

# SLaMS Introductory Guide

## So what is the Shed about?

The Shed, its a place for men with time on their hands. It has facilities to pursue hobbies, practical interests, share skills, learn new ones, help in community-inspired projects and develop new ideas and make new friends.

Provided you are 18+, you can join. We have members who are out of work, carers needing time out, those with long term medical conditions, and many who have retired. They come from all walks of life. More than anything, the Shed is a place to have some fun, chat, drink tea and enjoy good company.

Present activities include woodworking, craft making, painting and wood turning. However it's the members who decide what goes on in the Shed.

The Shed started in Burrowbridge in January 2016, with modest beginnings, but has moved (2018) to Bridgwater and now occupies a 900 sq feet workshop. SLaMS has many active members, mostly older, retired or semi-retired men, and a number of other supporters. Amongst these are Town, District and County Councillors, Compass Disability Services, Village Agents, Tudor Trust, Somerset Community Foundation, Sedgemoor DC, RVS, community representatives and GPs. We are also affiliated to the UK Men's Shed Association.

Although actively supported by the above, the Shed is an independent organisation and broadly operates on a cooperative basis. All members have an equal say, there are no paid staff and the Shed members run it on a day-to-day basis through a Management Committee whose responsibility it is to guide the Shed on what it does, raise money for its operation and above all see that it stays financially viable, safe, friendly and inclusive.

### **SLaMS Shed Contact Details**

Address: Mens Shed, The Canal Workshop,  
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eMail: [info@slams.org.uk](mailto:info@slams.org.uk)  
Website: [www.slams.org.uk](http://www.slams.org.uk)

## **Thinking of Joining? - Things you need to know**

### Ethos of the Shed

The Shed provides a friendly and safe environment for men (mostly) to meet, to share and develop their practical skills, learn new ones and enjoy their hobbies. Or you can just come along for a cuppa and a chat with like-minded men. We also look to make our contribution by engaging in community-based projects. So you can see that by doing our own thing, the Shed also does its bit to help the community.

### So you'd like to join us?

The first thing that needs to happen is you get to know us and the Shed gets to know you. This Introductory Guide should explain a lot about us. Sit down, enjoy a cuppa, ask questions and have a conducted tour of the Shed. Tell us what you want to do in the Shed, what skills you have, what you want to learn.

If you are interested in joining, please fill out a Membership Application Form. In return you'll be given a name badge. Wear it. It lets others know your name (who can remember more than 10 names?) and is coloured to indicate your level of skill and the tools you can safely use. We ask you to complete a Capacity Self Assessment and a Tool Competence & Training Needs Assessment in conjunction with one of our Committee members. That will give us an immediate guide on which tools you are experienced in using. But you must also read the safety instructions for these tools before you begin to use them. And it doesn't give you the right to use everything; just those that we agree with you from your initial assessment. Without completing these assessments you'll not be allowed to use the workshop tools. The process also shows what skills you wish to obtain and allows a training process to be initiated.

## **Some Rules to help the Shed run smoothly**

### Paying our way

We like you to enjoy the Shed a couple of times before committing and contributing towards your attendance.

The Shed has a lot of expenditure; the cost of rent, insurances, utility bills, tea/coffee/milk and workshop consumables. And then there's the purchase and repair of our tools and equipment, materials, work area fittings, as well as essential training for First Aiders, PAT testing etc. None of these is cheap.

All this is funded through members' subscription fees and session donations, grants and donations received from Shed community projects.

We have a lot of donated materials, mainly wood. Feel free to use it at no cost, but don't waste it either. Look for the right size of material before you decide to cut up a much larger piece that could be used for a bigger job.

Besides occasionally going short of the makings of a cuppa, the Shed will run out of things if we don't have regular donations of money. There's also the need to buy new equipment or repair it. It's down to you and your mates in the Shed to discuss this and put your ideas to the Committee. If your project is going to require a large expenditure, check first with the Committee.

When you have committed to stay with us, pay the annual membership fee. This is currently (2018) £30 per annum, with the membership year running from 1st April to 31st March. If you join after October, you need only pay a reduced rate, though if you wish to pay the full annual fee that will be gratefully received. We also ask you to make a session donation each time you visit the Shed. As a guide we ask you to contribute £3 per half day (a.m. or p.m.) or £5 if you are in the shed at any time during both sessions; more if you feel able to do so. Membership fees and session rates are subject to change.

If you suffer financial hardship, we leave you to donate only what you can afford. Please let the Treasurer know if you regularly plan to donate less than the guideline. You can discuss this with him in confidence.

### Be Civil, be Safe, be Informed

We want you to enjoy the Shed's facilities and the company of other Shedders. But there are some basic aspects of Shed life that we ask you to comply with.

- **Respect other members.** By all means enter into gentle banter, but be sensitive to others' feelings, situation or circumstances. We are all prone to emitting the occasional expletive, but we have little tolerance for habitual or frequent abusive, offensive or crude language. It sets the wrong tone, so unless you have Tourettes Syndrome, cut it out. Read our policies on Equality and Diversity, and Adult Safeguarding, and sign that you have read and understood them soon after joining the Shed.
- **Respect the tools and workshop facilities.** Many of our tools have the capability to seriously injure you and others in the Shed. Likewise inappropriate handling and disposal of materials risks injuring you, others or

damage to our facilities. We have policies on Risk Assessment and Health and Safety, which we ask you to read and sign that you understand them. We have safety sheets or method statements for many of the power tools, as well as equipment manuals or manufacturer's instructions. Again, read these before using the tools, even if you are used to operating similar equipment elsewhere. If in any doubt, seek guidance or assistance. We keep a Safety Instruction Record so you and we can keep track of what you can use safely.

- **Respect yourself.**

- Medication: If you are on medication, please ensure that you arrive at the Shed with your medication up to date, and have sufficient supplies with you for the duration of the shed session and your journey home.
- *"The Older I get the Better I was"*: None of us is getting any younger. Don't assume you can always do what you used to be able to do, so swallow your pride and ask for assistance from other Sheddors. We are all on a similar journey, and part of being a Shedder is a willingness to ask for help from, or offer help to others.
- Alcohol and Drugs: We have zero tolerance of alcohol and recreational drugs use. If you turn up at the Shed under the influence of either of these do not expect to be allowed in - you will be asked to leave immediately. There are no exceptions. Come back when you are clean.
- Smoking: If you must, do so outside the Shed and well away from entrances and other non-smoking Sheddors.

- **Wise up.**

- Find out who on the Management Committee represents your interests e.g. Shed projects, Community projects, tool purchases. There will be a list in the kitchen/snug with mug shots.
- Regular Management Committee meetings are normally held on the first Tuesday of each month. You can influence events by raising issues with Committee members. The minutes of each Committee Meeting are posted on the notice board.
- Occasionally a brief Shed Meeting is held to bring members up to speed on the latest developments, raise problems, thrash out issues and celebrate SUCCESSES. Speak up - we want to hear from you.
- Regularly read the Notice Board and visit the SLAMS website [www.s-lams.org.uk](http://www.s-lams.org.uk) to keep up to date. To share discussion of shed projects

online use [www.facebook.com/SomersetLevelsandMoorsShed](http://www.facebook.com/SomersetLevelsandMoorsShed). But please don't post pictures of our expensive tools - it invites crime.

- Committee Members are key holders to the Shed, responsible for unlocking and locking-up, and act as Session Supervisors. You may need to know a couple of names and phone numbers in case someone fails to open up. You'll find these in the kitchen/snug.

## **And now the Boring but Important Stuff.....**

### Arrival at the Shed

Limited parking is available in the lane leading to the Shed. Do not park beyond the end of the Shed adjacent the canal as this obstructs neighbours' legitimate access and turning. Parking alongside the Shed is reserved for disability drivers. Your parking must allow easy access by emergency vehicles (Fire, Ambulance etc) as well as the Somerset Waste Partnership truck. Owners of larger than average cars should park in Old Taunton Road, or nearby in Morrisons Supermarket car park (3 hour limit) and walk the short distance (5 minutes) back. Never obstruct the Shed door or side gate - both are emergency exits.

On entering the Shed:

- Sign in (full name IN CAPITALS please) listing your session donation.
- Find and wear your name badge at ALL times.
- Read the Daily Notices on the White Board. Listen to any announcements, others news and share your news.
- Tell the session supervisor what you intend to do that day, so that he is aware of any potential implications for the use of workshop space or tools and any assistance that you might need, or can offer.
- (If the number of Sheddors attending a session is more than is safe to work, the Supervisor will ask that you wait until space is available. Take time out for a brew, read the interesting stuff in the snug or on the notice boards, or chat to others in the kitchen or by the picnic bench. But don't loiter in the work areas.)
- Make sure you have the appropriate protective footwear and clothing and obtain any necessary PPE from the filing cabinet BEFORE you commence your project.

## Emergency Procedures and First Aid

Make yourself aware of the emergency exit points from the Shed, power-off buttons or switches, the First Aid station and the location of the Fire Assembly Point.

In case of fire, switch off electricity to your equipment; shout “FIRE ! FIRE !! FIRE !!!”; leave the building by the nearest safe exit; meet at the Fire Assembly Point. Do not attempt to tackle the fire unless trained to use the equipment.

Fire alarms may occasionally be sounded. If done with prior notice, it will be a Fire Alarm Test, and Shed evacuation will not be required. If no notice is given, treat the alarm sounding as the real thing, albeit may be a Fire Exercise - so evacuate the Shed and meet at the Fire Assembly Point.

In the event of evacuation, follow the instruction of the Session Supervisor. Read the Fire Evacuation procedure and sign that you have understood it.

Accidents do happen, but hopefully only minor ones. Immediately report to the Session First Aider (see the White Board) or any other First Aider present- there is a list on the SLAMS Notice Board. Minor cuts etc may be dealt with using the supplies at the First Aid Station. More serious injuries will immediately be referred to a doctor, hospital or the emergency services, who will be supplied with your membership application form listing the medicines you use. We will inform your “In Case of Emergency” contact as given on your name badge, so make sure that is always up to date.

## In the Workshop Areas - Safe Working for You and Others

You are required to make yourself aware of health and safety rules and procedures applicable to the Shed and apply them. That means YOU are responsible for working in a safe manner at all times, considering not only your own safety but also the safety of others around you.

If you persist in unsafe practices you will be asked to leave - for your and our safety's sake.

If you see others working unsafely, tell them - its your DUTY. If necessary, intervene and stop them before an accident occurs.

Keep all designated doorways, gangways and exit points free from obstructions or easily flammable materials, including rags, sawdust, paper etc. Report any hazards to the Session Supervisor.

Always keep the workshop clean during activity - hazardous substances are to be stored in the metal cupboard as soon as you have finished using them. Waste flammable materials are to be disposed of in the containers provided as soon as practically possible. Do not leave hazardous materials lying around.

No lone worker is allowed to work in the Shed at any time. No exceptions, so please don't ask us.

You may only use the power tools that we have agreed with you as a result of the Capacity Self Assessment and Tools Competency Assessment that you must complete. Some tools are only authorised to be used if two Shedd-ers are operating and assisting.

Do not enter areas marked by black and yellow hazard warning tape unless you are authorised to use the equipment and intend to do so. Do not loiter near or enter these areas if the tools are being used.

Where supplied, always read the Safety Sheets or Method Statements in work areas.

Ensure you only use a machine if its use is within the boundaries of your skills and knowledge.

Always use the personal protective equipment (PPE) provided, such as ear defenders, goggles, dust masks etc.

Use the dust extraction equipment whenever possible. Dust can spoil other areas of the Shed, it affects the health of other Shedd-ers and airborne wood dust is an explosion hazard.

In the event of an emergency, power off all power sockets in the work areas. Do not reset until instructed to do so.

Always try to use wall sockets for power in preference to extension cables. Use extension cables only in exceptional circumstances, with the agreement of the Session Supervisor and place them carefully. They are a trip hazard.

After you have finished using a machine, switch it off, leave it safely stowed in its neutral or locked position and switch it off at the wall socket before moving to another machine or leaving the area.

## Considerate Working in the Shed

If you plan large projects in the shed, obtain permission from the Management Committee or Session Supervisor before starting.

Most benches are for two man working. Share them when needed. Don't hog work space or other Shed facilities.

Respect the property and work of others; don't take tools or other items they are currently using or borrow their tools unless you have their permission.

Respect another Shedder's work. Don't criticise it "*I wouldn't have done it that way*" and don't mess with it. However there is no issue in you advising that there are alternative methods or facilities in the shed for undertaking tasks.

If you break off to make a cuppa, always ask others if they want one as well. The favour will be returned.

Tidy up as you go along. Cluttering up bench and floor space with your discarded tools, offcuts and part-finished work, while you go off to do something else for a while, deprives others of much needed working space.

Space in the Shed is at a premium. As appealing as the idea may be of adding more tools and materials to the Shed, think! - Where are we going to store them? Obtain permission from the Committee before bringing them in.

All personal valuables are brought into the Shed at the owner's risk. Although standards of honesty among our Sheddors are high, sadly there have been a few limited occasions when attractive Shed or personal items have "grown legs and walked". Be advised.

## So You Want to Use Your Own Tools in the Shed?

If you wish to bring your own tools into the Shed, you may do so only with the prior permission of the Shed Supervisor and providing your tools are serviceable, in good order, and any electrical tools have been recently PAT tested. We might be able to do PAT testing for you, but ask in advance.

You are not permitted under any circumstances to let other Sheddors use your tools if those tools are in a category for which they are not assessed as being safe to operate. Their badge colour is a good indicator of this, but always check with the Session Supervisor. You are responsible for ensuring they use your tools safely.



Notwithstanding any permission given you by the Session Supervisor, you are responsible if the use of your tools by you or others (even without your permission) results in injury to (a) you or any other member or visitor to the Shed, or (b) damage or loss of your tools, or (c ) damage or loss to other Shedder's or visitor's work or possessions, or any of our facilities.

So you might wish to think twice before bringing your tools into the Shed.

### **In the Kitchen, Health and Hygiene**

Keep the kitchen tidy, wipe up spillages immediately; there's no one to clear up after you.

Wash up all used mugs, plates and cutlery and put them on the draining board. You might even use the tea towels provided and do the complete job!

Your session donation includes the makings for tea, coffee and biscuits, but these don't get into the kitchen by magic. If milk, sugar, tea, coffee or biscuits are running short, take a stroll to the nearby convenience stores and buy some. If you give the Treasurer a receipt; he will reimburse you. Alternatively you might just wish to donate these to the Shed. It all helps us make ends meet.

Only tea, coffee, milk, sugar and biscuits are for communal use. If you have anything special of your own, mark it up with your name and store it in the fridge. But note that unnamed or perishable items brought in for personal use will be thrown out at the end of the week.

Help us to recycle. Put all waste, whether kitchen waste, office or workshop waste in the assigned bins. Or better still, take it home, including your perishables for disposal. It saves us a job and we have plenty else to do.

Keep clean. Follow good hygiene practice, washing hands after attending the toilet and keep the toilet area tidy. Leave it as you would like to find it. This all helps stop the spread of disease.

Keep the door to the First Aid point closed at all times unless using it in conjunction with a qualified First Aider. It helps keep the area clean and dust free.

## **Before You Leave.....**

When you have finished for the day, or at least 15 minutes before the end of the session:

- Mark up any jobs you have as work-in-progress with your name and store them with any relevant materials in the racking provided. Any work left on benches will be disposed of, so if its important to you, store it away properly.
- Clean up any machines or tools you have used as well as your waste.
- Ensure any power tools you have used are switched off, plugs removed from sockets and the machines are left in a safe neutral position. Update any status notifications for machine tools.
- Return tools to their shadow boards, or assigned storage places.
- Put all unused materials, hazardous materials and fixings back in their correct storage area. Ensure safe storage of large pieces of wood.
- Clean above and below and on your work area.
- Use the vacuum if sweeping causes atmospheric dust.
- Leave your work bench clean and clear, as you would like to find it at your next session. Put SLAMS PPE back in its storage location.
- Report any problems or emerging issues with tools, shortage of materials, new, emerging or residual hazards to the Session Supervisor.
- If you wish to borrow any SLAMS tools, check with the Session Supervisor, and if agreed, book it out and sign in the Day Book. Remember to bring it back at the next session, or as agreed.
- Before you leave, return your coloured name badge to the rack, and sign out (initials and time) in the day book.
- If, other than the Session Supervisor, you are last to leave, wait until he has closed down the Shed and locked the external door and side gate. The Shed is in a quiet location so if he is suddenly taken ill, or has an accident he may need assistance.

## Induction Checklist

So have we done a good job in getting you to speed on what the Shed is about and getting you ready to enjoy the Shed and its activities? Use this checklist and tick off the items that you have completed.

### Getting to Know Each Other, Who's Who, What's Where, Who does What etc

- Sit down, have a cuppa, get to know each other
- The Shed understands what you are looking for and why
- Your special needs, if any, noted
- Brief tour of the Shed, Kitchen and Toilets, Car parking; Opening times
- Balance of Own Projects v Shed Projects v Community Projects
- Committee Members, Supervisors, Designated Safeguarding Officer roles
- Monthly Committee meeting
- SLaMS Introductory Guide
- Notice board, Website and Facebook
- First Aid, Fire Exit & Precautions, Own and Shed PPE
- Taster sessions; Membership and session fees/donations explained

### Signing and Paying Up; Capacity and Competence Assessments, Tag Badge

- Complete the Membership Form; sign Disclaimer and Privacy Statements
- Pay your membership subscription, session donations
- Complete your Capacity Self Assessment form
- Complete your Tools Competency and Training Needs Assessment form
- Receive your name badge (coloured tag); insert ICE phone number.
- Safety Instruction Record: receive the General Safety Rules Briefing
- Safety Sheets, Method Statements, Manufacturer's Instructions.
- First Aid, Fire Safety and Emergency procedures
- Shed Supervisor: Reporting incidents, hazards or faults.
- Security of personal property + use of own tools in the Shed.

### The Less Interesting but Essential Stuff

- Read, understood and signed copies of our policies and procedures
  - Risk Management Policy and Risk Assessment Procedure
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Equality and Diversity Policy
  - Adult Safeguarding Policy
  - Grievance Policy and Procedure
  - Data Protection Policy
  - Fire Evacuation Procedure
  - General Safety Rules
  - Safety Sheets + Instructions: Hand held + bench mounted power tools