

# Rural Wisdom in Highland Perthshire

1 year on



## 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 across the Highland Perthshire area and hearing 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 North Angus 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 have been doing over the past year

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

- Meeting community groups.
- Going to forums.
- We've been touring across the area on the Library Van - our Rural Wisdom worker goes on the van and talks to people at each stop.

What have we been doing over the past year

- Attending conferences to represent the views of older people in rural areas.
- Speaking to businesses about the effect of Urban policies on rural areas.
- Working with other projects and development workers to overcome issues.
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It will be good to make more use of the Village Halls.



## Issues that matter to people in this area

People have continued to raise the same issues that they talked about in 2017.

Transport is a barrier to getting involved in activities and living independently.

Housing is a worry for many people – either now or looking ahead.

- There are very limited housing options if you want or need to move to somewhere smaller or to be nearer other people.
- The lack of smaller houses also makes it hard for younger people who want to work in the area.

The balance within rural communities is changing and this is causing difficulties for people who live there all year round.

- There are more holiday/weekend homes – as high as 75% of houses in some villages.
- People feel isolated when there are fewer other people around them, especially in winter.
- Local activities and facilities don't have enough people using them to stay sustainable.
- Poor transport adds to the problems.
- People want to build contacts with their neighbours who are there for part of the year, but this can be a challenge too.

People living in this area – and other rural parts of Perth and Kinross – have many barriers to getting care and support to enable them to live independently and have a good quality of life.

- It is difficult to get information about social care and support.
- Once people do manage to find out what they are entitled to, it is then hard to find care as some of the main services for people in other parts of Perth and Kinross are not provided in the Highland Perthshire area.
- The support that people do get from locally-based care providers such as the Care and Wellbeing Co-operative is good and they want to see more of this.

Many people want a little bit of support to stay connected and active and so be able to remain in their communities. People have ideas on what will help but want a bit of advice and development support to get going on these.



There is a network in rural communities, people look out for each other. We want to build on that.



## Action on these issues

### Transport

The aim is to increase the use of the local bus services and make the case for additional provision.

- Our part in raising awareness includes writing articles for The Quair (local free monthly magazine that reaches almost everyone in this area).
- We have been talking to people in local groups.
- We have also been meeting the service operators.
- We have been arranging for a questionnaire going in buses to draw in the views of everyone using the bus services. We plan to go on the buses to speak to customers too.

We've started talking to the tourism sector to find out what their seasonal workers' transport needs are, as this may be part of the solution.

The idea of a Village Van project is taking off.

- We're supporting a group on Loch Tay to develop a Village Van project.
- We've been bringing Village Halls together and this is leading to action on several points. These sessions are now a meeting place for conversations about ways to build stronger connections and be part of the Village Van project.
- Approached the Aberfeldy Small Businesses Association (ASBA) to ask if they would be in the Village Van project.



I've enjoyed hearing what people in other rural areas are doing. It gives you ideas and a boost to get going.



Throughout the past months the Rural Wisdom worker has been attending the Highland Perthshire Action Partnership meeting to take forward transport issues.

We used several consultations by the Scottish Government on transport and the one on the strategy to reduce Social Isolation and Loneliness to raise the experiences of people in this area around poor transport and the impacts this has for people.

Looking ahead, there are several things underway to keep moving forward on transport issues.

- People from Rural Wisdom are going to the national Community Transport Conference.
- We are arranging a whole community event in October to discuss transport.
- People from Highland Perthshire are getting in touch with Community Transport schemes in other parts of Scotland and with the Pembrokeshire scheme, which we heard about from one of the other Rural Wisdom areas in Wales.

## **Housing**

In autumn 2017 we fed in all the suggestions and points raised in the summer conversations into a consultation that Perth and Kinross Housing Services had on housing needs and adaptations. This led to a Special Needs Housing Workshop in March 2018 that looked at the housing needs of older people in the area.

We've kept in touch with staff in Planning and Housing departments and with Councillors who are working on aspects of housing.

Housing has continued to be raised by many people, for example from the people we met on the Library Van Tour. We fed in the points they raised to the Scottish Government in the response to the Social Isolation consultation.

We are working with Housing Options Scotland and Rural Housing Scotland to organise a drop-in event for all the community in Aberfeldy and the surrounding areas.

## **Changes in the balance of rural communities**

We brought the Village Halls and Village Associations together to promote each other and share ideas for more ways to engage with the local community. This includes:

- Sharing information on events and activities, to make it easier for people to go along to a neighbouring village.
- Publicity to attract visitors to the area who may want to come to village events.
- Putting details of events on the Your Community PK website that is supported by Perth and Kinross Council.
- Building contacts with the local Councillors.

People from the area contributed to a set of Tips on ways to get more volunteers for community groups. This publication brings together the experience and ideas from people across the whole Rural Wisdom project. Local groups are now using the Tips to help them find ways to bring in more people and become more sustainable.



We put groups in other villages in touch with the Kinloch Rannoch Befriending initiative, to share the ideas and experience there.

We are helping raise the idea of a feasibility study for a Crianlarich to Ballinluig bus service and the economic impact that would have in strengthening rural communities.

We fed in the experiences of people in this area on this issue to the Scottish Government's Social Isolation consultation.

We invited groups from the area to be part of planning for the Village Van project.



**It was great meeting Sandra and hearing about what is happening at Kinloch Rannoch**



## **Social care information and services**

People from the Rural Wisdom project, the Care and Wellbeing Co-operative and Kinloch Rannoch Befriending Project got together to look at ways to get better services and better information and advice for people across the area. We drew on the experiences people across the area had raised themselves and through many more community groups and had encouragement from other groups in the area.

This led to an application for funding from the Scottish Government for a new project to provide independent information on social support – what people's rights are, what may be available and how to get it. We were successful and the Support Choices project starts in October 2018.

We are supporting a group of local people who are taking action towards becoming a Dementia Friendly Community in Aberfeldy.

We are part of a group of people exploring the potential for a Care Hub. The ideas at this stage include ways to get training for more people to become care workers and creating options to enable older people to stay at home or in the area when they need more care and support.

We are finding out about how information and social care services are provided in other rural areas. The contacts we have made through other parts of Rural Wisdom have been helpful, such as Kirrie Connections in Angus.

### **A little bit of support**

We offered help to a local group of people who want to extend a Bridge Club to reach more people in more locations and make it more accessible with a funding application.

We met people from a local group about a potential befriending scheme. They talked to people in their group and in the area and eventually decided that the gap in the area is a need for a different type of activity.

Other groups in the area are taking on ideas from the summer conversations as part of developing what they do, to reach more people.

We helped people in the area around Kinloch Rannoch get in touch with staff at Perth and Kinross Council to discuss local provision in their area. This has led to more and on-going contact with the Locality Team for the area.

The conversations about Dementia Friendly Aberfeldy include points that people talked about before, such as making the town easier for pedestrians.

We are helping promote activities and services that are there, such as making a short film where people talk about how much they value the Library in Aberfeldy.

### Our plan for the next year or so

- We will continue to follow up on points people have raised, including the ideas that are taking longer to get going.
- We will be continuing to work with people across the area and in other organisations to take forward housing issues. This includes sharing ways for people to make their home work well for them and contributing to discussions in Perth and Kinross and across Scotland about ways to have more housing options for older people.
- We will also continue to make sure people living in Highland Perthshire are involved in looking for more transport options for people living in this area. This includes working with the Public Transport Unit to encourage people to talk about their transport needs, looking at how communities can support each other in sustainable transport initiatives and exploring the idea of a rural transport co-ordinator.



Mobile Library Van is a lifeline, great for communication and social contact for other people.





## Contact for more information

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