

# LANCASTER MEN'S HUB NEWSLETTER



Issue 3 October 2021



## Funding Boost for LMH

Lancaster Men's Hub is delighted to announce that a bid to the Lancaster and Morecambe Community Fund has resulted in a substantial grant that will both assist the group to continue its steady growth and will provide much-needed funds for materials and support for the projects that it has undertaken so far. The money will ensure that the Hub can continue its activities in the Cornerstone and that it can afford the necessary levels of IT and insurance support that a responsible organisation needs. It will mean that construction projects involving both members and guests can go ahead properly funded and that it can expand into areas that involve our guests in a range of social activities beyond the weekly Elevenses meetings. Lancaster Men's Hub would like to thank the Lancaster and Morecambe Community Fund for their generous and on-going support.

## ORGANISATIONS WE WORK WITH The Making Space Employment Service

We provide employment support to people with mental health needs and seek to improve their employability. The "currency" of the Service is to build up or revive skills, improve confidence, self-esteem and community connections. We offer a person-centred stepped holistic approach. Individuals may benefit from encouragement and support from our project volunteers who have lived experience of mental distress or mental illness. Like Lancaster Men's Hub, we are committed to "wellbeing through doing". 70% of people who are involved in our Service are men so we really do appreciate what LMH is doing. Keep up the good work!

## Visit from UK Men's Sheds Association representative.

On Friday 8 October Lancaster Men's Hub received a visit from Rachel Meadows, the Volunteer and Community Development Manager of the UK Men's Sheds Association. She attended our Elevenses session and met members and guests. Rachel had advice for the Hub and was able to suggest a number of new approaches that we could adopt to spread our message and support out guests. She was also

very impressed with what Lancaster Men's Hub had achieved so far and expressed an interest in further



contact with a "Menshed" that was going beyond what a typical Menshed usually offers. Rachel has, in fact, been welcomed as our first female member. Lancaster Men's Hub is not a Menshed per se but is affiliated to the national association for advice and mutual support.

The Service supports access into paid work including self-employment, educational and training opportunities, work experience, team working and volunteering. We support clients in work to retain employment or to change to more suitable employment and we support adults of working age who have mental health support needs. Some clients have other needs including learning disabilities, acquired brain injury, physical health issues or substance misuse issues. Many people have multiple barriers to gaining paid or unpaid work.

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## Local firms help LMH

Lancaster Men's Hub are grateful to two local firms for their support in beginning to get a community project off the ground. Moorland Community Group have asked the Lancaster Men's Hub to produce window box planters for residents and have asked that these are made from recycled materials. In order to collect pallets kindly donated by **Pallets Direct**, based at Forton Services, we were lent a pickup truck by **Water Sculptures** on White Lund Industrial Estate.

Three members of the hub collected the donated pallets and stored them, preparatory to breaking them up and constructing planters from the recovered wood.

Lancaster Men's Hub hopes to have at least ten planters completed in the near future and source more wood to produce planters and other useful and decorative items that can be made from recycled wood.



## Planter Project

Lancaster Men's Hub is picking up a project originally started by the Menshed but which has since stalled. The Moorland Community Group had asked for window boxes/planters made from recycled pallet wood and a number of these were made and distributed last year. Anne Jarvis and Sharon Phillips from the Moorland Community Group are working with LMH to restart the project and a first batch of 10 window box/planters are being fabricated and then assembled by Lancaster Men's Hub guests. Lack of suitable premises has meant that we have to rely on the



Cornerstone (again!) for room to assemble the planters, but the project is going well. Moorland Community Group sell the completed planters to residents and the proceeds are shared between the group and the Lancaster Men's Hub.

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## Meet the Trustees

Hello there, I'm David Smith, now retired and the Treasurer of Lancaster Men's Hub. I have lived here since coming to Lancaster University back

in 1972 and my wife and I have 3 wonderful children and now 2 grandsons – who definitely keep us on our toes! Having been fortunate to have worked all my life, from lifeguard, gaming machine engineer, production control, welder and the remaining 30+ years in IT, I now

have the opportunity to help others. An eagerly anticipated retirement can suddenly find men and women with a loss of comradeship, time on their

hands and often a feeling of loneliness. When I retired, I took up wood working, which helps keep me busy, and this is one of the many activities that members of the Men's Hub have expressed an interest in. At present we are searching for suitable workshop premises in Lancaster, but we still manage to fabricate various items to help other local community groups with their projects.

Having been on the Men's Hub's Steering Group from the beginning, I inevitably ended up with the job of designing our website, [www.thelmh.org.uk](http://www.thelmh.org.uk) where you can find out more about us, what we have been doing and what events we're putting on. Why not come along to our regular Friday Elevenses at The Cornerstone, have a cuppa, some cake/biscuits and meet some of the members?

Don't forget that we have Elevenses every Friday from 11.00 pm at the Cornerstone on Sulyard Street. Free coffee social drop-in. Everyone is welcome.

Our view is that everybody has something to offer and we want to see people getting involved in their communities. Everywhere in Lancaster, people with disabilities are making a big difference – we don't just sit around we get going! We are proud of what the people involved in our Service have achieved in spite of their personal challenges.

We deliver a structured employability programme which benefits both our participants and the community. Our project volunteers deliver over 100 hours of community work each week and Individuals gain valuable work experience and build up their personal contacts through participation in "mainstream" community activities. CVs are improved by adding current experiences to them and establishing supportive references.

We facilitate transport, use volunteer drivers, organise car sharing and establish activities near to where participants live so attendees can often walk. Levels of telephone support are also high. The organisation works in the Lancaster District, including Heysham, Morecambe, Carnforth and out to Garstang and Wyre.



*Making Space at an Equine Therapy project in Cumbria (Mediate with Horses)*

We offer one-to-one support, participation in work teams or learning opportunities, on line training and workshops/events, telephone consultations, email bulletins and notifications and we run employability related groups sessions with IT learning support.

Our partners include a lot of non-mental health organisations/ groups thus promoting social inclusion. The project has a broad range of referral routes which includes statutory mental health teams, hospital based teams, social prescribers and GP practices as well as self-referral. The Service is embedded within the community in non-clinical settings and non-mental health settings to help clients move forward and avoid potential stigma.

We are part of the voluntary sector response to growing unemployment, redundancy and hardship post-pandemic. We remained OPEN throughout the pandemic, working hard to address welfare needs and support people with their mental health and we helped



*Making Space Welding Class*

10 people find some form of paid work during that difficult time. Participation in our horticultural programme resulted in measurable improvements in mental health according to research by the University of Cumbria.

Making Space handles a huge number of face to face contacts and telephone queries every day. In addition to its intensive support programme it also offers help to people who are not on the caseload but need its advice or support. Before the pandemic we assisted around 10-15 people into paid work each year, around 250 people into some form of community volunteering, and 30-60 people into education or learning. We continue to benefit from COVID funded telephone and online support delivered by a local trained health and wellbeing coach, Janette Edwards. We work with private businesses and in social enterprise settings. This may take place in private grounds, estates, community centres, clubs, sport centres and stadiums. We also use community and faith sector centres. We are about to restart our "Making New Futures" sessions at Morecambe Library 1-3pm in November.

The Service is available 10 am - 4.30 pm Monday to Friday with telephone support in the evening. The Employment Development Worker is currently supported by 9 volunteers with lived experience who support service delivery. Such project workers also attend community events and help out in many different ways, sharing their skills which include woodworking, art and craft, car mechanics, construction, music, IT and social media, and even magic and balloon making. The list is so long! People ask what would be your dream – I would like to win the Euro Lottery and set up a city farm at the former site of Skerton School – let's keep dreaming! Let me know if you are interested. Maybe space for an LMH workshop!

**Ring Lionel on 07738 148289 for more information**