

Rural Wisdom Angus

Autumn/Winter 2017



About Rural Wisdom

Rural Wisdom is working with communities in Scotland and Wales to create opportunities for older people to shape their community. Our aim is to 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.



It's a good location in Angus, but it needs to be loved more.

All people need to feel valued and of worth. Everyone has something to give.

It's still a community, neighbours look after neighbours, people know each other.



What we did

Rural Wisdom is working alongside people living in Edzell, Brechin and the rural areas in this part of North East Angus.

Over the summer we met over 400 people living across the area. The conversations centred around a potting shed theme – inviting community members to think of their community as a garden. We asked:

- What's blooming?
- What needs nurturing?
- What needs sown? – especially for older people but also for the whole community?
- What are the challenges?

We started by telling people about the Rural Wisdom project and that we wanted to hear from them. We put items on community noticeboards and Facebook pages, and had a piece about the project in community newsletters.

- We attended 7 different community events over the summer, including Gala Days.



**You'll no weary in Brechin,
definitely not – there's aye
something going on.**

**There's nothing but braes in Brechin,
nothing but hills, so if you have to
walk it's quite a task for some.**



- We have been at or in touch with 14 community groups – mostly groups in touch with older people or mixed age groups plus a few with a stronger focus on younger people.
- We have spoken in depth with 8 community volunteers.
- We went along to group activities to meet the people who took part.
- We talked to people who are part of the Community Councils.
- We met a range of services that support older people, to hear from the older people there.

We heard 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.



It's a good place to live, it's a good caring community, I've loved it...

A downside for me in Brechin is you never seem to know what's happening, or going to happen until you get the press and you say 'I wish I'd known about that'...

You wouldn't be short of a neighbour to reach out to if you had a problem in Edzell.





There's a lot going on, there's a good network of community involvement, through the Cottage, the church, and just through the High Street.

How will communal services be maintained and invested in?

Groups need help to draw in and involve more younger people.



What happens next

Talking to people

We are continuing to meet people to hear about their ideas and how they want to be part of their community.

We are making audio clips and film clips as another way for older people to describe their life and their home area, and to say how they think things can be done in the future.

We are going back to the people we met to tell them what we heard and the plans for the next phase of Rural Wisdom.

We are sharing this report with other people across the area and with people who make decisions about services in the area.

Taking the ideas forward

People in this area will continue to come up with ideas on ways to make their communities work better for older people and others who live here.

Some of the developments people suggested are being taken on by local people and groups. Rural Wisdom is providing a way for community groups to get extra practical support for what they do.

The Rural Wisdom team is helping some developments get going. In early 2018 we are starting taster sessions – a chance for people to try something and decide if this is the sort of activity they want to continue.

People also came up with ideas on ways to improve opportunities for younger people who live in this area. We will be encouraging them and older people are looking forward to seeing younger people have more opportunities too.

The main points we heard

These are friendly places to live where people are known and looked out for and there is a sense of community spirit. Older people want to be involved and active in making their part of Angus a good place to live.

Family, friends and neighbours are key sources of 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.

There are community-run spaces, initiatives and activities which make a real difference in communities.

There are also places, especially public facilities, that are not used so much because they have become too expensive or are difficult for some older people to reach.

The geography of a place makes a big difference. In Brechin, many people find it difficult to get up the hills, while people in Edzell enjoy being in a flat place that is easy to get around. People feel that those who plan activities and services for older people need to take this into account.

Communication around what's going on can be an issue. Resources like the Brechin Voice have been helpful in getting the word out but they need resources and support to be maintained.

Older people enjoy contributing to their community but would like to see wider community participation in organising and volunteering so they feel less pressure in these roles as they get older.

People are feeling the impacts of closures and changes to some local authority services and want to be more involved in discussions about how local needs can be addressed. They have ideas on ways to make this better.

People value local shops and want to see these thriving as part of a strong and sustainable community.

Transport is a big problem for some people.

- People living outside Brechin often have a long bus journey to get into town even though it is a short distance.
- There are also specific problems that need specific solutions, especially on access to NHS services and to other services based in Dundee or Aberdeen.

People want to be part of building connections in the community, including between people moving to the area and those already living here, more intergenerational activities and more opportunities for all members of the community to connect.

Wider community issues such as unemployment have had an impact on the whole community. Older people want to see more opportunities for young people in this area.



We need more of a culture of working together. This place is too small not to do so.

It feels sometimes that Brechin gets left behind.

The bus services are poor for those who do not drive. It takes over 45 minutes to get to Brechin.



Next steps - Actions people would like to see happening

These are the initial ideas that people suggested as ways to nurture what is there as well as ways to fill gaps. We expect that people will have more ideas as Rural Wisdom develops in this part of Angus.

Older people contributing to making this a good place to live

Older people want to be part of the coming discussions about a possible Development Trust or Partnership in Brechin.

Find out who is doing work to spruce up Brechin town centre and ask how older people can help them.

Improving communications

Community groups to work together to improve communications so older people know what is happening, using a mix of ways for information to be shared.

Keeping active and connected

More community activities for older people living in and around Brechin – both people who need more care and support and those who are managing at home – so people can stay as well as possible for as long as possible. Start with some taster sessions and from this develop plans for the future.

Find more locations that can be used for community activities.

Talk to Angus Alive and Angus Council about the policy on charges for community facilities, so community groups can hold more activities there.

Share tips and experiences among community groups on ways to encourage more people to get involved.

Develop more activities that bring together people of all ages who live in local communities. Start with asking people what they want to do and then try something and learn from that.

Find ways for older people to get support to get to activities like swimming and going for walks.

Have more activities for older people in the evenings (but not too late at night).

Find out who is supporting people from other countries who come to Brechin and ask how local people can help new residents feel more integrated. For example, can we help people going to ESOL classes?

Find out about Men's Sheds and how to get one started here.

Find out about Community Transport in other areas and ways to improve transport for people who don't drive.

Easier access to health and social care

Talk to the Angus Health and Social Care Partnership about ways to have more clinics and other services in this area.

Talk to Angus Health and Social Care Partnership and voluntary services that support people with hearing loss, to find a way to get local services for people.

Share information so people know about very good services, such as Care and Repair and Community Alarm, and about Self-directed support.

Find out about ways other rural areas provide social care services for older people who need this.

Having a stronger voice

Find more ways for older people to contribute their experiences and views to the planning for local health and social care services.

Share ideas on ways for people living outside the main towns to be part of discussions about what happens in Angus.

Ideas that mostly benefit younger people or improve an area for everyone

Remind people about the support they can get from the Community Learning and Development Team and Voluntary Action Angus.

Support people to develop the Yard in Edzell as a place for young people and intergenerational activities.

Support the development of an Outdoor Gym in Edzell.



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