

- [About the Council](#) 
- [Communications](#) 
- [News](#) 
- [October 2017](#) 
- [End Loneliness in Mendip campaign - focus on Men's Sheds](#) 
- [Changes to free parking hours in Great Ostry car park](#) 
- [Find out how the Shape Mendip Lottery can help your community group](#) 



End Loneliness in Mendip campaign - focus on Men's Sheds

2 October 2017

Mendip District Council, working alongside a number of leading local health and wellbeing service providers, including Health Connections Mendip, Somerset Public Health and Mendip General Practices, has launched the End Loneliness in Mendip campaign, which aims to raise awareness of the support available for older people who are suffering from loneliness.



One key part of the campaign is to further raise the profile of Men's Sheds within the district. Men's Sheds are a fairly new invention that have been growing in popularity across the country.

The sheds are aimed primarily at older men. They provide a welcoming, inclusive environment and company for men wanting to learn new skills or share existing ones by working on their own projects, or projects for the local community.

There are already Men's Sheds in Frome and Street and one has just recently opened in Shepton Mallet.

Patrick Abrahams, organiser of the Frome Shed, said: "We now have 70 members and have around 20 to 25 Sheddies coming each week. We opened in Frome in 2014 and since then the popularity has grown and grown."

"Not only do Men's Sheds provide older men with a place to go to work on projects of their choice, it also gives them a chance to make new friends and learn new skills."

The Frome Shed has been involved with many community projects, including making a scooter rack for a school, planters for a care home and bird boxes for Frome Town Council. The Sheddies also recently made a coracle to race against a Welsh Men's Shed.

The newest shed in Mendip is in Shepton Mallet, which only opened earlier this month.

Shepton Shed organiser Graham Cooper said: "Somerset Care and Repair have very generously given us free use of an enormous shed with some serious power tools and, perhaps most importantly, a kettle and a plug!

"Our first project will be to carve out a useful and comfy space - and there'll be scope for everyone to pitch in.

"The shed will provide interest, activity and company for men of all ages in the Shepton area. Whether you want to build a boat, make bird boxes, bind books, or simply mend stuff, our Sheddies will be able to work on joint projects or their own job that's just too big for the dining room table!"

To get in touch with your nearest Men's Shed:

· Shepton Area Men's Shed meets every Tuesday from 9am to 1pm at Barley House (Somerset Care and Repair), Charlton Trading Estate, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5QE. For more information, contact Graham Cooper on 07966 361796 or cooperqd@hotmail.co.uk

· Frome Men's Shed meets every Thursday from 9am to 1pm at the Welshmill Hub, Parkhill Drive, Frome, BA11 2LE. For more information, contact Patrick Abrahams on 07932 760585, email patrick_abrahams@hotmail.com or visit www.fromeshed.org.uk

· Street Men's Shed meets weekly at Unit 10, The Tanyard, Leigh Road, Street, BA16 0HD. For more information about the shed and the days and times it meets, contact Acting Chairman: Brian Bastable - tel: 01458 443940, email brianbastable9@aol.com or go to www.streetmensshed.btck.co.uk

To find out more about the End Loneliness in Mendip campaign and how to get involved go to - www.endlonelinessinmendip.org.uk

The website also includes information about volunteering with local community groups, as well as information on how to become a 'Community Connector' and spread the word about the support available.

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