

“LET’S GET A GOOD THING GOING”

..... Ideas for an Information Hub

July 2018



About this note

This note describes ideas that people in Brechin and the surrounding area have on ways to make it easier for people to share information about local activities that are used by older people.

This is where we have got to at July 2018. We hope that more people and groups will contribute your ideas and be part of what happens next.

Where the idea of an Information Hub came from

Rural Wisdom is a project that brings together people in Scotland and Wales to discover how rural communities can work well for older people living there now and also as people in rural areas get older.

In summer 2017 Rural Wisdom got going in North Angus, covering Brechin, Edzell and nearby areas. We heard from people living in and around Brechin and Edzell. People talked about what was working in the area, what could make life better, and things that they would like to see get started or grow.

We wrote a short report about what we heard and circulated this in the area to show what we had heard and encourage more people to contribute their views and suggestions. You can get a copy of this form Shona, who is the Rural Wisdom Development Worker – see contact information at the end.

One of the main gaps that people described was getting information, especially for people in Brechin. There are groups and activities in the area, but people were not hearing about them. It is also hard to get information about the services that are available. Some people wanted regular printed information while others thought the ideal solution would be a central place where people could pop in and find out about what is happening across the area.

What we did next

Since then, we've been finding out more about what sort of information people need, the sources that they use and what would be helpful. We've also been talking to people in community groups and voluntary organisations and to people who work for the Council and NHS about their experiences and ideas and what they can contribute.

The development worker at Rural Wisdom worked alongside staff at the Angus Council Communities Team to plan this work, for the survey and the planning event.

- We had a short survey. There were forms at the main activity groups and clubs and people could complete them there.
- People who wanted to respond on-line could do it that way.
- We went to some groups and talked to people about their experiences and what they would find helpful.
- We invited people to a discussion and planning session on a Saturday in May at Brechin Cathedral Hall.

This note describes what we heard and the early stages of getting an Information Hub started in Brechin.

Most of the people who responded to us are already taking part in local groups and activities – over 80% go to some weekly groups and over 22% are going to monthly activities, while just over 10% were not attending any activities or social groups in Brechin.

It is important to remember that people who have fewer social connections are less likely to have been part of these conversations. Their need for information is going to be higher and they face even more barriers in getting to hear about what is available to them.

Where people get information

We asked people where they get most of their information.

- The main source of information for most people is hearing about things from friends, neighbours, family and other people close to them (78% of people responding).
- Local newspapers (main source for 55% of people responding) and newsletters from places such as churches are good at reaching large numbers of people.
- People hear about things through the groups and activities that they go to (42%) and digital sources (40% for social media, especially Facebook, and 27% for websites).
- The workers at the services with which people are in touch are the main information source for a small proportion of older people (19%).

Interestingly, when Outside the Box has asked older people in other places about their sources of information on other topics, it has been pretty much the same pattern.

"You have a blether at the bus stop and hear things that way."

"From the people I meet at the Montrose Street community garden."

"From friends at the Legion."

"You hear at the bowling club."

"I look at the information at the Health Centre each time I'm there."

"Churches have monthly newsletters which they put out info of events in."

"It needs to be a mix – not only on Facebook!"

We also asked people if they knew where to go to get information or help with some of the main services and supports that older people had told us before were important to staying well and independent.

Around half the people who responded knew where to get information about

- Community alarms (59%)
- Angus Care and Repair (56%)
- Community groups and activities (51%)

Between a third and a half knew about

- Pensions, Attendance Allowance (44%)
- Housing options (35%)
- Care at Home (31%)

Under 30% of people knew about voluntary transport services, even though this was a major barrier to many people using the services that they did know about.

Smaller numbers of people know about other services that were available, such as Laundry Service.

"I feel that rural residents who have not been involved in needing care are possibly like me and have no idea how to contact various groups."

"We need to know about as many options as possible."

"I don't use the other services, but I would have a good idea where to go to find out."

What people want to find out

The 2 main topics that people want to find out about are local activities and services provided for older people.

As an example, this is the list of local activities that they already knew about and the ones that were not so well known from the people who took part in the planning session. Another group of older people would come up with their own list. The main point is that there are many activities happening that people do not know about.

Well known activities – most people knew they happen and have a good enough knowledge of the details or knew where to find out

- Community Garden
- Singing group
- Tea n' Tunes
- Acorn Club
- Floral art group
- Swimming classes
- Church services at different churches
- Walking group – Oot n About
- Tea & Tunes
- Lunch Club Brechin Campus - weekly
- Brechin Tea Dance (monthly)
- Big lunches at Gardner Memorial Church (annual)
- Brechin Amateur Orchestra Society (annual)

Less well known activities – some people know of them but others are unsure where to find out about details such as time and location

- U3A (University of the Third Age)
- Craft group at church hall
- Gardner Memorial craft group
- Dementia café run by Alzheimer Scotland
- Inner wheel - Rotary Ladies
- Exercise class at Cathedral Hall
- ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language) and Computing at the library

Bowling clubs
Church Guild at Cathedral Hall
Seated Exercise at Brechin Community Campus
Recorder Group

Not so well known – only a few people among those we met know of them, and other people do not know how they would find out about them

Men's friendship group
Knit and Natter
Cinema club
Art group at St Andrew Hall
Gardner steel drum band
Hub café at Salvation Army
Line dancing
Contact the Elderly Afternoon Tea Group – Monthly
Brechin Community Pantry - several days each week
Cameo Club at Salvation Army
Craft Group at St Andrews Church Hall

When we asked people about services that give care and support provided by the Council, NHS and organisations providing care, there was a similar range with people not knowing about what is available.

"I thought the Laundry Service was closed."

What type of information is useful and where do people want to find it?

We asked people what they would like to see as part of a possible Information Hub in Brechin.

- There was a lot of agreement around the need for something central, so everyone can find out about things and knows where to ask.
- This is in addition to the information sources that are already there, and it will be good to expand and develop these.
- Many people hope that this would lead to more activities as well as information about where to find activities.
- People also thought this would benefit local groups.

Some people described how there are similar challenges for younger people and families looking for information about the community activities and services they would like to use.

"The ideal is a central point in Brechin to have leaflets, and personal access to a person. People need someone they can telephone direct to find out details."

"A place where you can find out about volunteer transport as well as hearing about activities and events."

"It helps groups plan activities when you can check if there is already something else on that day. We would like to co-ordinate more."

"We could make more use of the community noticeboards that are already there – City hall, library and more."

"A single person or place to co-ordinate information."

"A place for community groups to share information. The cost of advertising and leaflet drops make this too expensive for day-to-day information."

Location

The main points are:

- Somewhere central
- A physical space
- Somewhere that is easy to access for people who are disabled.

"There needs to be information in a range of places – so a central location with the Library, Health Centre etc continuing to have good information, church newsletters and other informal sources also continuing."

"The Hub at the High School is too far away for people at the lower end of town."

"It needs a physical presence. Can volunteers help to spread the word?"

Types of information

- Activities on in Brechin
- Easy to understand leaflets to take home
- Flyers from all local groups or a directory updated annually giving details of the group and contact details from each group
- It covers community activities and information about public services, such as Health Centre opening times and Council services to benefit older people.

This is the basic, essential information people want about each activity and service:

- Date or day/s of the week it happens, time and location!
- Contact name and phone number (preferred to email address, although both is good)
- Cost if any
- Who it is open to
- Whether there is transport for people who need that to take part

"Be up to date - sometimes it is not clear if a group is still running."

"Fliers which can be taken home are useful – otherwise you tend to forget details."

"A diary of activities used to be kept in Library. This was so useful and we need something like that."

Activities and services

"More group/activity open or taster sessions – this would make things feel more accessible to newcomers."

"Some kind of help and transport to get the lonely and vulnerable out of their houses."

"Access to the C.A.B as it can be difficult to access Montrose or Forfar if you have care commitments with time constraints".

"All groups, activities, and events, not only for the elderly but for all. I always find out about something going on after the class has started or the event has finished."

"How can we help people to improve computer skills and ensure finding local info is included in learning?"

Next Steps

This is the list that came from the planning session in May.

- 1) Confirm locations of existing noticeboards – and explore additional options (such as how would this be funded).
- 2) Explore diary of events run by the Library – if doesn't still exist, could this be re-developed?
- 3) It would be good to have regular local newspapers and newsletters which give events and activities – how can this gap be filled by complementing what people are already doing?
- 4) Create information for organisers and the public on getting the most out of Facebook in terms of accessing local information. Include a list of best used 'community noticeboards/pages' on Facebook and share info about these on physical noticeboards.
- 5) Explore putting together tip sheet for organisers who are new to publicising events.
- 6) Offer to support groups whose activities aren't so well known. Ask local groups what sort of information they want to share.
- 7) Encourage groups to run taster/open sessions.
- 8) Pull together activities and groups in a simple easy to follow sheet.
- 9) Programme a news story in the Brechin Advertiser as a new community development to show what we are doing.
- 10) Share information with everyone involved.

- 11) Contact Community Pantry about the possibility of using Tuesday afternoon on a trial basis for 'information hub'
- 12) Once we get going, check out putting posters of activities in pubs, hairdressers, health centre, charity shops.

At the end of June the good news was that a pilot Information Hub could get started.

The Brechin Community Pantry has agreed that we can use their premises to launch and develop our Information Hub.

- It will run from September 2018 for 6 months
- It will open one afternoon a week to start.
- We will be working alongside more community groups and hope that people will volunteer to help out.

The funding for the pilot comes from the Rural Wisdom project. Over the pilot we will see what happens and find out how useful it is and the benefits it brings for older people in and around Brechin. We will use that experience as part of discussions about what is needed for the future.

Thanks

Thank you to everyone who has helped with this and to everyone who will be helping to take it forward.

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