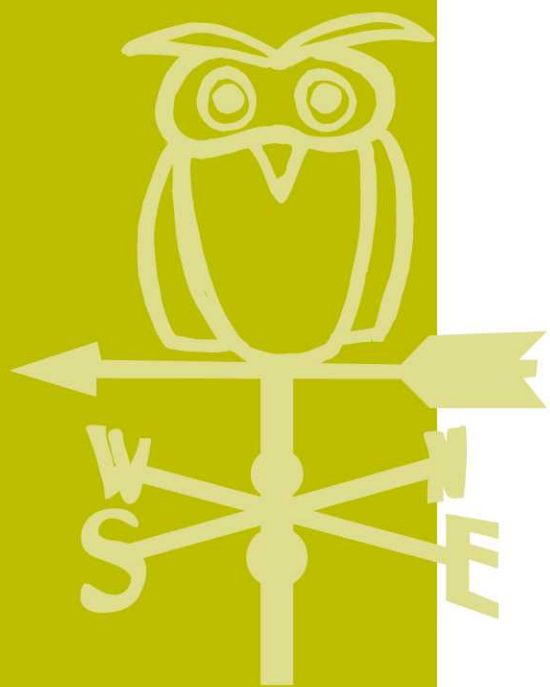


# Rural Wisdom Leeswood and Pontblyddyn

2018



[www.ruralwisdom.org](http://www.ruralwisdom.org)

## About Rural Wisdom

Rural Wisdom is working with communities in Wales and Scotland 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:

- 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.

Rural Wisdom regularly attends local events and activities to build and maintain community relationships. We listen to the wishes of the community and strive to work with individuals and groups to make positive changes and are the link between several organisations, both statutory and local. We ensure that people of all ages in the community have the opportunity to have their voices heard in a number of ways, including face-to-face meetings, telephone contact and a community email group. We hold regular Age-Friendly steering group meetings to create action plans.



**There is good community  
spirit in Leeswood.**



## What we did

Rural Wisdom is working alongside people living in Leeswood and Pontblyddyn. Over a six month period, we have met with individuals and groups from across the area. We asked people what it was like to live and work in Leeswood and Pontblyddyn. We wanted to hear about things that were working well, things that could be better and what people wanted to contribute to their own community.

Local businesses, groups and individuals developed a short questionnaire to establish what people like about living in Leeswood and Pontblyddyn, what they would like to see and if they feel they are living in an Age-Friendly community. The results of the questionnaire have been used to develop an action plan as follows. What people told us:

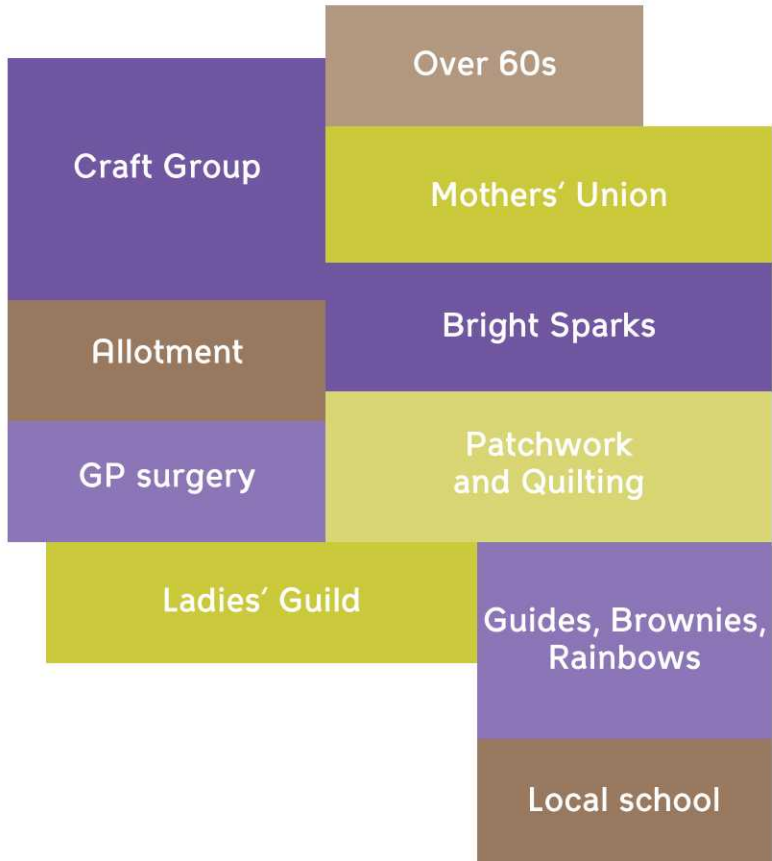
- More involvement of people of all ages to 'lighten the load.'
- To increase the number/range of activities in the community for people of all ages.
- To maximise the use of the community centre to protect the future of this valuable asset.
- To improve information about organisations/groups, and the available support.
- To increase the range of communication media, raising awareness about what is happening in the community.
- To increase community pride and spirit of volunteering, building community resilience.



**I worry that if people do not use the community centre more, we will lose it.**



**We also visited local events, groups and organisations.**



## What happens next?

### Talking to people

We heard about how older people see the community working for them and others. We are continuing to meet people to hear about their ideas and how they want to be part of their community.

The project has already been working with community members to develop the activities. Groups have been encouraged to work together and two rooms in the community centre which had not been used for several years have now been transformed. The rooms are now the home of the community cafe and will be available to rent. Community members have even been looking into forming a lunch group.

Rural Wisdom is also supporting people and groups to connect with each other where they have common interests or goals.

Some of the activities people have suggested have already been developed and others will be launched in due course.

We are continuing to work in partnership with local groups and the Ageing Well Network in Wales to develop the ideas and wishes of the community.



The afternoon tea was lovely, the Film Club is really enjoyable and I'm keen to know what the next film is!





## The main points we are hearing

Leeswood and Pontblyddyn are great places to live and people want to strengthen the community spirit that is already there. Older people want younger people to be involved more and take an active role in making the villages good places to live.

There are many good things happening in Leeswood and Pontblyddyn but it can be difficult to know what is taking place and when. Communication has already been improved across the villages, with an email group and a What's On feature.

The location of Leeswood and Pontblyddyn makes them desirable places to live; they are two rural villages close to Mold and larger towns such as Wrexham and Chester across the Welsh border. However, not everyone has transport and buses do not run late in the evening.

If you do not drive, it can be very difficult to get to other areas. Transport is an issue for some people in the village.



It would be great to get the younger generation involved.

I've lived here for 70 years and all my family is here – the community is good but more and different people need to be involved.



## Next steps

### Actions people would like to see happening

People described many ways to make Leeswood and Pontblyddyn better places to live for older people and others.

As they are working towards becoming Age-Friendly, we have placed the suggestions into the eight principles of Age-Friendly Communities.

### Outdoor space and public buildings

- Protect the future of the community centre by ensuring that the use of the building is maximised with a full schedule of events.
- Keep the park and footpaths clean and tidy with regular community litter picks, involving people of all ages.

### Transport

- Ensure that people are aware of the times and destinations of the bus services and of local voluntary transport options, as well as how they in turn can help them.

### Housing

- Liaise with other organisation about the needs of older people so that residents are able to grow older in their own homes with adaptive features.

### Respect and social inclusion

- Bring younger and older people together; for example, skills swapping sessions can be great fun.



Isn't it lovely to see the children  
out tidying up the village!



### **Social participation**

- Encourage involvement by those community members who are not currently active, develop the proposals made by local people, promote all ongoing activity and tackle barriers to participation.

### **Civic participation and employment**

- Bring all groups together, regardless of age or interest, and encourage co-operation to get things done. Work with the local Voluntary Council to promote volunteering opportunities in the community. Encourage individuals to have a social conscience and a sense of civic responsibility.

### **Communication and information**

- Local groups work together to improve communications so that older people and others know what is happening.
- Make better use of the community newspaper, notice boards and social media pages.
- Develop and email information group and directory of groups.

### **Community support and health service**

- Ensure that GP and surgery staff are kept informed of all services, events and activities.
- Encourage GPs to carry out social prescribing.
- Identify barriers to transport preventing people accessing their GP and work with individuals to find solutions.



**I worry that if people do not use the community centre more, we will lose it.**





## Where are we now?

Let's re-visit some of the activities we started:

- The beautiful community centre has been the focus for Rural Wisdom, ensuring that it keeps its place as the hub of the community.
- Ambitious work has been carried out within the hall to provide more usable space, for local people to hire and also as a home for the new community café.
- Local schoolchildren decided the name of the new community café in early 2018 and the cafe was officially launched as Café Haulwen – in English, this means the Sunshine Café. The café, a result of hard work by community members and friends from the local authority, is open every Thursday; local people can now enjoy socialising over a hot drink right on their doorstep.
- Two litter picks have been carried out, with others in the pipeline, to encourage pride in Leeswood.
- A sociable afternoon tea to get people together enabled the community to find out about the launch of the regular Film Club, which has proved to be a great success, leading to thoughts of afternoon tea-dances.



It is easy for me to walk the short distance to the café.

Encourage the younger ones to get involved; the 40 and 50-year-old could take over the groups.



- The growing community email group membership now numbers over 50. All kinds of information is now exchanged by email and the group provides an easy way for community members to stay in contact between meetings or events.
- The What's On feature in the Leeswood News is gaining popularity; a steady stream of new contributors are gradually adding to the dates being promoted in the listing.
- A good relationship is building between the community and the school & playgroup and some intergenerational activities are developing - for example, older community members and local schoolchildren got together to plant pumpkins and the playgroup visited Café Haulwen.
- The community is exploring digital inclusion, with a tablet course to be held in September in partnership with the local college.
- Dementia Friends training has been delivered to a group of young people and more sessions are planned.

Looking ahead, the community is considering starting a book group and a Knit and Natter group.

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

Rural Wisdom will continue to listen to the needs of the community and will keep in contact with the local voluntary Council, exploring any available funding that could support groups

People in the area will continue to come up with ideas of how to make their community work better for older people and others who live here.





## Contact for more information

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