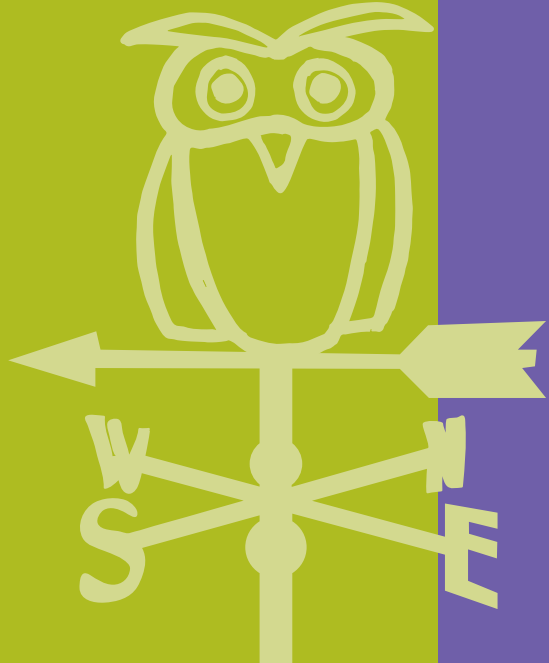


# Rural Wisdom Angus



1 year on

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

## About Rural Wisdom and this update

Rural Wisdom is working with communities in Scotland and Wales to create opportunities for older people to shape their community. Our aim is 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.

The project began in 2017. We spent that summer meeting people in Brechin, Edzell and the rural areas in this part of North East Angus. We heard about what is important to them. We produced a report and sent the booklet to lots of people to show what the issues were and the ideas people had on ways to make things work better.

This booklet describes what happened over the following year.

There are similar updates for Highland Perthshire and Eaglesham, which are the other 2 areas that are part of Rural Wisdom in Scotland. Our colleagues in Wales are also telling people about the issues there and the progress that is happening.

## What we've been doing over the past year

We've continued to talk to people across North Angus and will keep doing that. Here are some of the ways we're hearing from people and involving them in what we do.

- We've continued to visit local community groups and discuss the issues people told us about and hear the issues that are important to people there.
- We attended the 'Your Budget, Your Choice' participatory budgeting event in Brechin City Hall, where we spoke to over 300 people about Rural Wisdom and our aims. We used this event to ask people their views on taster sessions around physical activities, creative arts and crafts.
- We met people who run community groups and the issues facing them such as help with setting up halls, extending their reach to new participants and recruitment of volunteers to help organise the running of the group.
- We attended Community Council meetings and Locality Integration Meetings to share our findings and to raise the profile of issues affecting the communities of Brechin and Edzell, with key influencers.
- We held a Pop Up Shop event in Edzell, where we hosted 'Community Conversations' around what works well and what needs to work better. In exchange for information, we provided pots of homemade jam and a free raffle ticket for cot quilts.



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



- We have talked to with local Church community associations about how we and other community groups can use their halls. They helped us share our findings with more people and involve people in other conversations. In return, we support them with promoting their own activities or linking in with other groups with similar aims.
- We have supported other campaigns in Brechin, such as the Age UK Christmas Day Lunch initiative for those who are elderly and live on their own.

## Issues that matter to people in this area

These were the main issues that people raised in 2017, which are continuing to be raised.

Better communication about what is happening in Brechin is a top priority for many people. Strong community support exists in both Brechin and Edzell, but help is needed to encourage people to participate.

Family, friends and neighbours are key sources of support for most people. We heard that people want to have better access to support and care which is flexible and locally accessed, to extend the natural support offered by others.

There are public facilities that are not used so much because they have become too expensive or are difficult for some older people to reach.

The geography of a place makes a big difference to participation. In Brechin, many people find it difficult to access services and activities due to the 'braes'. In Edzell, people enjoy the flat environment which is easy to get around.

People want to be part of building connections in the community between people moving into the area and

those already living there. Some people are worried about larger-scale new housing developments that may put pressure on local services such as Health and Education.

Internet access can be difficult, particularly in Edzell where the signal is very poor and local residents find it difficult to access updated, relevant information.



**If you hear about an event or activity, you can join in. Without that information you stay at home on your own.**



## Action on these issues

### Improving Communications

We held an Open Meeting in November in partnership with Angus Council Communities Team. People discussed communication links within Brechin and what will work better for them. A small steering group of older people was formed to take this issue forward. We organised visits to other Older People Hubs in the Angus area - Kirrie Connections and Montrose Links Park - where we learned from people there what works best for them and how they got started.

We have held regular open meetings with other community group organisers, keeping people updated along the way and seeking their views.

- This formed the basis of a short survey which was distributed during May and early June through local social media pages and taking printed copies to other community groups, Sheltered Accommodation complexes and Day Care.

- We held a Conversation Café event to gather views and look at how to take this forward. People had a clear view about the best approach and that is what we then worked on.
- We brought together the findings from the survey and Conversation Café. Our report was titled 'Let's Get A Good Thing Going' and we shared it widely through many local networks to reach the people who took part and many others.
- We got in touch with an established group in the community which has a wide reach to discuss setting up an Information Hub – something that would be centrally based and easily accessible within Brechin town centre. We arranged to use their premises one afternoon each week, on a trial basis from September 2018.

Since then we have continued to raise the profile of the Information Hub by using community contacts and visiting local groups and local social media pages. We organised and promoted a shared campaign in raising the profile of the diverse and impressive community groups and social activities, titled 'Open Doors Fortnight,' at the beginning of September 2018.

We are also following up on the other ideas that people gave on ways to make it easier for older people and others in the local community to find out about what is happening, such as more information about a wider range of activities on noticeboards.



**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.**



**It's good that someone is taking this on to benefit all the local groups.**

## **Building connections in the community**

We heard during the summer of 2017 that people want to be part of building connections in the community, including between people moving to the area and those who already live here. People would like to see more activities happening which bring generations together and strengthen intergenerational relationships.

We held a Community Tea Dance in partnership with the Edzell Village Improvement Society (EVIS) in January where a mix of families, older people and visitors came along. People enjoyed it and EVIS are now organising regular Tea Dances as part of their own programme of activities.

We held a Pop Up Shop around Community Conversations, where we asked people if they felt their voice was heard locally, where are the best places to meet folk in Edzell and what makes their community age-friendly. This led to more connections with people in the village and gave us lots of ideas that are helping with Rural Wisdom in Angus and across the whole project.

We worked alongside with the Primary School to run a series of classroom sessions with children in Primary 7 and people from older generations on their experience of life in Edzell.

- They came up with ideas on ways for people to come together and planned a short film that they wanted to put together.
- We ran a number of taster sessions at the bowling clubs, bringing children in P5 and P7 to learn more about the club and the sport. As a result of this a number of young people started attending the bowling club regularly.

- The students and older people interviewed each other about their experience of life, giving each other advice and encouragement.
- We screened a 'trailer' for the film at school assembly.
- The final film will be screened in the community and give more people in the village opportunities for wider discussion on the topic of intergenerational relationships.



**I've really enjoyed being involved, and do you know, it's worked - when I see the kids in the street they stop and say hello to me now, so it's really worked.**



### **Keeping active and connected**

We heard during our Potting Shed engagement exercise that people in Brechin would like more opportunities and choices around attending and being part of social groups. We were successful in an application to Angus LEADER for additional funding to get more activities underway.

We asked people what they wanted and offered a variety of choices around creative arts, music and crafts to begin as taster sessions. A community singing group was the top choice.

- We held four taster sessions in February and March, using a local meeting place that was handy for transport and easy to access for people who are less able to navigate steps.



- Eight people attended the first session, with another four attending the second session gradually building up to 16 members over the four sessions.
- We are fortunate that the people who come along include someone who had been a music teacher who plays the piano and a second music teacher who plays the violin.
- The members of the group have provided their favourite songs and the worker tracked down the lyrics and instrumental music.
- After the taster sessions, the group decided they wanted to continue as they all enjoyed it so much.
- We asked around for a venue that would work in the longer-term and people at a local Sheltered Accommodation complex offered the free use of a communal lounge which has a piano. Some of the residents are now part of the group.
- We organised a session at the local Day Care Centre in October, encouraging others to join in the activity.
- A similar group from Blairgowrie are keen to visit the group in November.

We are now following up more ideas for activities that will bring people together.



**It's a cuppy and a carry-on.**

Member of Brechin Community Singing Group

**Rural Wisdom is bringing focus to older people to get out and join in with activities.**



## Other ideas that we have not taken on yet or are taking longer

There are a few things that people have told us are problems for them that we are just beginning to work on.

Many people in this area are concerned about the policy on charges for community facilities such as halls. The halls are too expensive for many community groups. If the charges were lower, community groups could hold more activities there and benefit more people. We are working with other people who want to raise this issue and plan to follow it up with the people who make or can influence these decisions.

Transport is a big problem for people in the area, especially as there is less community transport than before. We have been hearing about the problems people have.

- We are finding out about Community Transport in other areas and ways to improve transport for people who don't drive.
- Bus timetables are no longer available in printed copies. Many older people are among those who cannot get information that is only available on-line and when they do get on-line it is hard to find the difficult to find the information they need.

We are talking to Angus Health and Social Care Partnership and voluntary services that support people with hearing loss, to find a way for people to get local services.



**There is a lot of frustration within groups of older people around changes to the bus times when we are not able to get access to the updated timetables.**



## Our plan for the next year or so

- We are working with other people and groups to ensure older people continue to have more opportunities and choices around being active and meeting other people.
- We are working with Angus Council Communities Team and community groups to find more ways for people to get transport that will enable them to take part in community activities and get access to health and other services.
- We are continuing to support the Steering Group of the Brechin Information Hub to develop the project.
- We will continue to link existing community groups with other similar groups, so they can support each other and develop joint initiatives.





## Contact for more information

**Shona Laidlaw**  
Development Worker, Rural Wisdom (North  
Angus)

07855 210113  
shona@otbds.org  
[www.ruralwisdom.org](http://www.ruralwisdom.org)

**Outside the Box**  
0141 419 0451  
[www.otbds.org](http://www.otbds.org)  
3.10 The Whisky Bond  
2 Dawson Road  
Glasgow, G4 9SS

outsidethebox

**VOLUNTEERING MATTERS**  
CYMRU

 **NDTi**  
National Development Team for Inclusion

 **LOTTERY FUNDED**

