

Rural Wisdom Eaglesham

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.



I've lived here my whole life and I wouldn't want to live anywhere else.

Neighbours are important here, you have to look after each other in a rural village.

We have a good GP service but the journey to the health centre is a tricky one. It's not that far away but there's no direct transport.



What we did

Rural Wisdom is working alongside people living in Eaglesham and the rural areas around it.

Over the summer we met with individuals and groups from across the area. We asked people what it was like to live and work in Eaglesham. We wanted to hear about things that were working well, things that could be better and what people wanted to contribute to their own communities.

We started by telling people about the Rural Wisdom project and that we wanted to hear from them. We put items in community noticeboards and on Facebook pages, and had items in church newsletters. We went along to coffee mornings and community events such as the Eaglesham Summer Fair and the Doors Open Day. We also visited local groups and organisations, such as:

- Eaglesham Community Club
- Montgomerie Court tenants
- Eaglesham and Waterfoot Community Council
- Lunch clubs



I think everyone presumes that we can go to Glasgow, East Kilbride or Newton Mearns for all our shopping and banking. That only works if you have a car and are able to drive.



- The Regeneration of Eaglesham's Environment (T.R.E.E)
- East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership
- East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure
- Alzheimer Scotland
- Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire
- The Richmond Fellowship Scotland
- Local shop and business owners

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.



It's a good community...but we need support when shops and post offices close.

There are a lot of new housing developments – how can the village facilities support these new families when they don't work for the current residents?

There's great groups and clubs to join in with.

I've lived here for years, but I still feel nervous going along to a new group. It's easier to go along with a friend. If you don't have someone to go with, you just end up not going at all.





Even if I can get to the shops, I can't get my shopping home up all those hills.

The library is good, but only if you can get to it – I can't.

We sometimes get left out of Council stuff – things happen in places like Barrhead and Eastwood.



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. When we started we focussed on people living in Eaglesham, but people told us that this community includes people living in Waterfoot, so we will also be hearing from people living in Waterfoot and the surrounding area.

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, especially the Community Council for Eaglesham and Waterfoot. Rural Wisdom can provide ways for community groups to get extra practical support for what they do.

Rural Wisdom will also support people and groups to connect with each other where they might have common interests or goals. We'll work in partnership with local groups and we can help to get some new things going.

The main points we heard

Eaglesham is a great place to live and people want to strengthen the community spirit that is already there. Older people want to be involved and take an active role in making the village a good place to live.

There is a lot of good things happening in Eaglesham and Waterfoot, but it can be difficult to know what's happening, when and where. Improving the communication across the whole of the village and surrounding areas would be helpful for lots of different people.

Local people, particularly older people, value their local facilities and would like to see improvements in this area. The village is now without a post office and bank. There are also concerns around the sustainability of the remaining shops.

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

The location of Eaglesham makes it a desirable place to live: it is a beautiful rural village close to Glasgow and large towns such as East Kilbride. However, this can mean that villagers lose out on services because it is presumed that they can travel to access these in other areas.

The geography of the area makes it difficult to get about the village. The steep, hilly streets create safety issues for many older people. This has an impact on everyday life and makes it harder to stay connected to others.

Due to the difficulties in getting around the village many older people are unable to access community spaces such as the village hall and the library.

The term 'older people' covers a wide range of ages and several generations. Many people feel that there are presumptions made about what works well for them which are based on outdated stereotypes.

Local groups that can arrange transport or have the use of a bus are well attended by older people.

Family, friends and neighbours play a key role in keeping people happy and well. When you live in rural area you rely on those people around you. How can we support this to continue and extend across the whole of the village and surrounding areas?

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

If you don't drive it can be very difficult to get to other areas. Transport is a big issue for lots of people in the village:

- There is no train station, so people must rely on the two infrequent bus services.
- The buses don't go around the village and many people can't make it to the bus stop.
- There is no direct transport service to the local Eastwood Health and Care Centre.
- The transport to other areas providing shops and services is very poor.

Next Steps - Actions people would like to see happening

People described many ways to make Eaglesham and the surrounding area better places to live for older people and others. 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 and around the area of Eaglesham.

Improving communications

Local groups to work together to improve communications so older people, and others, know what is happening. This will include community groups, the Community Council, faith groups, schools and local businesses.

Explore better ways to share this information such as community newsletters, public events and more noticeboards.

Better transport

Ask the current bus providers if they can make changes to improve the current services.

Explore how local resources could be shared to provide alternative solutions, such as the Boys Brigade mini-bus.

Find out what is working elsewhere and explore how it could be used in Eaglesham, such as Your Wee Red Bus.

Support 'volunteer driver' projects to become more sustainable by researching successful models in other areas. For example, we met people from the Rural Wisdom project in Pembrokeshire and the community transport network there is a good source of information.

Effective community facilities

Talk to local people to understand what they want their local shops to provide. This will help to make local shops viable businesses.

Speak to the Post Office and banks to discuss the possibility of replacing lost village branches with mobile van services.

Look to other areas for inspiration and advice about creative community-led/ volunteer-led facilities such as Post Offices and shops.

Speak to East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure about what 'outreach' services they can offer, such as library home delivery or touring theatre events.

Improving street safety for pedestrian accessibility

Bring groups together to tackle access issues such as leaf litter and overgrown plants and shrubs. Groups who are interested in this include The Regeneration of Eaglesham's Environment (T.R.E.E), Scouts, Schools and the Community Council.

Contact East Renfrewshire Council about improvements to pavements and surfaces.

Carry-out street audits and 'walkabouts' to work out what the issues are and what the solutions could be. Local groups could work alongside older people to improve access and placement of street furniture such as benches.

Strengthening intergenerational connections

Local groups such as schools, faith groups, Community Council, Scouts, Montgomerie Court Tenants, Girl Guides etc. could work together to create more opportunities for people to come together.

Younger people and older people can come together to tackle community issues such as clearing the pavements of leaves – this could contribute to awards such as Duke of Edinburgh for some young people.

More small-scale social activities could be provided for a wider range of people; music events, film nights etc.

Supporting local people of different ages to come together to access services such as Eastwood Health and Care Centre or local shopping centres.

Men's Sheds are working well in other areas. Speak to other Men's Sheds to explore whether they could work well in Eaglesham and Waterfoot.



I miss having a local bank – I don't feel safe using the cash machine on the street.

The hills make us older people feel quite wary, especially in Winter. You end up staying indoors more.





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