

CASE STUDY – MEN’S SHEDS

Introduction

Men’s Sheds are community spaces where men and women can connect, converse and create. Set up to help to reduce loneliness and isolation, many have turned into small businesses, creating joinery items such as bird nest boxes and other wildlife habitats. There are 550 Men’s Sheds in the UK. In this project the Green Connections team worked with three Men’s Sheds, Knighton, Llanfyllin and the Brecon Shed.

The Project

As part of the Green Connections (GC) commitment to improving biodiversity, Men’s Sheds were enlisted to create a range of boxes including swift nest boxes, bug houses, bat boxes and homes for small mammals such as hedgehogs. As part of the Swifts in Powys project GC worked with the Sheds to refine the design of a swift box which could be fixed under the eaves of buildings. A total of 219 boxes and habitat features were built.

Radnorshire

RWT commissioned the Knighton Men’s Shed to build a large variety of animals homes including 57 bird boxes and 12 bat and bug houses, and 15 habitat features including planters, nature trail signs and one hay baler. The bird and bat boxes were distributed across Radnorshire to landowners, community groups and businesses. The hay baler was used during the hand powered hay making feasibility study, The planters were planted up with native wildflowers and sited at Waun Capel Park and the Newbridge on Wye Area for Wildlife.

Brecknock

WSWWT worked with the Brecon Men’s Shed to build swift and dormouse boxes. They made 11 swift boxes and altered 50 dormouse boxes by replacing nails with screws to hold the wire keeping the lids in place, cutting lengths of wire and cutting notches in the lids to stop them slipping out of place.

Project Outputs

Men’s Sheds:	Brecon	Knighton	Llanfyllin	Total
Swift boxes	11	27	45	83
Bird nest boxes	0	25	0	25
Owl boxes	0	5	0	5
Bat boxes	0	6	10	16
Bug houses	0	6	15	21
Hedgehog homes	0	0	4	4
Dormouse boxes	50	0	0	50
Habitat features	0	15	0	15
Events	Title		Attendees	
Llanfyllin	Build a box day		29	

Over the course of the project Men’s Sheds made 204 animal homes and 15 habitat features including nature signs, planters and a hay baler. An MWT collaborative event with the Llanfyllin Men’s Sheds was attended by 29 people.

Montgomeryshire

MWT worked with the local Llanfyllin Men's Shed to build the perfect swift box. Men's Shed members took the lead and continued to tweak their design over the next year until the ideal swift box was ready to go into production.

Providing Llanfyllin Shed with the opportunity to build these boxes over the last year or so has been truly beneficial to the group as they haven't had many other orders. It has kept them busy and in "business". It has also helped them to learn new skills, and to upskill new members with these skills. One committee member mentioned how important our collaboration has been for them, particularly a new member who is rurally isolated and hasn't left the house much since Covid. When he joined the shed, he got stuck in with making the boxes and learning new skills.

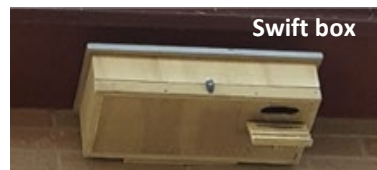
MWT also ran a collaborative event, Build a Box Day, with Llanfyllin Shed helping to promote the work they do in the local area. Members of the shed made flat packs of bird boxes, bat boxes, and mini bug houses for people to put together on the day. Twentynine people were attracted to this lovely community event. It really helped to promote the shed and the work they do. Two people were interested in becoming members, and a couple of people were interested in placing an order from them.



Planter



Bat box



Swift box

Photos by
RWT MWT
and
WTSWW



Hedgehog box

Project Outcomes

- 204 new homes for wildlife will be in use for years to come, improving survival rates, improving biodiversity and making animal communities stronger.
- Members of Men's Sheds taught new skills to help wildlife in the future and able to pass on those skills to existing and new members.
- A new community able to take action to help wildlife.