for fundraising purposes for the shed and occasionally for local charitable organisations.



Workshop early 2015



The Garden early in 2015



The Social Area June 2015



The Garden June 2016



2017