Stonehaven & District Men's Shed

Monthly Newsletter for October 2026

To contact the on-duty Shed Safety Supervisor call: 01569-785617
An audio version of this newsletter will shortly be available here: SDMS website | Facebook.

Announcements

~ A proposal was made at the September trustee meeting to relocate the Laser team to a separate building along the South side of the shed. This was because of the increased activity and occasional complaints about noise and unhealthy odours. The Board turned down the proposal, mainly on the basis that the impact on the frontage, from an aesthetic angle, would unlikely be accepted.
Mal Gray was tasked to come up with an alternative proposal along with a team involving Raymond Douglas, David Ross and Adam Paterson.

Dates for Diary

Mondays	weekly	'Dru Yoga' with **Lynne Bentley** (13:00 - 14:15)
Tuesdays	weekly	'Pilates' with **Steve** (13:00 - 14:00)
Tuesdays	weekly	Guitar Club (usually Tuesdays 19:30 - 21:00) **Paul Bentley**
Thursdays	weekly	'Iyengar Yoga' with **Linda Chedburn (**13:00 -14:00)
Wednesday	4th Nov?	Monthly Book Club with **Gary Brindley**
Friday	30th Oct	Trustee meeting at 12:30
Friday	6th Nov	Social get-together at Number 44 (16:00 – 18:00) **Jim MacKenzie**
Sat	7th Nov	Farmer's Market
Sat	7th Nov	Plastic Free Stonehaven's Monthly Beach Clean (10:00 – 11:00)

Shed News:

Open Forum

Chairman **Duncan** gave the following report at the monthly Open Forum on Thursday 1st October

Welfare

- **Duncan** expressed our condolences to **Mike McInally** for his recent loss.
- Speaker Today – **Angus McIntosh** from Friends of Kincardine Community Hospital

Events

- Farmers Market on Saturday 3rd October
- The Laser Team are taking a stall at KCH Friends Coffee Morning at St Bridget's Hall on Saturday.
- Christmas Lunch planned for 17th Dec and a Burns Lunch on 11th Feb, both in the Station Hotel.
- Since our success as 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' 2026, we've had visits by members from Inverbervie Shed, Ellon Shed, Lerwick Shed and Kintore Shed. We also had a visit from SMSA Network Officer, **Brian McWilliams**, who is the new Area Liaison officer for our region.

Health & Safety

- We have obtained an Emergency 'Grab Bag' for use in the event of a fire or other emergency.
- **Paul Tosh** called for better discipline at Fire Drills; in particular, for orderly gathering at the nominated muster point and individuals personally responding when names are read out.
- Fire Evacuation Plan and Fire Plan for Fire Brigade to be updated.
- Refresher Training for Shed Safety Supervisors to be organised.
- Agreed at the September Board meeting that we should raise awareness that behind our sign is/sign out sheet there is a copy of the Fire and evacuation plan.
- Following on from the prizes we were handed with the Shed of the Year award, in particular, training on woodworking and machine competence, by David Young Training, this will be organised for up to eight members in our facility.

Business

- The OSCR Financial and Chairman's report have been submitted to our Financial examiner.
- Minute of the Trustee meeting held on Friday 18th September is now available.
- **Peter Walker** is in the process of renewing our Power Supply contract from February 2027.

General

- Installation of additional storage batteries took place on Monday 5th October.
- A further batch of prosthetic leg parts is ready for dispatch to Bristol. Transport costs are to be funded by McPhie Ltd of Glenbervie (our Lord Lieutenant's family business).
- In order to make some extra space for yoga & Pilates, the pool table has been sold to Westhill, organised by **David Summers**.
- The Laser Team is working on a proposal to re-site the laser machines to an area more suitable for expansion of their activities whilst considering associated noise and appropriate extraction.
- It was suggested we look at recreating a Shed Art Group - **David Summers** is looking into this.

- Mearns Academy would like to use Stonehaven Men's Shed for the annual Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) funded by The Wood Foundation. This is an annual event where schools choose a local organisation to direct charitable grants to local causes.
- The Board recently agreed that a Welcome sign should be put outside on Wednesdays between 10:00 – 12:00, and that two members would dedicate time to welcome any visitors. The objective is to show our facility to the public and encourage new members or lapsed members to come in.
- It was mentioned that, on a small number of occasions, visitors have been ignored by our members. Normally, the duty Shed Safety Supervisor should welcome guests but, if they are busy, then other members in the Social Area should stand in and welcome visitors.
- Next Board meeting is on Friday 30th October at 12:30

Upcoming Shed Safety Supervisors Rota

Subject to any changes you have individually made Thursday evening opening has ceased for the summer

Mon 12 0ct	Tue 13 Oct	Wed 14 Oct	Thu 15 Oct	Fri 16 Oct
Duncan Cursiter	Gary Brindley	Graham Gaston	Paul Bentley	Ian Smith
Mon 19 Oct	**Tue 20 Oct**	**Wed 21 Oct**	**Thu 22 Oct**	**Fri 23 Oct**
Kenny Dingwall	Bill Shepherd	Mal Gray	Murray Marshall	Hugh Morel
Mon 26 Oct	**Tue 27 Oct**	**Wed 28 Oct**	**Thu 29 Oct**	**Fri 30 Oct**
Paul Tosh	Raymond Penny	Steve Holt	Raymond Douglas	Bert Butchart
Mon 2 Nov	**Tue 3 Nov**	**Wed 4 Nov**	**Thu 5 Nov**	**Fri 6 Nov**
Bill Allan	Tony Zaccarini	David Hepburn	Bill Shepherd	David Ross
Mon 9 Nov	**Tue 10 Nov**	**Wed 11 Nov**	**Thu 12 Nov**	**Fri 13 Nov**
Duncan Cursiter	Dave Walton	Gary Brindley	Graham Gaston	Ian Smith
Mon 16 Nov	**Tue 17 Nov**	**Wed 18 Nov**	**Thu 19 Mov**	**Fri 20 Nov**
Kenny Dingwall	Hugh Morel	Mal Gray	Mike McInally	Murray Marshall

Shed Visitors

Since our success as 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' 2026, we've had visits by members from Inverbervie Shed, Ellon Shed, Lerwick Shed & Kintore Shed. We also had a visit from SMSA Network Officer, **Brian McWilliams**, Area Liaison officer for our area (successor to **Tim Green**).

Guests from Kintore Men's Shed

Stonehaven & District Men's Shed

Talk on Thursday 1st October

The talk was by Angus Mackintosh, Chairman of Friends of Kincardine Community Hospital, (Arduthie Ward)

Friends of KCH is a volunteer group and registered charity which started at the same time as the Renal Unit which was opened in 2018. Covid interrupted but it was fully restarted in 2024.

The volunteers group operate separately from Friends charity and now have 14 volunteers, some also in the Friends Group. Friends group help staff and patients in areas where NHS cannot help. And the volunteers help by circulating with a tea/coffee trolley and having a chat with patients. Shedder **Bill Hunter** attends a couple of times a week in this capacity.

Examples where Friends of KCH have helped out: -

- TVs were not available - now everyone has a TV and table, provided by the Friends' organisation.
- Equipment is provided by Friends to make life easier.
- Assisted tea making / tea station
- Provision of 5 specialist chairs at £3,500 each which means a family member can stay the night.

With significant input from Men's Shed, they also renovated the nurses Gazebo and Memorial garden and carried out general garden maintenance.

Fundraising for these activities is obviously an important subject and approximately £22,000 has been raised from:

- Family members
- Beerfest
- Thomson Rally
- Coffee mornings
- Car boot sales
- Fundraising events in the town

Our contribution was much appreciated!

The Friends of Kincardine Community Hospital would like to thank the Stonehaven Men's Shed for all of their support and hard work. Over the years since the launch of the Friends group, the Men's Shed has always been at the forefront of supporting our activities, especially in relation to the maintenance and development of the hospital gardens. This is best shown in the Men's Shed renovating of our wonderful gazebo by replacing the roof and floor, to allow patients to sit outside and enjoy the gardens as part of their recovery process. Men's Shed provided all the material and labour to carry out this work.

A wonderful gesture to support the Friends.

Our thanks to David Ross and the team for the work on the shed and the Laser team for the contribution at St Bridget's. which raised £300 for this great cause.

Bill's Hiking Sticks

Shedder, **Bill West** took up hiking/walking stick making several years ago when he lived in Southampton, where he had easy access to coppiced wood. Although many hours work are put into the average stick, it is a hobby that can be picked up and put down as you feel like it.

Classic hiking sticks are mostly made from hazel, which frequently grows quite straight and keeps its bark after seasoning. Bill is, however, happy to use any reasonably straight hardwood branch and is currently using the last of his stock of dense holly branches harvested during his time in the south of England. Even branches washed up on the beach can be turned into sticks and rare beach finds include gnarled gorse (whin). Although a difficult wood to work, the gorse creates beautiful walking sticks and the occasional hiking stick.

After cutting green sticks, Bill coats the cut ends in PVA glue, preventing the tails from drying out too fast and splitting. Cut sticks are then hung, heavy end down, by a length of twine. Hanging heavy end down reduces warping as the wood dries and allows full air circulation. Green sticks are required to season for at least a year in a shed. Working the sticks before they are completely seasoned will result in further shrinkage and warping as they continue drying.

Once seasoned, the sticks are then straightened by steaming. Bill uses a modified wallpaper stripper for steaming. The seasoned sticks are placed in a large bore pipe four or five at a time, the steam (wallpaper stripper) hose is inserted at the bottom of the pipe and rags are then packed in around the steam hose and any protruding ends of sticks, top and bottom, to reduce the amount of steam escaping.

The sticks are steamed for an hour per inch of diameter (better too long steaming than not long enough) to make them pliable and then, working quickly, removed to be straightened using a former. They can be straightened over your knee but only with appropriate protection against the heat. The remaining sticks continue steaming while the first stick is straightened by applying manual pressure to straighten out bends or curves. Sometimes a counter bend is applied to compensate for spring back. As the sticks cool, malleability is lost; too much pressure at this stage can cause cracking. A few hours after steaming the sticks are ready for working with basic tools and sanding to prepare them for finishing with oil or varnish.

Following initial sales at the Men's Shed, it became apparent that thumb sticks (forked top sticks) were more popular than straight hiking sticks. With this in mind, Bill often converts straight hiking sticks to thumb sticks by grafting a forked branch onto a straightened stick. Bill, not having the patience to wait for forked branches to season naturally, dries freshly cut forks in a microwave oven!

Bill is happy to share his trial-and-error learning with anyone who wants to give it a go.

All proceeds from the sale of Bill's sticks go to the Men's shed.

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Serving the Community

Stonehaven Men's Shed get involved in supporting the Community in a variety of ways:

Farmers Market

Shedders, led by **Donald Clarke**, **Mike McInally** and **Paul Tosh**, organise the monthly market, allocating spaces for the various stalls; ensuring the market area is clear; assist in erecting and dismantling the various gazebos; ensuring Health & Safety regulations are adhered to and general marshalling of the event.

Friends of Kincardineshire Community Hospital

Friends of Kincardineshire Community Hospital held a coffee morning to help raise funds for the tremendous support they provide to staff and patients at KCH. The Men's Shed manufactured, produced and displayed and sold examples of their work for the Friends of KCH. Thanks to **Mal Duncan, Bill Emslie, Raymond Douglas, Mal Gray** and **David Walton**.

Cowie Thistle Benches

Cowie Thistle asked the Men's Shed if we could help with renovating an existing bench and manufacturing & installing another. **Davie Ross** took up the challenge assisted by **Paul Tosh** and **Adam Paterson**

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Muchalls Notice Board

David Ross and **Murray Marshall** answered a request from the Muchalls Village Association for a new notice board.

Paws on Plastic Monthly Beach Clean

Shedders **Paul Bentley** and **Doug McKelvie** join in the Monthly Beach Clean organised by Plastic Free Stonehaven, a fellow Stonehaven charity who were honoured with the King's Award for Voluntary Service in 2025.
Paul and Doug would be delighted if other shed members could come along and help out.

Monthly Pétanque

This event, organised by shedder **Doug McKelvie**, and involving other community groups takes place at the new Pétanque rink beside the shed.

This month's winner was shedder **Billy Hunter**.

Personal Projects

Shedder **Murray Marshall** making a nesting box for his five visiting hedgehogs!

Trainee **Adam Paterson** manufactured the pieces for this tank on the laser cutting machine then put them together for this fine exhibit

Trainee **Adam Paterson** used his computer skills learned at college to help Paul fix the 3D printer which was refusing to work for our members!

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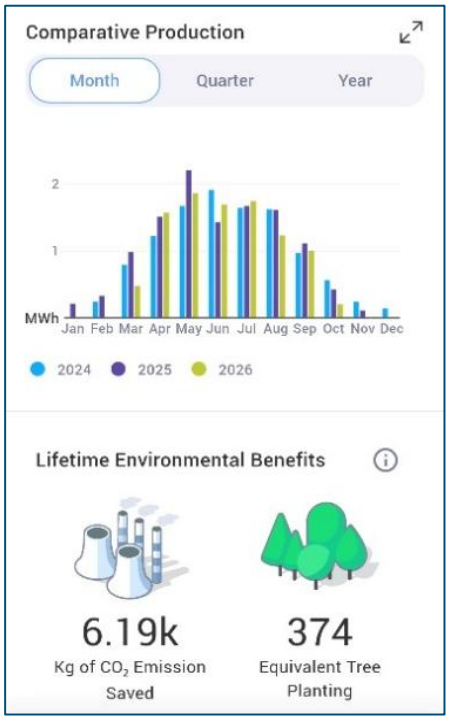
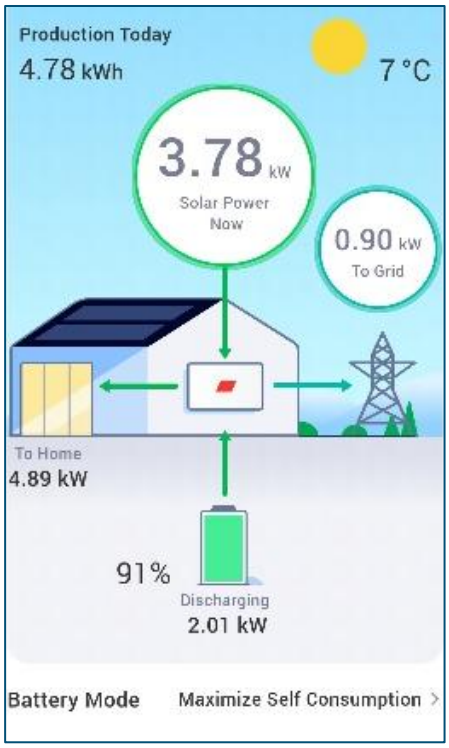
Alternative Energy Battery Storage

Chairman **Duncan Cursiter** and Trustee **Peter Walker** organised the installation of two additional batteries to increase our electric storage capacity to 23kWh. This investment was made possible by the very kind donation from this year's Midsummer Beerfest. We also have 36 solar panels with a 14.58kWh total output and 6 Air Source Heat Pumps with a total capacity of 30kWh. This updated setup has the potential to further reduce our power costs and improve our contribution to net zero.





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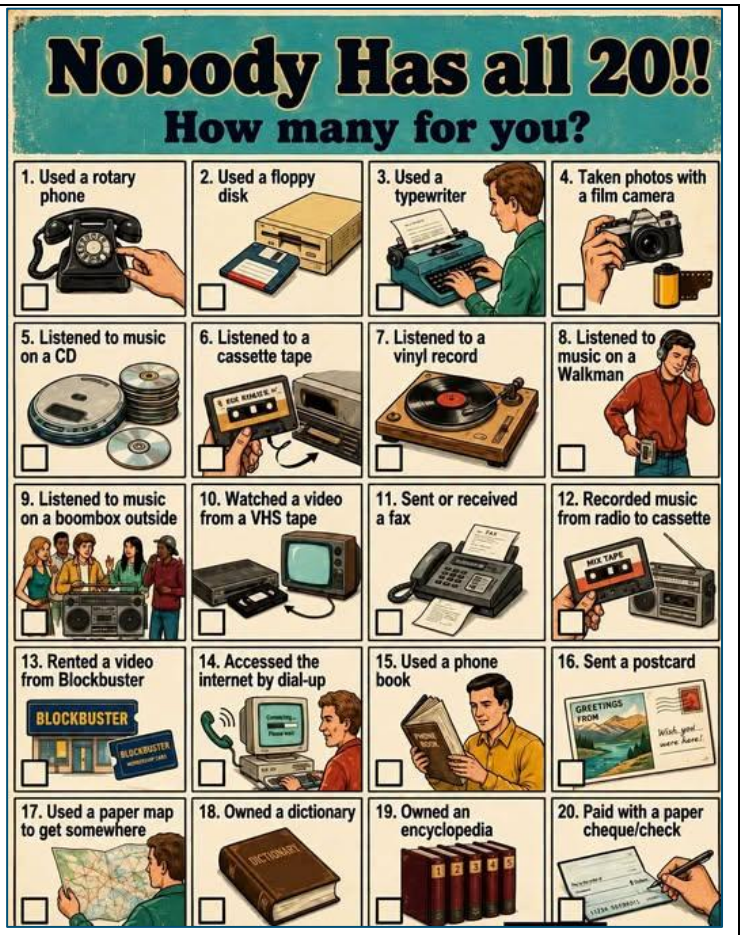
Bill's Corner

The EFFIN BEEKEEPER
He kept bees in the wee town of Effen,
An Effen beekeeper was he.
And one day this Effen beekeeper got stung!!!!!
By a big Effen bee!!!!
Now the big Effen beekeepers wee Effen wife
For the big Effen "Polis" she ran (policeman),
For naebody can sort out a big Effen bee like a big Effen Polisman can.
Now the big Effen "Polis" he done his nut,
And he ran doon the main Effen street
In his hand was a big Effen baton
He had big Effen boots oan his feet
Now the big Effen Polis
caught the big Effen bee,
And he twisted the Effen bee's wings
But this Effen bee got its ain back
'Cos this Effen bee had two stings
Now they're both in the Effen museum
And the Effen folk aye come see
The remains of the big Effen Polis
Stung to death!
By the big Effen bee!!!!!!



Audio Newsletter

- **Lynn Zaccarini** kindly creates the audio version of our newsletter. If you know of anyone in the community who may be interested in listening to it due to having a vision impairment or who just prefers to listen to a newsletter rather than to read it, please let them know. This edition of the monthly newsletter will shortly be posted on our Facebook **page &** website.

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