

Notes & Ideas from Rural Wisdom Get-Together

Tuesday 9th May 2017, Perth



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. **If you would like to come along to the next event please contact: ruth@otbds.org**

Rural Wisdom: Get-Together in Perth, May 2017

Over 20 people came together in Perth (thanks to PKAVS for hosting) for the first Rural Wisdom Get-Together to explore the ways that communities can work better as we age.

The Get-Togethers will move to different communities around Scotland. If you think there is somewhere we should visit, or if you would be interested in providing a venue and hosting a Get-Together please contact us.

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.

Local examples

Alan Stevenson, Community Link Worker shared with us some of the exciting work that's happening in the communities within East Renfrewshire:

- Singing for the Brain – now 3 groups up and running.
- Shopping Buddies – reciprocal peer support between older people who need help with shopping and younger people with learning disabilities who want to develop their skills and confidence.
- Pop-up charity shops in care homes.
- Intergeneration Quiz which has grown into an annual event involving over 30 schools and care homes over 5 local authorities.

All of the developments built on:

- ideas from older people – sometimes starting with one person talking about what she missed and would like to see.
- making creative use of resources that were already in the community working in partnership – with housing providers, care providers, other community groups, places of worship and more.
- building the solution that works in each community.

Points from discussions

We used some of our time to think about what works well and what the challenges are for older people in rural communities.

Older People in Rural Communities - What Works Well?

- 'Small is lovely' ultra-local can work well for people.
- Weekend activities are important for older people, not just 9-5pm.
- 'Combine different approaches' different things work for different people and places.
- 'Visit, Visit, Visit' – so important for people in care homes.
- 'Stop Talking, do the walking' – we need action as well as conversations to make things change.
- Think in terms of resources not just money.
- Local GP's and pharmacies are good places to offer information.
- Community Transport projects make a big difference.
- A range of opportunities; formal volunteering may not work for everyone: 'Volunteering with a small 'v'.

Older People in Rural Communities – What are the challenges?

- Transport
- Funding beyond the initial project.
- Sustainability of local groups.
- Can be difficult to find out what is already out there.
- 'Invisible' areas – small communities that are often forgotten.
- Getting information to where it needs to be.
- Lack of Home Support/Care Packages.
- Attracting volunteers in rural areas.
- Services and professionals only working weekdays.
- Too many silos keeping people disconnected.

Older People in Rural Communities – What can we do?

- Listen to and work with the local rhythms of a community.
- Think about who is not in the room – how do we reach them?
- Share information local people and communities personally.
- Get to know and understand the local areas you are [working] in.
- Work to build local ownership and local partnerships.
- Good detail makes the difference.
- Stay connected with communities, groups and other workers.
- Understand that things can vary from location to location.
- Build on the good things that are already happening.

What next – ideas for future Get-Togethers

Towards the end of the event we discussed how best this network and these events could be used:

Rural Wisdom Events – What would be helpful?

- 4 national meetings per year close to transport hubs.
- Groups organise their own local Rural Wisdom events.
- Connecting in other ways with a variety of technologies – social media, skype etc.
- Thematic sessions around specific issues e.g. Transport.
- Open-days, 'Q&A' sessions.
- Different types of communications to stay connected and move things along.
- Network visits to local projects, communities and groups.
- Get-Togethers and meetings hosted by local projects/orgs.
- A healthy mix of participants; local people, community groups and paid workers.
- Is debate needed as well as good conversation?

This document draws together the main points which were raised on the day which we will take forward as the project develops.

If you would like to share your own thoughts, experiences or simply stay connected with the Rural Wisdom project **please contact us:**

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For more information on Rural Wisdom please visit:

<http://ruralwisdom.org/>

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

