

Rural Wisdom Get-Together

Friday 9th March 2018

Inverness



Rural Wisdom: Older People Shaping Rural Communities

Rural Wisdom is a community development and shared learning project that explores the impact of community-based activities that are led by older people living in rural areas. It has been designed to benefit people across the UK.

There are 4 elements to Rural Wisdom

- Working alongside people in local areas in Scotland and Wales, to encourage more community-based supports and local services that are led by older people. The first locations are: Aberfeldy and the surrounding communities; Brechin, Edzell and the north Angus glens; Eaglesham; Leeswood and Milford Haven.
- Networks in Scotland and Wales, to bring together people from any area who are interested and want to share what they are doing.
- Linking up with people in other parts of the UK.
- Evaluating the impacts of what we do.

Rural Wisdom: Get-Together

As part of the Rural Wisdom Project we will be holding a series of events across Scotland. These 'get-together' events are for anyone who is interested in how rural communities can work well for older people and others as they age. We hope these Get-Togethers can help build a nation-wide network to share ideas, enthusiasm and inspiration about age-friendly communities. This will also provide a place to share any challenges or issues and work together to overcome these. We feel that it is important that our get-togethers move around Scotland and visit places that can share valuable insights into rural communities.

Rural Wisdom: Get-Together in Inverness, March 2018

We gathered in the Smithton-Culloden Free Church. We were joined by people representing a wide range of groups, organisations and services as well as Karina Ross from Dementia Friendly Communities Helmsdale.

If you would like to attend a future event, suggest a location or host a Rural Wisdom Get-together please contact: hello@ruralwisdom.org

Dementia Friendly Communities Helmsdale

Karina Ross – Programme Manager

Karina Ross from Dementia Friendly Communities Helmsdale (DFC Helmsdale) joined us to share the approach they have taken to support people to live well with Dementia.

DFC was established in 2012 to address the lack of support and services available to families who lived around the Helmsdale area. The geographical challenges that come with rural living meant that many families often slipped through the net of traditional services.

They aimed to create opportunities for people affected by dementia to be involved in their communities, to be connected, to feel supported and able to remain in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.

They achieve this through providing a range of opportunities:

Helmsdale Village Hub – a space designed for people with dementia and other diagnoses, welcomes anyone aged 55+ who wants to stay physically, mentally and socially active.

Bridge Over Troubled Waters – short-term care and support to “bridge the gap between a problem and its solution”. Completely flexible and designed around what will work well for you at that time.

Dinner to Your Door – not just a hot food delivery service but a friendly face, the delivery driver will happily stop for a chat or provide a listening ear. The service is available to anyone who wishes to use it from older people to young families.

Men’s Shed – it is a well-equipped space that offers men (and women) a space to connect with others. It not only benefited those using the shed, DFC were able to make a donation to the local rowing club whose members built the shed from materials donated by local companies.

Interactive Screens – these 50” screens enable groups and communities to connect with others, particularly useful in remote rural communities. To date they help to connect two community well-being hubs, a care home, a hospital and a day centre.

Art & A Blether – a safe welcoming space for carers, and others, to join an art tutor every week. Followed by a pop-up café for a blether and a cuppa afterwards.

For more information: www.adementiafriendlycommunity.com

Karina Ross: karina@dementia-friendly.com



Karina offered us some great examples of different approaches shaped by local people in response to the challenges and opportunities that present themselves in that particular geographical area. She stressed that DFC acknowledge the balance between providing supports that are specifically for people affected by dementia, while creating a self-sustaining social-enterprise that also supports the wider communities. They manage this by designing their opportunities to primarily work well for people affected by dementia but make them accessible to anyone living in and around the area.

What's working well in other areas?

At Rural Wisdom we love hearing about great things happening when local people and organisations work together to share knowledge, resources and strengths. The DFC Mens Shed is a fantastic example of this, as is their relationship with local community transport associations and schools.

Here are a few other examples that people shared on the day:

North Kessock Village Hall

The village hall is well used and has something happening every day of the week. We heard that it's a hub for the whole community to connect with each other and find out what's happening in and around the village.

The Black Isle Community Market, run by Transition Black Isle, also visits the village hall every month as part of their regular programme covering Cromarty, North Kessock and Culbokie. The market offers local produce ranging from food and drink to crafts and toiletries. The social aspect of the market is important too – offering a chance for a drink and a blether. This blend of social and economic activity that is led by local people and organisations helps communities to thrive.

North Kessock Village Hall: <http://www.kessock-hall.net/>

Transition Black Isle Community Markets: <http://transitionblackisle.org/north-kessock-community-market.asp>

Cycling Without Age

A movement that began in Copenhagen which offers older people the opportunity to get out and about in their communities via a trishaw. The first project in Scotland started in Falkirk but there are now groups around Scotland raising funds for their own community trishaw. The trishaw can seat two people, enabling them and a volunteer cyclist to get out and explore places that might otherwise be inaccessible.

We love Cycling Without Age's Guiding Principles and feel that they are relevant to much of what we're doing within our own Rural Wisdom projects:

“Generosity: *Cycling Without Age is based on generosity and kindness. It starts with the obvious generous act...It's a simple act that everyone can do.”*

“Slowness: *Slowness allows you to sense the environment, be present in the moment and it allows people you meet along the way to be curious and gain knowledge... because you make time to stop and talk.”*

“Storytelling: *...We tell stories, we listen to stories on the bike and we also document the stories when we share them via word of mouth or on social media.”*

“Relationships: *Cycling Without Age is about creating a multitude of new relationships: between generations, among the elderly, between pilots and passengers, nursing homes employees and family members. Relationships build trust, happiness and quality of life.”*

“Without Age: *...Life unfolds at all ages, young and old, and can be thrilling, fun, sad, beautiful and meaningful. Cycling Without Age is about letting people age in a positive context – fully aware of the opportunities that lie ahead when interacting in their local community.”*

Excerpts taken from: <http://cyclingwithoutage.org/about/>

To find out more information please visit: <http://cyclingwithoutage.scot/>

Go Golspie

Go Golspie is a Community Development Trust set up to stimulate the local economy and provide social activities. In 2017, they worked alongside local organisations to be able to take older people and people with restricted mobility up Ben Bhraggie. 57 people were transported up the hill in six 4X4 cars to take in the spectacular, well-known views that were no longer accessible to them.

The activity was so popular that they will be running the trip again this year. We love their sense of adventure and hope to see other opportunities like this across Scotland.

Ben Bhraggie Newspaper Article:

<https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/highlands/1212555/sutherland-charity-group-organises-convoy-up-steep-hill-to-give-locals-top-views-once-more/>

Go Golspie Twitter Feed: <https://twitter.com/gogolspie/>

Discussion Points

We rounded the session off by discussing topics, themes and sessions that people would find useful for future Rural Wisdom events:

- **Welcoming Communities**
How can villages welcome each other, to work together and share resources?
What makes communities welcoming to newcomers?
- **Rural Economy and Community Enterprise**
How can communities benefit from local tourism opportunities? e.g. NC500
Showcase enterprising groups and communities - themes/geographical areas.
Funding in a different way – what are the options?
- **Rural Challenges**
Transport
Mental Health
Networking and information sharing
- **Local Identity**
Can a strong local identity encourage people to be active in their community?
Pride of place – how to we celebrate our rural communities?
- **Living to our last breath**
We are sensual beings until our last breath.
Good deaths – What does this mean for each individual person?
How do we begin to have these conversations?
- **Evidencing Rural Issues**
Some communities are too small to be included into the SIMD and can then be restricted from certain funding opportunities.
Some rural communities have ‘deprivation’ of a different sense – how do we collectively gather examples and evidence this?

Connect with Rural Wisdom

These are just a few of the points raised on the day. If you are interested in any of the issues mentioned or have any examples that you could share with us, please get in touch.

If you would like to receive any of our Scottish Get-Together notes, attend future events or receive our e-newsletter that covers Rural Wisdom in Scotland and Wales please email us on: hello@ruralwisdom.org or call: 0141 419 0451

We are busy planning our next Get-Togethers. Our next event will be in Maybole, Ayrshire in June and we hope to be back up in the Highlands by the end of the year. If you would like to attend, or host a Get-Together please get in touch, we would love to hear from you.

For more information on the Rural Wisdom Project please visit:

<http://ruralwisdom.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/RuralWisdom/>

