

# Rural Wisdom Get-Together

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2017, Galashiels



## 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 a future event please contact Ruth at:**  
[hello@ruralwisdom.org](mailto:hello@ruralwisdom.org)

## Rural Wisdom: Get-Together in Galashiels, August 2017

Our second get-together saw a range of people travel to The Transport Interchange in Galashiels, Scottish Borders. We feel that it is important that our get-togethers move around Scotland and visit places that can share valuable insights into rural communities. 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.

### Sharing what we're hearing

Shared learning is an important part of the Rural Wisdom project. We hope to build on this as the project develops; connecting groups, communities and organisations who can offer support and inspiration to each other in a variety of different ways.

We have been busy over the summer getting to know the Rural Wisdom communities across Scotland. Gala days, coffee mornings and 'pop-up potting sheds' provided great opportunities to hear from these communities. The get-together began with us sharing a short summary of what we have been hearing from people, including the following key themes:

- Older people are proud of their rural communities
- Sustaining local shops and businesses
- Activity that brings the whole community together
- People have grown weary of formal consultations
- Accessing community space for groups and activities to run
- Accessing care provision that works well in rural areas

If you would like to read about these themes in a little more detail [our July 2017 update can be found on our website or by clicking this link.](#)

### Points from discussions

We used some of our time to reflect on the themes that are emerging and thought about positive ways we could begin to address these.

Three group conversations emerged from our get-together session – **Communication, Transport and Positive Risk Taking.**

Read the key points from these discussions below:



### Communication in rural communities - What works well?

- Communication methods that work well in our larger towns and cities often don't work well in our rural communities.
- We can try to find and use local, informal communication networks.
- We will find the places where people naturally gather; library, post office, coffee shops etc. and ensure information is available there.
- We can think about what we want to communicate and try out a few different methods or formats – do what works well for that community.
- Information tends to be more widely available in the larger towns and cities across our Local Authorities. We can encourage and support groups and services to think about how they reach our smaller, more isolated rural communities?

These are just a few points from our discussion – we are hoping to explore the area of rural communication further and produce a checklist of helpful questions and prompts. If you have anything to share; advice, hints, tips or something that has worked well please contact us. We would love to hear some examples of good rural communication in the areas where you live or work.

Please contact Kate: [kate@otbds.org](mailto:kate@otbds.org)

## Transport – Getting around rural areas

Transport is one of the key areas which, if improved, could make life for older people living in rural areas in Scotland much easier.

- Community transport schemes have been a solution to this and have been successful in many areas across Scotland, including the Borders.
- Community transport needs to be able to target the people who really need it and it shouldn't be competing with taxis.
- As money is a main issue, pushing for more investment into community transport is important.

Community transport though cannot solve the whole transport problem – some of this must be addressed by local bus services.

- Increasing demand for bus transport would help and would allow for more services to be put on. Marketing to get more people using the bus then, is important (there have been good examples of this happening in Perth).
- This would in turn be helped by getting different bus and train services to coordinate their timetables as many don't match up and create unfeasible journey times.

### Community Transport - a local example:

Something which has made the community transport options work more effectively in the Borders has been the Community Transport Hub which acts as a 'one stop shop' for community transport options across the Borders. The Hub gives out a single number to call and will direct the person enquiring to the most appropriate service for them. This creates cohesion between the different services, makes the process of accessing the transport much easier for people, and allows them – where possible – to consolidate the lifts, keeping time and costs down.

- The key challenges are having enough vehicles and drivers. This could be addressed if it were possible to find ways to consolidate lifts further. One way to do this would be to encourage the NHS to make appointments for specific areas on certain days of the week so that more journeys could be shared.
- The Hub model has been effective at making the community transport services run as efficiently as possible across the Borders. They are in the process of looking for funding to be able to continue the Hub.

[Visit the Community Transport Hub here.](#)

## Positive Risk Taking

In our discussions about community activity and accessing care provision a recurring theme was that of positive risk taking. Staying active and well connected in our communities is hugely important but we understand that this can sometimes be difficult.

*“We are hearing about people living in rural areas who feel that other people are making decisions that are intended to keep people safe but have the effect of reducing their independence and creating problems.”*

Our discussion notes go into detail about the factors that contribute to this as well as some positive action we can all take forward:

- We can highlight and publicise examples of what has been achieved through positive risk taking.
- We can have events and training in each local area about positive risk taking.
- We can bring together the national guidance on when formal process' are needed, such a Protection of Vulnerable Groups check for people in the community.

[Our detailed discussion note can be found on our website or by clicking this link.](#)

## What next – ideas for future Get-Togethers

We are currently planning our next get-together and will circulate this information as soon as possible. Any discussion notes mentioned in this document will be available on the Rural Wisdom website – please contact us if you would like to add to any of the discussions.

These are just a few of the points raised on the day. If you would like to share any advice, information, challenges or connected with others **please contact us:** [hello@ruralwisdom.org](mailto:hello@ruralwisdom.org) / 0141 419 0451

**For more information on the Rural Wisdom Project please visit:**

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

[www.facebook.com/RuralWisdom](https://www.facebook.com/RuralWisdom)

