



20 March 2025

## **The Fressingfield Shed - Annual Report 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025**

The past year has been an exciting time of consolidation and set up for the Fressingfield Shed as it was our second year of operation, involving a lot of activity to continue to expand our membership and improve the physical set up of the shed building and grounds. We had our first community open day which was very well attended and started running a series of courses and workshops to expand our outreach to the community.

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.

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 continue to improve our facilities as well as 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. We are currently offering membership at the low rate of £2/month with concessions available for those in need. These fees are essential for us to cover basic running costs.

### **Overview of activities over the past 12 months:**

Over the past year we have seen our Membership increase to 69 members. We have continued work to set up the building, garden and workshop with a real focus on the outside veranda area and garden. Incredibly after a year full of volunteer energy by shed members and the support of important donors and supports such as the Parish Council, the County Council, Adnams Community Trust, The National Lottery, TCG Roofing, and The Goodwin Trust we now have a fully functional outdoor work area/veranda and a full and blossoming garden.

#### **Activity overview:**

1. Drop in workshop days Tuesday and Thursday mornings established for woodworking, repairing and model making. This has also expanded to wood turning courses once a week which have been an exciting addition to shed life. We have also had a workshop from local firm Weybread Woodcraft on router skills. We have an active membership turnout for workshop days with a mix of setting up the workshop, community work and members doing their own projects. The workshop has also benefited from a grant from the National Lottery which allowed us to buy improved woodworking equipment as well as other equipment for printmaking etc. The lottery grant has now been spent and the workshop is full of useful woodworking and modelmaking equipment ready for making. We continue to seek out

wood donations for members to use and participate in stopping waste or pallet wood from going into landfill in support of the environment and to help members on lower incomes access free or very low cost wood for projects.

2. Textile working: Various sewing workshops and drop in sessions for those interested in textile/fibre work have been ongoing and we've been experimenting with how best to support this activity. Over the past year we expanded our offering here and provided courses on cushion making, leather wallet making, sew a pair of trousers, Japanese boro bag stitching, sew a draught excluder and other sessions. These courses teach useful sewing and repairing skills and bring people together; they also importantly support our underlying sustainability values by using our recycled fabric to support the circular economy and the environment. From young mothers isolated at home and looking for community support, to retired people interested in improving their skills and meeting new people these courses have had a wide appeal in the community.
3. Our garden has absolutely been transformed over the past year from an empty piece of grass to a thriving and diverse green space with an orchard, raised beds, greenhouses and flowers. We will now be renaming the garden in memory of our shed member and local parish councillor Garry Deeks who sadly passed away this year and who was tireless in his commitment to setting up this space for the community to learn about gardening and share in the benefits of getting active in planting and harvesting. Over the past year Garry and the gardening team did willow weaving workshops, taught the community how to graft apple trees, built a geodesic dome for tender plants, and finished building and planting out the garden beds at the shed. Talented shed volunteers also painted a lovely mural on the shed gates to represent shed life and welcome people to our "hidden spot" behind the Methodist Church on New Street. Now that we have our outdoor veranda/workspace built the garden and the workshop are beautifully connected to a combined space for socialising, growing and making. Garry's legacy will live on and benefit the community for years to come. We hope more keen gardeners and novices will continue to join in at the Fressingfield Shed to help the garden thrive. We will open the garden to the community during our annual open days as well during events and courses.
4. Printmaking comes to the shed! In Oct 2024 we purchased a small desktop Lino press and started offering printmaking activities at the Fressingfield Shed. This activity has attracted quite a few new members, and as we offer it in the evenings it has also expanded our opening times. Printmaking is a great way to get started making small artworks, cards, posters and other items. Without much experience you can make something interesting and with practice do some very impressive and more complex cuts and prints. It has proven so popular that we have now brought on a second press and expanded to Botanical Printing and Lino Printing Courses running every other month and monthly drop in sessions on the third Thursday of each month. We also had a very popular and fun festive printing session to make Christmas cards and gift tags. Many participants are surprised by what they can make and feedback has been super positive and popular. Hopefully even more community members can get involved with printmaking over the coming year.
5. Community Work: we have trained several members in electrical PAT testing so we can now offer these services to the community. We also ran a first aid course to train people in how to use the community defibrillator and do basic first aid if needed in the shed or in the village. We ran an open workshop to sew a draught excluder to help keep villagers warm and lower heating costs this winter. A community open day was held in May 2024. Shed members continue to help out in the community on various initiatives including building and running a coconut shy for the local fete.

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!

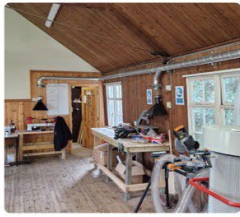
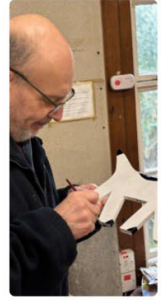
We have a range of members involved of different ages, men and women, from Fressingfield and the surrounding villages. Due to the nature of the woodworking equipment, you must be over the age of 18 and be responsible to use equipment without supervision to join and have access to the workshop. If you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

See [www.thefressingfieldshed.co.uk](http://www.thefressingfieldshed.co.uk) for more information

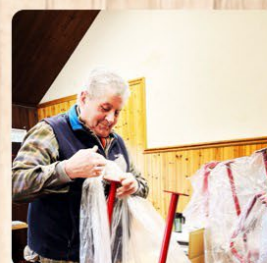
email us on [info@thefressingfieldshed.co.uk](mailto:info@thefressingfieldshed.co.uk)

Or drop by to see us at our upcoming Open Day scheduled in May 2025







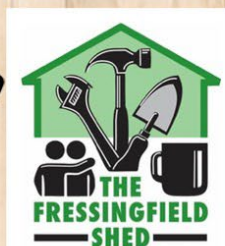


MAKING

Good times



JOIN  
US







CHERISH EVERY  
MOMENT





Learning  
how to  
hook &  
prog







Printing  
LINO &  
BOTANICAL





## WILLOW WEAVING AT THE SHED!







# MAKING APPLE TREES! AT THE SHED OUTDOORS