

Rural Wisdom in Highland Perthshire,

Summary Note



Rural Wisdom is working with communities in Scotland and Wales to create opportunities for older people to shape their community. Our aim is make communities work better for older people and the other people who live there.

These are the outcomes we want to achieve

- More older people, and a more diverse range of older people, have a stronger voice
- Older people have the opportunity for more social connections in their communities
- There are more activities that are led by older people and are co-produced in the community, and older people get support from them
- People of all ages are part of creating communities that work well for older people
- Older people in rural areas are contributing to local and national policies and initiatives.

What we did

Over the summer we met people living across the area. The conversations centred on 4 questions:

- What is it like living here?
- What is working well?
- What could be better – especially for older people but also for whole community?
- Have you any ideas on what would help?

We started by telling people about the Rural Wisdom project and that we wanted to hear from them. We put a piece in the Quair, as people said this was the best way to reach people across the area. We also put items on community noticeboards and Facebook pages, and had items in community e-newsletters.

We have been at or in touch with:

- 17 community groups – mostly groups in touch with older people or mixed age groups plus a few with a stronger focus on younger people
- 8 groups of local people attending group activities
- 4 Gala Days, Highland Games and 4 Community Councils
- Services that support older people, to hear from the older people there.

Overall, we met over 175 people who live or work in this community. We also met people from other rural locations who told us about the very similar issues that affect people in their community.

We heard about how older people see the community working for themselves and other older people. We also heard how younger people think it could work for their older relatives and neighbours.

We plan to continue talking to people, including support providers and community groups who we were have not yet been able to meet.



The main points we heard

- This is a welcoming and friendly place that values and uses the strengths of people and communities. Older people want to continue being an active part of this.
- People want to stay independent in their own communities.
- Family, friends and neighbours are the main support for most people. People want to have better access to support and care that is based in the area and is flexible, to extend the natural supports in these communities.
- This area needs more options on housing, especially smaller houses to let people stay in the area for longer.
- Community facilities here are good and people value them. There are barriers to using some public facilities and older people are looking for more access to computers.
- Transport is a big problem for some people. There are specific problems that need specific solutions, especially on access to NHS services and to other services based in Perth.
- People value local shops and have ideas on how they can work better for older customers.
- Informal routes for information and communication work well. Poor access to broadband is a major problem for the area.
- People want to be heard and be part of decisions that affect their community. They have ideas on ways to make this better.
- People want to be part of building connections in the community, including between people moving to the area and those living here, and

between older people living in settings like care homes and others in the community.

“You can’t build a community just for older people, it has an impact on all the members who live there.”

“There is virtually no affordable housing in the area.”

“There would be less need for care and we could be more independent for longer if we had sheltered housing.”

“People don’t know where or how to raise issues – for example, who do you go to about transport problems?”

There are also detailed suggestions for locations within the area.

What Next? Things people would like to see happening



This is the initial list of developments that people would like to see. They all benefit older people living in this area but many of them will also benefit other people.

Some of these can be taken on through Rural Wisdom, while there may be existing routes that people can use. People expect that many of these will be taken forward by people working together, rather than by just one group of people.

- More ways for people to have company – activities in the community where people meet and more structured support such as befrienders.
- Creating more activities involving the people who live in the care home – them getting out to things and people coming to them.
- Weekend community activities that will help build the community.
- More information on sources of funds for bigger costs such as keeping churches and other buildings maintained – impact of them closing would be felt by whole community.
- Intergenerational activities that are natural and continue in each local place – whatever the people there want to do.

- Talking to local shops and businesses about access and parking.
- People getting together to find more ways to support older people who do not have or need a Blue Badge but do have problems getting around.
- Finding ways to make village halls more viable, including ways to tell people in other areas about activities.
- More information on how to protect yourself from con men and being pressured to sign contracts.
- Information on managing fuel allowances.
- More information on practical ways to open food packaging and prepare food – helps people stay independent.
- Support for people to apply for Blue Badges.

“Could we have shopping buddies who are tall enough to reach the top shelves? Or personal shoppers? Or a stool on request? Even just for an hour each day.”

Contact for more information

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