




Wilton Town Council

Wilton Men's Shed

Report of the Town Clerk

 The Council Offices
Kingsbury Square
Wilton SP2 0BA

 01722 742093

 [Email the clerk](#)

 [Wilton TC Website](#)

Legal context

Wilton Town Council has authority to consider this matter under the General Power of Competence conferred by Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

The purpose of this report

To consider a request from Wilton Men's Shed for permission to site a workshop/shed to the rear of the Pavilion in Castle Meadow.

Report Author: Town Clerk
9th May 2019

Introduction

1. The Wilton Men's Shed project is a community group launched 2018. It has a steering committee, a growing local membership and its own bank account and [website](#).
2. The aim of the Wilton Men's Shed is to :
 - 2.5 To promote social inclusion for public benefit through the provision of a facility particularly for, but not exclusively for, men at risk of being socially excluded.
 - 2.6 To prevent social exclusion by promoting the opportunity for friendships, social engagement and skill sharing in a safe and enjoyable environment, in which members can meet and carry out creative projects acceptable to the Shed and of their own choosing, individually, jointly and for the benefit of the wider community.
 - 2.7 To promote good health and wellbeing to its members through active participation and, from time to time, providing opportunities for relevant health organisations to raise awareness of good health strategies for the benefit of the Shed.
3. The group has been awarded a start-up grant of £20k from the Army Covenant scheme.
4. Originally, it was intended to create a shed as part of the enterprise center at Wilton Hill, but due to ongoing delays and concerns about the grant funding being withdrawn, the group has been looking to secure an alternative site.
5. The group has asked the Council to consider allowing the shed/workshop to be located to the rear of the Pavilion in Castle Meadow (within the compound area).

Background

6. The Men's Shed movement started in Australia as a way of combatting social isolation for older men in rural areas. Within ten years of its beginning there were over 1,000 shed across the Country and the idea has now seeded across the globe. In Wiltshire alone, there are now 13 sheds with local sheds in Warminster, Westbury and Tidworth.
7. Men's Sheds are similar to garden sheds – a place to pursue practical interests at leisure, to practice skills and enjoy making and mending. The difference is that garden sheds and their activities are often solitary in nature while Men's Sheds are about social connections and friendship building, sharing skills and knowledge.
8. Sheds are whatever the members (Shedders) want them to be. Although labelled 'sheds,' they often aren't sheds at all. They can be empty offices, portable cabin's, warehouses, garages, and in at least one case, a disused mortuary. Some Sheds are purpose built workshops, but they rarely start out that way. Many don't have premises at all in the beginning and instead form a group that meets regularly for the social connection, company and camaraderie until they can find somewhere to kit out with tools - this is the stage the Wilton Shed has reached. Many Sheds get involved in community projects too – restoring village features, helping maintain parks and green spaces, and building things for schools, libraries and individuals in need.
9. Activities in Sheds vary greatly, but usually involve woodworking, metalworking, repairing and restoring, electronics, model buildings or even car building. Sheds typically attract older men, but many have younger members and women too. Whatever the activity, the essence of a Shed is not a building, but the connections and relationships between its members.
10. Wiltshire Council has been supporting Men's Sheds as part of its Health and Wellbeing Strategy, having identified the physical and mental health problems associated with older men living alone.

A shed for Wilton

11. Originally, it was planned to create a shed as part of the Enterprise Centre adjoining the veterans accommodation at Wilton Hill. It was envisaged that this would provide positive activities for the residents who can suffer from mental health issues arising from their past service. On this basis, the Army Covenant awarded a start-up grant of £20k to help cover the rent of a unit. However, delays to the Enterprise Centre have left the group concerned that the project may not proceed and that the funding may be withdrawn.
12. As a consequence the Shed has been looking for alternative accommodation. It discussed the possibility of renting a shop unit at the Shopping Village but the original unit was subsequently let on a commercial basis.
13. Following this set-back, the Shed Group has decided to use the funding to procure a shed of its own. The Army Covenant has been consulted and has agreed with this approach. This will provide greater financial security to the group and avoid the need for commercial rents. It will also provide a propose built facility the group can shape around the needs of members.
14. The group is now looking for a site for its shed and has asked if the Council would consider allocating space to the rear of the Sports Pavilion at Castle Meadow within the storage compound.

Recommendations

15. The Men's Shed project is part of a national organisation that works to improve the mental and physical wellbeing of shed members. While aimed at older me specifically, sheds are open to all. It has a growing membership and will offer positive activities for residents of the new veterans unit at

the Alabare facility at Wilton Hill as well as local people within the Town.

16. It is recommended:

16.5 That the Council agrees to the location of a shed to the rear of the Pavilion at Castle Meadow

16.6 That the Council agrees a peppercorn rent for the land on which the shed is located

16.7 That arrangements are made with the shed for use of the toilet facilities within the Pavilion

16.8 That the shed will be responsible for all costs, permissions, utilities, connections associated with the shed

16.9 That the shed is responsible for any reconfiguration of the compound behind the Pavilion to accommodate the shed – moving the containers if necessary.