



10 April 2024

The Fressingfield Shed - Annual Report 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024

The past year has been a fundamental period for the Fressingfield Shed as it was our founding year, involving a lot of activity to establish both the charity and the physical set up of the shed building and grounds. The Fressingfield Shed charity was set up based on the mission and values of the UK Men's Shed Association: connection, conversation, and creation – that's what joining a Shed is all about. Sheds encourage people to come together to make, repair and repurpose, supporting projects in their local communities and promoting sustainability. By participating in these types of activities, the aim is improving wellbeing, reducing loneliness, and combatting social isolation. It is more than just a club, it is a charity with a mission to improve the individual mental and physical wellbeing of village people through creating community centred around making, gardening, and repairing. Research has shown that positive mental and physical health outcomes are related to participation in local sheds, and that because of the variety of activities on offer, sheds tend to have a wide appeal that includes typically hard to reach individuals in our community who are most at risk of isolation.

Our shed is a safe place where people from all beliefs, genders and backgrounds living in Fressingfield and the surrounding parishes can come together to build, fix and restore projects as well as themselves. The underpinning ethos is of companionship, sharing interests, learning new skills and most importantly to provide an environment of support by encouraging conversations, listening, sharing worries and knowing there is always someone down at the Shed willing to have a chat. Working with your hands on making activities is a mindful way to engage and can reduce anxiety levels, and the sense of achievement gained when making something and working together with others can also encourage wellbeing, as well as the important social support available.

Funding from the Parish Council and other donors is essential to help us cover our annual running costs of £5,000 per year (covering rent, insurance, utilities, basic supplies), and ensure that we can keep our membership fees at a low level to ensure access for all regardless of economic circumstances.

Overview of activities over the past 12 months:

Establishment of the Fressingfield Shed Charity; membership recruitment drive resulting in a current membership of 51 members; extensive work to set up the building and ground works to set up the physical site, workshop and garden. Incredibly after a year full of volunteer energy by shed members and the support of the Goodwin Trust we now have running water, bathrooms, a functioning workshop and garden and thanks to Adnams and Mid-Suffolk Council proper health and safety dust extraction equipment and the beginnings of an outdoor work area.

1. Drop in workshop days Tuesday and Thursday mornings established for woodworking, repairing and model making. We have an active membership turnout for these days with a mix of setting up the workshop, community work and members doing their own projects.
2. Fibre Friday drop in sessions launched in February 2024 to expand our membership to those interested in textile/fibre work.
3. Garden set up and working group established and greenhouse installed, growing beds going in and planting underway.
4. Community work: Dog waste bins installed around the village; Charity dog walk signs repaired; repainted for the Guide-Dogs for the blind village charity walk; Fabric re-use hub set up to recycle fabric from the circular economy and reduce waste; Wood re-use activities such as receiving donations of wood that would otherwise go into the waste system and using it for shed projects.

We started the Fressingfield Shed in spring 2023 as a wellbeing resource to reduce social isolation and be a place for the community to come together, to discover the fun and satisfaction of learning new skills, getting involved with making objects, repairing, growing and gardening, making friends and adding to the life of the village. Our workshop is a place where people can create, build, repair, and support each other in various workshop activities. Our garden is getting established and needs more active growers to get involved. Whether you have a passion for gardening, woodworking, model making, electronics, fibre, or any other craft, our workshop provides a space for you to pursue your interests and share your skills with others. With access to a wide range of tools and resources, our goal is to empower individuals to take on DIY projects and learn valuable skills along the way. Additionally, our workshop hosts workshops and events to foster collaboration and help build a strong sense of community. Join us at the Fressingfield Shed and let's make, repair, and garden together!

We have a range of members involved of different ages, men and woman, from Fressingfield and the surrounding villages. Due to the nature of the woodworking equipment, you must be over the age of 18 and be responsible to use equipment without supervision to join and have access to the workshop. If you have any questions please contact us for more information.

See www.thefressingfieldshed.co.uk for more information

email us on info@thefressingfieldshed.co.uk

Or drop by to see us at our upcoming Open Day on Sat 11 May 2024.