



# Rural Wisdom Evaluation

## Case Study 2: Improving local transport through Rural Wisdom – Upper Tay Area

January 2020



At the start of Rural Wisdom each community came together to discuss the key issues for older people living there and how Rural Wisdom could help. These issues helped inform the priorities for the Development Workers, their engagement with older people and work with organisations. The following case study highlights one example of what has been achieved and sustained in Highland Perthshire, Scotland.

*“Transport has always been an issue ... and people have tried hard”*

(Local resident)

Before Rural Wisdom started, volunteers were running a Hospital Car Scheme and a Lift-share Scheme. A Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) Dial-a-Bus/Taxi Service in Kinloch Rannoch had been started by the Public Transport Unit at Perth and Kinross Council, which also provides a town and rural bus service around Aberfeldy and the Upper Tay Valley. However, many people, particularly older people, still felt limited in accessing services and taking part in social and leisure activities because of a lack of transport.

The feeling of being ‘cut off’ isn’t helped by difficulties in online communication as *“Broadband is rubbish around here!”*

So, transport was identified as a priority – with gaps that needed addressing and the Upper Tay Transport Group came together to do just that! The group is made up of local people, many of whom were already active in transport and other issues, and includes the Chairs of the four community

councils in the area.

It started after the Rural Wisdom Development Worker (DW), organised a **‘Let’s Talk Transport’** event in Aberfeldy in October 2018 (flyer on page 2). This provided people a chance to talk to the council’s Public Transport Unit and explore how the local community can help meet the area’s transport needs.

Since then the Transport Group has gone from strength to strength. They recently held a follow-on event called **‘Shout About Transport’** to launch the Local Transport Plan and Knowledge Exchange, so members of the community can share ideas on improving transport from the Isle of Mull to Pembrokeshire!





# Older people are leading change on local transport

Other activities have included; increasing training opportunities for volunteer minibus drivers; producing a film, timetable and leaflet (available online and hard copy, see page 3) called **'Having Fun on the 91'** to inspire people to use the 91 bus by showing what can be done at places on the route; and carrying out a survey to inform a Transport Action Plan.

The group say that their biggest achievement is to have secured £15,000 for a Development Worker for 14 hours a week for two years from the council's Community Transport Fund. This will mean they will have support after the Rural Wisdom Development Worker moves on at the end of this stage of the Rural Wisdom project.

So how has Rural Wisdom helped get the Transport Group off the ground and then helped them secure funding so older people are now leading change on local transport?

We spoke to the group to find out. One of the members comes straight in: ***"Jill [the DW] has been a bright focus with energy... local people are very able but we needed someone with dedicated time and capacity for consistent support"***.

Another agrees and explains: ***"Volunteers are involved in too many things – we have to have resources"*** adding ***"Jill sowed some seeds – the embryonic ideas were there"***.

A third member adds: ***"Now everyone's involved, it's not top down. And it's community-led, not council-led"***.

Followed by a fourth, who explains: ***"Previously the council collected a lot of information but didn't do anything about it"***.

The group feel that, with Rural Wisdom's help, they have made some real achievements.

***"Originally there was no transport along the [Tay] Lochside – now it's improving"***.

Local people feel that the community has a much stronger relationship with Perth and Kinross Council and the Highland Action Group (which the Chairs of the four community councils on the Transport Group sit on with statutory agencies and other community councils in Highland Perthshire). They also think that the response to the transport survey means they have reduced some of the cynicism from local people about it being possible to influence the council or the community being able to make change happen.

The group is very grateful to Jill who ***"has done a great power of good in the time you've had – thank you very much"***.

It will be keeping in touch with developments in other places around community transport in rural areas through the Rural Wisdom project over the next few years:

***"In two years' time we want everybody to be able to move around the community without being dependent on a car!"***

## Resources

Find more information and resources at:  
[www.ruralwisdom.org](http://www.ruralwisdom.org)

### Other case studies from Rural Wisdom:

1. What's On (Milford Haven)
2. Transport Group (Highland Perthshire)
3. Intergenerational Work (Eglesham)
4. Community Café (Leeswood)
5. Singing Group (Brechin)

All of the above documents are available to read here:

[www.ndti.org.uk/news/rural-wisdom-evaluation](http://www.ndti.org.uk/news/rural-wisdom-evaluation)

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