

## The Silver Dreams Fund podcast

Hello and welcome to the Big Lottery Fund podcast.

**Big Lottery Fund:** The UK's aging population means that it's more important than ever to recognise older people's contribution to our society. But research has found that many people associate getting old with loneliness and long-term illness. The Big Lottery Fund has announced that it is investing £110 million pounds in older people. This is launching in October with the £10 million 'Silver Dreams Fund' in association with the Daily Mail. England Director Dharmendra Kanani explains how the Silver Dreams Fund works.

**Dharmendra:** The Big Lottery Fund is really interested in investing in older people because what we'd like to do by adding value as a lottery distributor is to promote and celebrate the positive aspect of ageing and understand actually older people have a lot to contribute and let's turn the negative into a positive, so that will be the litmus test of this fund is that actually is it positively portraying older people in England today, is it using older people as an inspiration and a source of inspiration to provide the solutions and are they at the heart of the solutions of the projects that are being devised, that's what we want the Silver Dreams Fund to be about.

**Big Lottery Fund:** Big has already funded many inspiring older people's projects. Men In Sheds is a project run by Age Concern in Exeter. The idea was to get older men involved in practical activities that they could do together. This group of about 20 guys meet in a garden shed to restore garden tools that are then sent off to a charity working in Africa.

**Big Lottery Fund:** Age Concern Exeter noticed that older men were not engaging with many of the activities they provided. So in 2009 they were awarded over £4000 under our Awards For All programme. Men In Sheds is now one of the projects that Age Concern now provides thanks to the Lottery funding.

It's a project designed for men and is run by men. They currently have 18-20 members and they meet – as the name suggests – in a shed; collecting and restoring tools that have fallen into disrepair. So let's find out what they're up to.

Well, it's pretty noisy in here. Everyone's busy sanding and grinding and scraping and chatting... there's a lovely atmosphere, actually. People just kind of getting on and doing a job but socialising at the same time.

Malcolm runs this project. Can you just explain, Malcolm, what Men In Sheds is about?

**Malcolm:** Men In Sheds is an activity where we get together – old chaps who have retired or live alone or have nothing to do – and they come along to our little workshop and in an environment of men and tea and biscuits and workshops, we clean up tools, sharpen them and renovate and refurbish them. Most of them are then packed into kits and they are sent off to various countries in Africa where they will be used again for several generations.

**Big Lottery:** And why was this project started?

Malcolm: Because Age Concern have extremely good facilities for elderly people to sit in rooms and sing songs and chat and enjoy themselves, and 90% of the females that go to these things love them. They've had a good day out, a good chat and a good gossip... You'll find that most men of this age group really find it rather difficult. They would much rather be involved in doing something. Especially something that they've probably been part of for the past 40 or 50 years of their lives. So this was started with the idea of getting men into an environment which they could enjoy and relax and discuss all the things of life.

Ray: My name is Ray Woodland. I've got a box of old pliers, and so what I do: I check them over, and what I do, is I get a wire brush and clean them off, then I put a thin coat of oil on the pliers to keep them looking good.

Big Lottery: What difference does this make to your life, coming here?

Ray: Well, I've been coming here roughly about a year. I get disability living allowance and my doctor said it would be a good idea if I come to Age Concern and they put me onto this project and from a health point of view, meeting the other friends that I've made here makes me feel real good. Because you have a laugh, you have cup of tea and a biscuit, and you're under no pressure. And the atmosphere is so relaxed that you can get on and do the proper job. I must admit, since I've been coming here, I've really benefitted because of the people I've met here. They're really lovely to me and this helps my wellbeing. And also, it makes me feel good that I'm trying to help other people.

Big Lottery: Would you miss it if it wasn't here?

Ray: I don't know where I'd be. I look forward each week to coming and if it wasn't here, I would be a very sad person. It makes everything worthwhile; it makes everything worthwhile to do it...

Big Lottery Fund: One Show presenter Angela Rippon is keen to support BIG's investment in older people. Angela talks about her experiences of being a TV presenter who is now in her 60s.

Angela: From a personal point of view apart from one famously recorded incident where John Birt who was then the Director General of the BBC told me Angela you have to accept you've had your day and it's time that you let the younger women come behind you have their opportunity, apart from that which happened 17 years ago I'm still here and he's not, so I think that says it all really.

Most of my friends because we're of the generation, the can do generation who are now in our 60's and 70's we still in our heads are 30 and unless your unfortunate enough that ill health or an accident in some way reduces your ability to do something, I think young people don't recognise when they are 20 or 30, is that when you get to 50 or 60 providing your still relatively fit and active and you still get a huge amount of enjoyment out of life in your head you are still 30, you still think of course I can still do that and you do it.

So, no, I don't think my generation has that feeling that we hit 60, 50 or even 70 and its time to hang up your ski boots or stop going swimming, or stop hiking, you know just hang everything up and sit in the rocking chair and watch the TV, it's not in our nature to do that because we didn't do it when we were growing up, we didn't do it when we were maturing and we sure as heck ain't going to do it now.

Big Lottery Fund: So what are Angela's reflections on getting older?

Angela: The best thing about being older is having years of experience behind you, to know what's right and what's wrong. The funniest thing about older is that there isn't much that is funnier about it. Bet Davis said getting old isn't for wimps, she is absolutely right. The most inspiring person I know is Joan Bakewell. If there is one thing I could change about attitudes towards older people it would remind younger people that they're going to be old one day, get used to it.

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