



**For immediate release:** March/April 2020

Please Give Your Support to Local Community Projects across the UK.

The Coronavirus health pandemic we face is a once in a generation event for us all and no-one could have fully prepared for this but there are things that we can do. Now, more than ever, we need to make sure that we can continue to support people who are vulnerable and will be very badly affected by the Coronavirus outbreak.

Staithes Area Men’s Sheds , based near Whitby, North Yorkshire, brings together Men and women of all ages for a range of activities that involve conversation, craft and mutual support as well as more unusual activities such as wood turning, use of power equipment, novel crafts and outward community engagement**.**

Due to Covid19, Staithes Shed had to close on 16th March. However, they have remained in contact by phone, email and now have the facility to video conference with some Shedders. They have also made the Sheds available to help the community in any safe way they can. In a show of solidarity, one of their Sheds erected a cover at a surgery to protect those collecting prescriptions through a side window.

Speaking after he closure, **Graham Storer, Project Co-Ordinator said**, *"The essence of Sheds is not what is made or done. It is the comradeship and family feel. That must and will continue mainly through our online presence and electronically.*

On how their members can put their skills to good use at home, Graham added: “*We encourage our Shedders to keep on doing what they can at home (birdboxes was a recent call on us) and wave to other locked down souls across the street! Sheds are people."*

The project and work being done by the charity is clearly having a profound positive impact on its members. **One said:** *“My mum is a regular at the Shed. She really enjoys herself and tells me how much she misses the camaraderie now it is closed. She suffers with early stage Alzheimer’s, and the Shed seems to be just the right ambience for her to feel useful, included and stimulated. In fact, it has proven to be invaluable to us as a family. It’s such a relief to know that mum still feels valued outside of our four walls. Long live the Shed!”*

**John Hume, CEO of People’s Heath Trust which distributes money through The Health Lottery said:** *“This is a difficult time for local people and for the local charities which do an amazing job supporting them. Some are using technology and other methods to make sure people stay connected, but we know that as the virus gets worse, demand will increase greatly.*

*“We desperately need to be able to keep supporting local charities and the only way we can do this is if we receive more good causes money raised through The Health Lottery. So if you’re an existing customer- thank you for continuing to support and if you’re new to this, please consider supporting local charities by playing The Health Lottery.*”

Money raised through Health Lottery Yorkshire & Humber is continuing to support local projects and has raised over £10million in funds to support 320 projects to date in the region.

With the money raised through The Health Lottery, we have supported disabled young people and adults, older people, people with autism and children and adults living in poverty. All of these groups are vulnerable right now. Many have very low incomes or are on zero-hours contracts or part-time work which is drying up in this crisis.

Many of these projects are needed more than ever at the moment. Many charities are staying open to support people in need and many are moving what they do online, to make sure that people remain connected and know they are cared for.

It may feel like we are powerless at the moment, but we are not. You can help by ensuring that you continue to support these good causes so that vulnerable people can get through this very difficult period.

**-ENDS-**

**Issued by Hollicom on behalf of The Health Lottery**

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