

Support for Fort William Men's Shed

I am writing in support of Fort William Men's Shed in their pursuit of an adjustment to their rent to Highland Council. They are a well governed Shed. The current level of rent, however, puts great strain on the Office Bearers and Trustees, volunteers who worry about how they will find the funds each year. The activities of the Shed are shaped by having to pay the rent and not by the wishes and needs of the Shedders. You would be able to contribute to the health and well-being of the Shedders by recognising the social value the Shed delivers and moving to a discounted let.

The Westhill Social Return on Investment analysis demonstrated that for every £1 invested in the Westhill Men's Shed by Aberdeenshire council there was a saving to health and social care and community learning and development budgets of £9.34. This social return of investment will be considerably higher in Fort William where the Shed can make a real difference with the stability and affordability of their tenure

Inverness, Dingwall and Maryburgh Men's Sheds have benefitted from Highland Council utilising the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to support sheds in their search for premises through long leases at discounted rents. As with all these Sheds Fort William possess the skill set to be unique stewards of public buildings providing a low risk for the Council Taxpayer. These skills allow them to do the non-specialist work on buildings maintenance and preservation and draw on connections and funding for any specialist works. Men's sheds are able to at least maintain public buildings at no cost to the local authority but more often than not considerably improve the premises they are in. Men's sheds keep empty and underutilised premises busy and occupied reducing vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

Men's Sheds are able to draw in funding for insulation and installation of renewable energy thereby improving the carbon footprint of public buildings and enabling local authorities to achieve their carbon emissions targets.

The success of men's sheds across Highland has shown they are sustainable organisations delivering social value by enabling public buildings or land to be used for the benefit of communities. We need to empower Fort William Men's Shed to make their contribution to community cohesion and improving health and well-being in Lochaber.

Best regards,

Tim

Tim Green
Development Officer
Scottish Men's Sheds Association
Banchory Business Centre, Burn O'Bennie Road, Banchory, AB31 5ZU



To whom it may concern

**Fort William Men's Shed – Community Asset Transfer Request
Letter of Support from Age Scotland**

In my role as Age Scotland Community Development Officer, I have worked alongside Fort William Men's Shed since their initial development period more than 10 years ago. Fort William Men's Shed offers a welcoming environment for men of all ages and is particularly valued by men facing retirement or early retirement from work.

Since moving to the premises at Unit 9a2 Blar Mhor Industrial Estate in Autumn 2015, they have created a safe social space for all men with time on their hands, to come together to socialise and carry out a range of purposeful activities. These activities are chosen by shedders for themselves or are done at the request of their local community.

The Shed aims to provide positive views of ageing and later life, tackle loneliness and isolation and help shed members to be as well as they can be. The Shed Committee and members have worked hard to ensure its continued ability to benefit individuals, the community and the environment.

For many members, social connection is the most valued benefit of attending the shed. Shed members also report:

- improved wellbeing, mental health, mood, self-esteem and confidence
- enjoying opportunities to meet other men in a shared neutral space
- positive health impacts through being more active
- opportunities to share experiences of life – both positives and challenges
- opportunities to share/improve skills and knowledge and to learn
- pride in making or repairing something
- a sense of achievement from doing something for the community
- enjoying having an interest outside home and purposeful activity
- respite from a caring role – for the person attending or the one at home
- a sense of belonging and feeling part of the shed community
- pride in being part of something positive
- people to see, a place to be and something to do - something to look forward to.

Over the years, I have seen first-hand what this special place means to shed members – but also the heavy burden of attracting sufficient funding to meet the high annual rental (£5720) of their premises. The voluntary committee of the charity must continuously apply for funds just to maintain a roof over their heads, and this has taken its toll on successive office bearers.

As the new shed committee works towards a sustainable future for Fort William Men's Shed – a Shed Fit for the Future - it would be a very positive step for Highland Council to recognise the value of this community group by supporting its request for a reduction in/waiving of rent.

We continue to support Fort William Men's Shed as a member group of Age Scotland – recognising their value in improving health and wellbeing outcomes. It becomes increasingly difficult to justify to charitable donors and trusts, the proportion of their funding which goes directly into the public purse through their rent payment. We strongly support their application to you to reduce this burden.




Jo Cowan (she/her)

National Community Development Officer



Argyll & Bute - Mull and Iona, Oban and Lorn, Mainland Mid-Argyll and Kintyre, Gigha and Colonsay.

Highland – Badenoch and Strathspey, Lochaber, Skye and Lochalsh



Age Scotland, part of the Age Network, is an independent charity dedicated to improving the later lives of everyone on the ageing journey, within a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland. Registration Number: 153343 Charity Number: SC010100. Registered Office: Causewayside House, 160 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1PR.



LOCHABER ACTION ON DISABILITY

A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered office-Caol Shopping Centre, Glenloy Street, Caol, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 7DB
Tel: 01397 701171 Email: enquiries@lad.org.uk

Scottish Charity Number SC022335 Company Number SC175303

Dear Stanley,

We would like to thank you and your team for making and donating a very unique piece of furniture as our work top counter for our Bric-a-Brac charity shop. We are all very grateful for all the work that you have put into our shop counter.

We hope that you are all able to continue the great work you do for the community.

Kindest regards

Dani Drummon
Manager
LAD

From Sarah Fanet SNP Councillor on Facebook

On the opening of the refurbished LAD shop in Fort William

Sarah Fanet SNP

tdproSsenofig375h56g31mma345uug63uh60la7mah1t2igi1uumgcml06f ·

A very special way on a windy morning to start the week cutting the ribbon for the reopening of the **Lochaber Action on Disability** shop following recent refurbishment. What a beautiful counter with a superb beech top, all designed and made by **Fort William Men's Shed** . 🍊🍊

🍊🍊I am so impressed by the hard work going on at LAD to help people and empower them to help others.

As a Fort William constituent recently put it, LAD is a place where smiling just happens and then you go out and spread that smile into the world. Thank you LAD for all you do for people all over Lochaber.

A young man R, with FWMS member Arthur learning about woodwork.

Completed planter for College - part of which Robbie helped with (community involvement)

