

Local & Wise

Local & Wise was an experiential learning workshop delivered at the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board's *Suffolk Ageing Well* conference in 2013.

Delegates were grouped by where they live or know best in Suffolk and stepped outside their professional roles in order to reflect on what local communities need to do to better support people living independently well into their older years.

The Suffolk Book of Neighbourhood Wisdom provides a summary of the learning from the thirteen Local & Wise books produced by delegates during the workshop.

illustrated

The Suffolk book of neighbourhood wisdom



“The afternoon knows what the morning never suspected” Robert Frost

As an older person, what's to love about your neighbourhood?

main towns



14 different neighbourhood clusters were formed representing areas with similar characteristics. This analysis considers the larger towns as one group and market towns and rural areas as another but there is considerable overlap. Rural groups outnumbered urban groups and thus produced a greater number of factors.

Felixstowe | East Ipswich | Ipswich Central | Bury St Edmunds | Kesmere

rural towns & villages



What helped bring these good things about?



The community wanted them. Historical values. Sense of identity – somewhere to belong to – aspirational place to be. Hip reputation – culture, events in the park – vibrancy. Built on rich history.

strong identity

Tradition of strong voluntary activity. Local people identified need. Cultural Heritage – music, food, local agriculture, festivals. Market towns – mix of produce, everyone visited, on special day. Market charter. Connection – a sense of belonging. Strong community. Community ownership. Ownership and purpose.



Money / Affluence. Local industry.

strong economy

Natural resources – the sea, fishing, shipbuilding.



Good neighbours (lunch clubs, pub, clubs & societies, GPs). Community assets – cinemas, churches, village halls. Amenities – pub, post office, transport.

community assets

Wealth of community buildings/venues. Clubs and societies, things to join, arts & culture. Schools are part of the community. Pubs. Preservation of what there is – for new generations to enjoy.



Local champions – willing and skilled people. People who know people – 'Networks', Influx of people – new energy. People making connections – 'Do-ers'. Volunteers. Committed and skilled people.

local champions

Participation. Good people – volunteers & organisations. Local champions. Public servants. Good network of volunteers. Willing representatives to provide leadership & articulate community views.



Open communication. Consultation. Communication. Appropriate forums to discuss ideas which can be actioned.

communication

Integration – eg connecting Do-ers to older people. Joint networking between agencies. Church/Parish magazine.



Serendipity - accident, Award – 'Best small town in the world!'

other things

Small enough to care but large enough to develop. Family. Multi-generational families, Structure & governance.



Support from local & district councils + parish councils.

Support & investment

Investment, Start-up funding and support, Money & resources.



Good infrastructure – rail/road, housing, employers. Housing, schools, hospital, local amenities.

Infrastructure

Hard working go ahead council. Transport links – dial a ride, mobile library. Access to services – leisure, shops, train, etc.



Ingenuity, creativity, imagination. Passion for a good idea. Passion & commitment. People who care for environment & care for each other. Local intelligence. Passionate people.

passion

Entrepreneurial enterprise – late opening shops & amenities. Motivated and engaged local community. Innovation by local people. Faith, Church as centre of communities [historically]. Planning.



Geographical location – natural environment. Good natural environment – access, dog walking, Location – seaside.

environment

Beautiful place – heritage, countryside, river, walking. Environment – land, river. Geographical location – middle of East Anglia.

 = frequency of mention

What's not to love for older people in your neighbourhood?

Feeling unsafe

in town at night, vandalism, crime, litter, spitting, beggars, rough sleepers, street drinkers

Poor access to information

Speeding cars

Loneliness isolation

Poverty

Lack of public seating

Few public toilets

Uneven pavements

Lack of housing choice

Poor access to public transport

Cost of parking & lack of disability parking

Expensive daycare

Lack of daytime activities for older people

Cyclists on pavements

Lack of housing choices

Poor road crossings

Access to services

Summer crowds

GP appointment process

Lack of sense of community in some parts of town

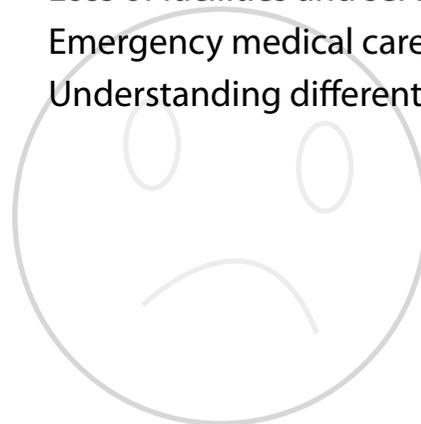
Loss of facilities and services (closures)

Emergency medical care is far away

Understanding different accents



main towns



Each of the Main Town groups tended to identify issues particular to their communities. There was surprisingly little overlap. This suggests the need for bespoke local solutions.

The concerns in Market Towns and Rural Areas are notably different to more urban settings.

Loss of amenities

e.g Post office, shop, village hall, pub

Lack of public transport

Rural isolation

Lack of suitable housing

Fuel poverty

Negative impact of out of town retail

Inadequate town centre parking

Village cliques, no good neighbour scheme, family distant

Sense of being useless

Lack of joined-up support

Lack of respect

Lack of facilities

Fear of crime

Generational barriers

Poor pavements / poor street lighting

Poor broadband / mobile signals

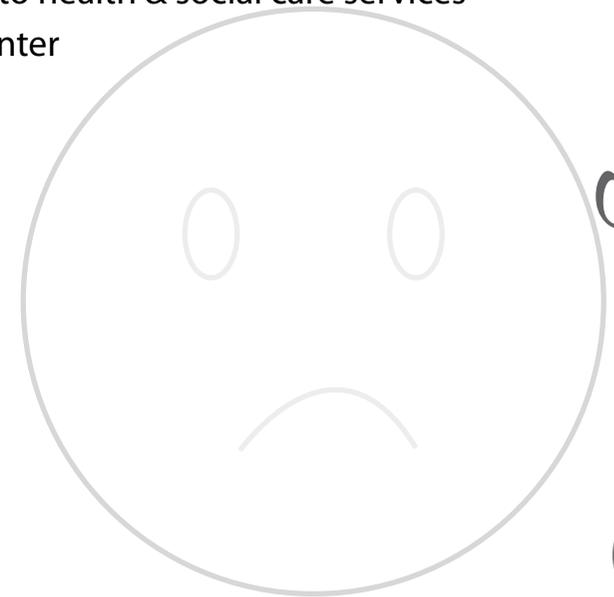
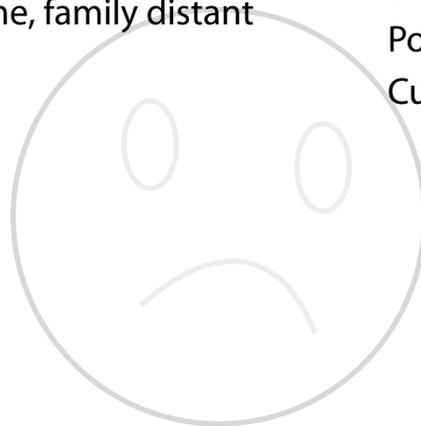
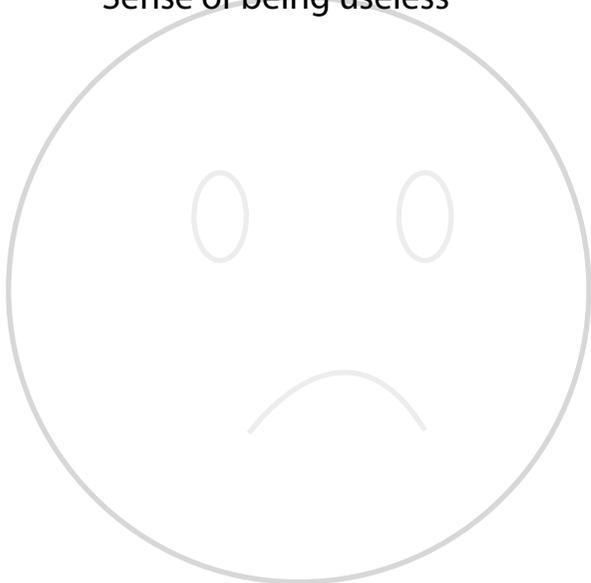
No reason to go out

No pub

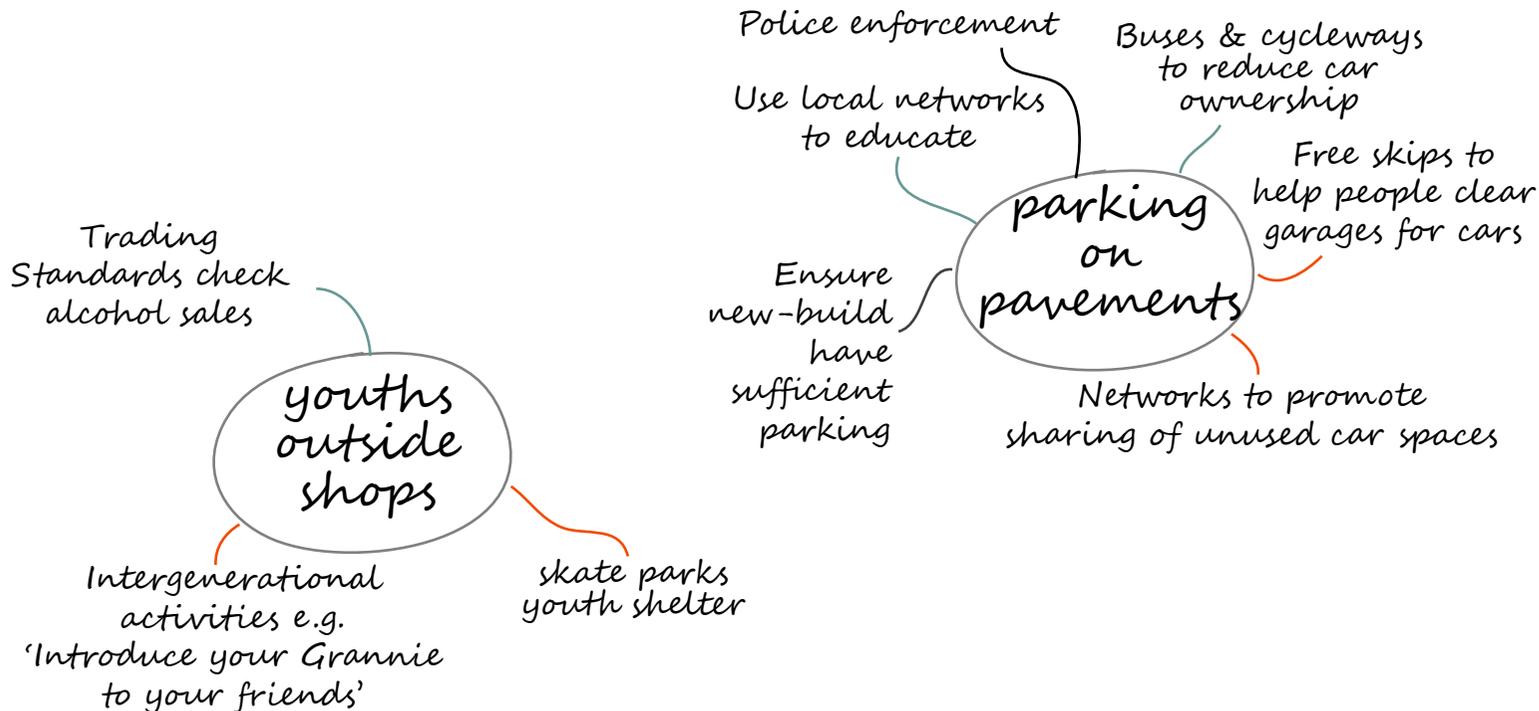
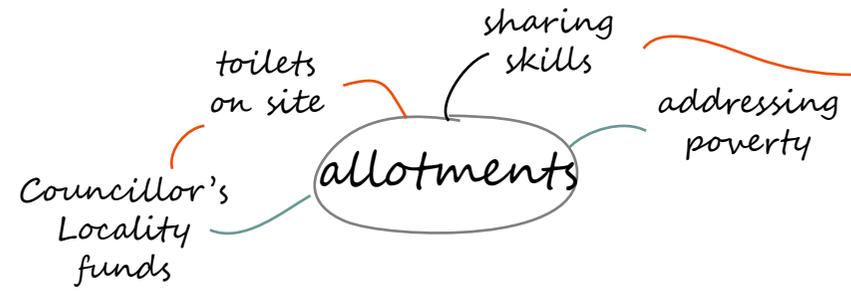
Cost of living / affordability. Food more expensive

Poor access to health & social care services

Cut off in winter



Character with a cause

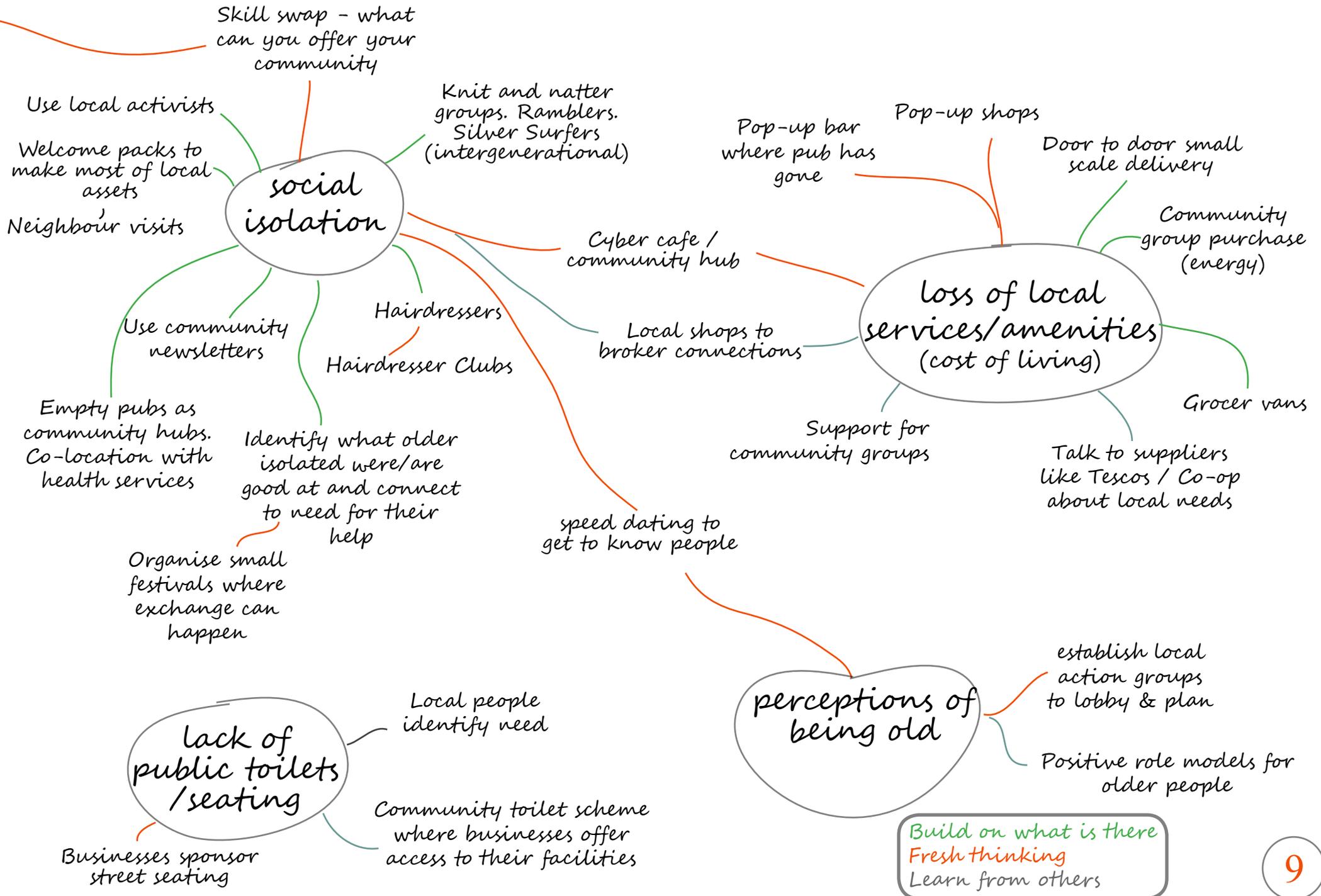


Each neighbourhood group completed an exercise where they identified an issue they wished to explore further. The issue was embodied in a 'Character with a cause'.

Issues around social isolation and loss of local services / amenities were explored by many groups.

Groups considered four questions and then recommended a way forward.

1. How can existing assets help?
2. Conditions that helped bring them about.
3. New ideas that could help
4. What can be learned from other neighbourhoods



What are the Golden Rules for creating and sustaining ageing-friendly communities?

build on what's working

Identify what is already there and working well
Know what is out there and then make connections
Understand the need – ask & listen
Build on what you have
Use community activists / groups
Use community centres/hubs/information
Unlock potential of community
Know and listen to community – understand

promote community spirit

Vibrant community groups with good community champions
It is not just about older people but the whole community
Build resilience in the whole community
Community empowerment, involvement, ownership
Intergenerational / revitalised community spirit

build respect

Breaking down perceptions – both of elderly and by them
Emphasise positives of older age
Respect
Give and take – older people can offer value to community as well as use services
Access – being part of the community – both physical and emotional access – involving all

be self-reliant

Self financing – don't expect money. Make money!
Support communities to be independent
Offer access to expertise and money
Use power of older people £££ and voting

listen

Engagement, communicators, media, advertising, Continuing Engagement
Meaningful engagement with older people, Education Communication
Consultation - don't assume you know what people need Listen to people who are older citizens – not service led
Consult with older people
Listen – one size does not fit all. Each community is different
Genuinely seek views on services
Always ask older people what they want

join-up

Collaborative working
Harness the power of the 'whole system' to affect change
Join up services across the tiers – health, planning, housing, community care, transport
Keeping wider connections

plan & design

Use good service design
Capitalise on trigger points in people's lives
Planning / Sustainable Design
Age friendly planning (homes, environment facilities, etc)
Good infrastructure – integrated – community driven
Ensure leisure and social activities are available
Care services to help maintain independence

stay passionate

Passion and dedication – entrepreneurial spirit – 'be bothered'
Community Leadership
Committed champions who are passionate to make it happen
Do it – deliver!!
Don't give up – persevere, Its a long term endeavour
Commitment / Adaptability

involve all ages

Make sure everyone gets involved and has their voice heard
Intergenerational participation
Listen and involve wide range of age groups
Encourage and empower. Involve all ages
Include older people in creation of solutions and delivery



Local & Wise was developed and delivered by Cultural Intelligence Ltd. Cultural Intelligence is a Suffolk-based social enterprise using human-centred creative approaches to generate social innovation and improved services.

One of our four themes is *Living and ageing well*. We would be delighted to discuss opportunities for future collaboration.

Thanks are due to all those who took part and particularly to Judy Rainer and Christine Barrett who produced the conference and provided helpful support to Cultural Intelligence in the development of Local & Wise.

Stay curious, keep creating and

be Local & Wise!

Local
& Wise



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