

Making it Happen Grow Grant - Newhaven Wood Creatives

INTRODUCTION

The Wood Creatives woodworking club was badly affected by Covid having barely sustainable membership numbers after the disease impact lessened. Through an active recruiting drive when mixing became permissible numbers slowly improved and ways were sought to expand our activities and thus our numbers. One of the things which we did was to expand our range of woodworking activities. So we applied for a £15,000 Grow Grant for the construction of an extension to our main workshop into our current wood store along with other works. This was granted and the physical work was completed and a programme of recruiting members has proved to be successful.

The construction work has been undertaken by small local companies and by members themselves. This first part of the project relates to the improvements to and expansion of our facilities. These are described below. The ultimate aim of the project is to improve participation by expanding membership and projecting our presence in the community.

APPLICATION AIMS

Our aim was to:

1. Expand our membership numbers
2. Broaden access to our facilities.
3. Extend our meeting times
4. Improve workshop safety (air quality and fire egress)

By:

Creating a woodturning and machine workshop

Building a new external wood store to accommodate the wood currently occupying our planned new workshop

Improving fire safety and dust control measures

PHYSICAL PROJECT WORK

New Wood Store

It was originally intended to build a new wood store as a lean-to to our building. However the cost estimate was too much and we elected to build a new stand alone shed and to make the lean-to as a self-build with minor help from contractors. We have now completed the shed as shown and also the lean-to. The lean-to frame is made of mainly recycled timber. This will enable us to store freshly cut wood for drying out over several years. The shed has enabled us to empty our present wood store. This is for wood which has dried (seasoned) and is ready for use. Part of the floor of the new shed was made from recycled timber. We will enclose the side store of the shed also with recycled timber. This will be part of our self-build.

New Workshop

The wood in the old store has been relocated to the new shed. The internal divider of the old store has been removed. The cupboard for the dust extractor has been built from recycled wood and panels rescued from being thrown out. The new workshop has been redecorated on a self-help basis. The installation of the dust extractor trunking was also self-help. The new electrical lights and power outlets have been installed.

We have moved the lathes into this area when all the other work was complete.

Workshop Doors

A new front door to the main workshop and a fire door was needed in the new workshop. These two new doors have been made and installed. The workshop entrance way porch has been repainted.

Benches

The removal of the lathes into the new workshop has provided space for additional benches for our wood working and carving. The new benches are substantial and are already proving useful.

Hot Drinks Preparation Area

Previously this looked like something left over from when the workshop was a schoolroom in the 1950s. We have installed a new kitchen style work area with cupboards, a fridge and a water heater. This has made a more attractive and hygienic area for preparing hot drinks and light snacks.

Completion of Physical Benefits

The new workshop has removed noisy machines from the quieter main workshop, provides significant dust control, is well lit with efficient modern LED lighting and has storage for tools and equipment.

The outside wood store has enabled us to manage stored, seasoning, wood ready for use.

The kitchen area has provided an attractive and hygienic area for the preparation of hot drinks and light snacks.

We believe that we have fulfilled the aims of item 4 of our proposal.

Financial Aspects

The project came in under budget partly by the use of recycled materials, partly by the forbearance of our contractors and partly by the work put in by our members. All aspects of the work were agreed by our landlords, the Hillcrest Community Centre, and the electrical work was certified by the Centre's own electrician. None of the grant money has been spent on ongoing costs. The savings have allowed us to buy a new bandsaw and a new lathe and these are now fully used.

The financial report on the project is attached.

FUTURE BENEFITS

The above work has inspired us to continue to make adjustments to our work space so we aim to continue to build on what has been achieved to far. But our main aims now are to:

Recruit more members

Broaden access

Extend our meeting times

And additionally to:

Project our presence in the community

More Members

Since the dire days of Covid the Club has been successful in recruiting more members. We are discovering that even people with adequate home workshops are finding that the company and comradeship at the Club is good for their mental health. With more members we are finding folks with new skills that they are ready to share and pass on. We continue to engage with the local town magazines and to use social media and these have encouraged new members to join.

Our recent expansion into wood turning has also encouraged new members to come to us. The workshop project is intended to help with this. Additionally we have a qualified wood turning instructor in the club and intend to open the Club up to running weekend taster sessions and longer courses.

As Covid restrictions were largely lifted in the Autumn of 2021 we had around 18 members. Currently we have 47 with new prospective members visiting often. We do not think that 100 members is out of reach.

Broaden Access

We see that there are two barriers to access: cost and opening times. We are currently open for 15 hours each week and at the end of Covid our monthly fee was £30/month. The cost therefore was less than 50p/hour - with free teas, coffee and biscuits! As our numbers improved our membership fee was dropped to £25/month with plans to drop it further as membership grow. Unwaged members can apply for a 50% discount. Of course like others we are faced with increased costs of rent and energy and we recently started to pay for metered electricity rather than paying a fixed monthly charge. We are also facing a rent review. Nevertheless, we are still committed to reducing the monthly membership fee.

Extending Meeting Times

Presently our meeting times are during the working day which excludes many potential members who are working or have caring responsibilities. We have opened for specific projects on the occasional Saturday and this has attracted interest. We have started opening on Thursday evenings with a professional woodwork teacher and have attracted several new members including one who wishes to bring his 13-year old along. We are also having an occasional Wednesday meeting. From pre-Covid days we have doubled the time that the workshop is available for members.

FEEDBACK

Our many new members are mostly joining to achieve a specific aim such as to learn woodcarving or turning. We receive lots of feedback like 'This is something that I have always wanted to do', 'I never thought that I would be able to do this' 'I recently downsized from a house to a flat and had to give up my shed come workshop, so it is great that I can pursue my woodworking again', and 'Until I saw your articles In Seaford Scene I did not realise that you were here and I am really glad that I found you'

Project Our Presence in the Community

As mentioned above we are engaged with social media and local publications. There is more that we can do:

Exhibitions (eg Art Wave)

Engaging with other local creative groups

Seeking wider publicity

Connecting with national interest groups

Art Wave saw many visitors to our workshop where we had an exhibition of the work of our members as well as laying on a wood turning demonstration.

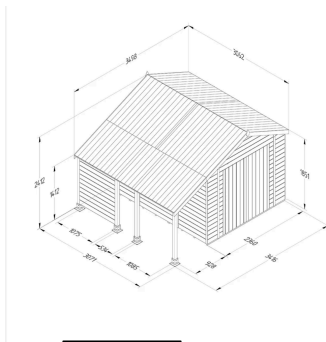
CONCLUSIONS

The physical aspects of the project have been completed and our plans for expanding membership and teaching have been implemented. We look forward to our continued expansion and inclusion.

We thank the "Grow Growth" team and their backers for this opportunity to bring in a wider membership and to enhance the scope and depth of our activities.

Jeremy Adams Chairman/Secretary

December 2023



The Shed Plan
the New Wood Store

Reality -



The old store (missing the junk and jumble)

The new outside store in progress(missing



the weeds and rubble)

Enjoying using the lathes in the new workshop. Nicely equipped with dust extraction.

Today's projects included a lidded pot, pens and Christmas tree ornaments.

WOOD CREATIVES Premises improvement				Grow Grant Cash Control			Started	
				Remaining	SPENT	RESERVED	Shared with Bill Giles	
Grant from SCDA				0.00	15000.00	0.00		
				Col D-G-H				
ACTIVITY (Wraps)	BY/FROM WHOM	INVOICE No.	Our Ref	Cash or Cheque No.	AMOUNT £p	RESERVED £p	Actioned by	Paid by
Purchase, Labour etc							Club Member	
Purchase of Shed		Invoice needed	1	Cheque 0036	1849.00		Bill Giles	Cr Card
Scalings for Shed and Leanto Foundations	Adam Clarke	plain docket (1	27	Cash	100.00		Joe Boylan	Ex Cash Acc
Purchase of Sink unit and worktop	B & Q	1032242311	2	Part ofCheque 0038	304.50		Joe Boylan	Cr Card
Shelving for shed	BIGDUG	1732130	4	Cheque 0039	143.99		Bill Giles	Cr Card
Screws for shelving etc	Electricfix	A12261433890	3	Cheque 0038	14.82		Joe Boylan	Cr Card
Ground Stakes	G & B Pro	3579521	26	Cash	29.99		Bill Giles	Cr Card
Fire Doors Purchase	Clearview Doors	3466	5	Part ofCheque 0040	1820.90		Joe Boylan	
Part Payment Electrics	N Thring	728	9	Cheque 0042	1500.00		Ted Gordon	
Electrics contract completion	N Thring	728	22	Part Chq 065/066	1400.00		Joe Boylan	Cr Card
Erect shed	ace of spades	1459	8	Chq 041	822.00		Joe Boylan	Cr Card
Fit Fire Doors & materials	CRG Buiding Services	docket 2	6	Part ofCheque 0040	277.77		Joe Boylan	Cr Card
Fit Fire Doors & materials	Mark Sinden	1001	7	Part ofCheque 0040	235.88		Joe Boylan	Cr Card
Roofing	Adam Clarke	Docket 2	15	Part ofCheque 0061	125.00		Joe Boylan	Cr Card
Work in plant room & Materials	Chris Buckley	Inv 4	17	Part ofCheque 0061	402.27		Joe Boylan	Cr Card
Work in plant room	Mar Sinden	Invoice	18	Part ofCheque 0061	395.00		Joe Boylan	Cr Card
Kitchen Refrigerator	QDA	2002657	11	Part ofCheque 0061	139.00		Joe Boylan	Cr Card
Sink plumbing items	HPS	S107016504	12	Part ofCheque 0061	28.16		Joe Boylan	Cr Card
Water Heater	ATC	228006399	10	Part ofCheque 0061	119.95		Joe Boylan	Cr Card
Screwite screws	Electricfix	A12588043156	13	Part ofCheque 0061	27.86		Joe Boylan	Cr Card
Roof Screws	Toolstation	XHQ350962488	16	Part ofCheque 0061	13.11		Joe Boylan	Cr Card
Sawn Timber 58 metres, Glue	Timber Requirements	75128	14	Part ofCheque 0061	240.11		Joe Boylan	Cr Card

Final Account for Project