

Northampton's first 'men's shed' club for older people is looking to expand⁵³

A former electrical engineer is looking for a venue to set up Northampton's first "men's shed" in a bid to stamp out loneliness in the older generation.

Martin Price has already gathered a small group of retirees to work on woodwork projects every week at Goodwill Solutions in Moulton, but now he is looking to branch out.

His group is one of a about 200 "men's sheds" now operating around the country, which aim to bring older men together to build items, work on projects and socialise - "a bit like a bigger garden shed" says Mr Price.



Secretary of Men's Shed Northampton, Keith Westhead, and treasurer Har Samrai, salvage wood from the Charles Bradlaugh pub to make benches back at the shed.

The 71-year-old former engineer and management consultant from East Hunsbury has already been pledged £5,000 to get the initiative started by Northampton Borough Council, but now needs to secure a low-cost 2,000 square ft venue in the town.

He said: "At the moment we have a yard and offices, but what we are looking for are workshop facilities.

"We are seeking help in securing funding and donations, identifying possible locations for the she and attracting members to join the start-up crew."

The men's shed movement started in Australia as a way of helping people suffering from social isolation in the mid-1990s.

The clubs have spread rapidly in the UK in recent years, with 240 groups now operating across the country working on all manner of woodwork and metalwork projects - including a group in Milton Keynes which has been building drones.

Mr Price was inspired to start a project in Northampton after seeing a similar one running in Tasmania.

"It was a revelation to me," he said. "There was this big old scout hut being extended by a group of men all aged between 50 and 80.

"I just thought it would be a good way to address the fragmentation of community here.

"They are about companionship, purpose and learning."

Mr Price said he has already had a lot of interest in expanding the shed and also has the support of Age UK in Northamptonshire.

To get in touch with Mr Price about joining his "shed," donating funds or offering a place for the group to meet, email him on mprice@engagementworks.com

⁵³ Northampton Chronicle