

SRS FAQ's

General

Is this the same as the Repair Shop on TV?

Not quite. The TV show employs well-paid professionals to repair items which are often of great value. When they are mended the owners sometimes cry with joy. That's TV. At the Repair Shed, we have skilled volunteers who mend everyday items to the best of their ability to save real people actual money. That's real life.

Is this the same as a Repair Cafe?

Sort of, yes. Like a Repair Cafe (or similar) the aim is to repair ordinary items for people. In a Repair Cafe there are of course limits on the types and size of items which can be looked at, and the opening hours are restricted. Also a central idea is that the owner of the item helps with or at least observes the repair, and so learns from it. At the Repair Shed, the idea is that the owner of the item drops it off for repair, and when the item has been done, it is available for collection.

Is this the same as a Men's Shed?

Sort of, yes, but with a different emphasis. Men's Sheds main aim is improving the mental health of members by providing a safe and secure space for men (mostly) to work and socialise together. It often happens that the principal activity is woodwork. At the Repair Shed the object is to repair items and so prevent them from going to the tip. It turns out that many of these are electrical or electronic items, and so that influences the tools and skills we use, though we are kitted out for metalwork and woodwork as well. However like Men's sheds we provide a space for people to work and learn together.

How does this relate to businesses which earn their living from repair work?

It is very important that the Repair Shed does not clash with local repair businesses by trading unfairly. So if a local enterprise exists to do the work you want done, and are interested in doing it, it would not be right for the Repair Shed to take it on. We'll be working to create a directory of local repair businesses which may be able to help.

For people with items to repair

How can I get my items to and from the shed?

In the first instance items will come in from Repair Cafes. This is possible because sometimes items would take too long to be fixed, or involve a process like welding that couldn't be done at a Repair Cafe, or need a specialist tool. As the Repair Shed develops, we would get more drop-off and pick-up points. There would be a form to fill in, and once

the item has been looked at, we'll get in touch to discuss the repair. There may be parts to buy or other issues.

What will it cost?

The work is done without charge, but we would ask for a voluntary donation to be agreed with you. The question is likely to be "what is it worth to you to have this mended?". Suffolk Repair Shed is a non-profit organisation and relies on donations to continue to offer the service.

Is there a guarantee?

Generally not. Unlike a professional organisation, the Repair Shed uses volunteers who are skilled, but often not formally qualified. They work to the best of their abilities to repair items, which are tested for operation (and in the case of electrical items for safety via a PAT test). See the full terms and conditions.

Are there some items you won't take in?

There will be some things we cannot look at from a safety viewpoint, including

- gas appliances
- refrigerators
- microwaves

In other cases we would not want to take work from local businesses.

What happens if an item can't be mended?

There will be a number of occasions where an item can't be mended, for example because

- we simply don't have the skills available
- spares are not available – or make the repair uneconomic
- the item isn't made to be mended, often the case I'm afraid.
- The item has genuinely reached the end of its useful life.

In these cases any donation would be returned along with the item to the owner.

Will I be involved in the repair?

Not directly, but there may be contact between you and the repairer to agree the extent of repair, and whether it makes sense to proceed (for example due to the cost of spare parts). You will be contacted once the repair is effected.

For Members

What does Membership mean?

Suffolk Repair Shed Ltd is a company limited by guarantee which is one of the most equitable forms of incorporation. Each member will have a vote both at formal AGMs, and at other meetings. It is envisaged that there will be at least 3 directors who will meet infrequently, but that the day-to-day running will be done by a committee formed from the membership. In the event of the company being wound up your liability is limited to £1.00.

At this stage it looks like there will be two types of members, namely repairers and makers.

Repairer Members

Repairer membership enables you to come to repair sessions with other members which is the main aim of the enterprise. Membership is free, but you will not have access outside the hours of repair sessions.

Maker Members

Maker membership enables you to come to repair sessions with other members which is the main aim of the enterprise. It also entitles you to access to the shed at any time for your own projects (subject to you being suitably trained to use the relevant equipment). Some equipment and processes (eg lathes and welding) may be tagged out to prevent it being used while no-one else is around for safety reasons.

For this class of membership there will be a subscription. At a first guess we'd be looking at £15 a month or £150 for a year to use the shed. If you do repair work which attracts a donation, a portion of that donation can be set against your subscription.

Will I be mentored?

One of the great benefits of working alongside others is that you will have the opportunity to develop existing skills, and acquire new ones. So while formal mentoring is not envisaged, there will be lots of scope for sharing knowledge and learning.

Do I need to bring my own tools?

The idea is that the Repair Shed will be fully equipped, but if you have favourite tools, or something we don't yet have, then you are welcome to bring it/them along. (Be careful not to lend them to anyone, though!).

When will sessions be?

From the responses we've had so far it looks like repair sessions will be held on a weekday evening to start with.

How will I earn credits against my subscription?

The current plan is that for each job a donation will be agreed with the owner, contingent on the item being repaired. Assuming it is repaired, then a third of the donation will be used to offset the subscription of the maker members involved in the repair, and two thirds will go towards meeting the costs of running the shed.

Donations from repairer members' activity go entirely towards the running costs of the shed.

Will the public/owners of the items be involved?

The shed will not be open to the public or, except for pick-up and drop-off, the owners of the items in for repair.