

CARE SURVEY 2009

COUPAR ANGUS, ARDLER AND BENDOCHY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

KEY POINTS

The aim of the research is to establish whether there may be a need for sheltered housing, community care accommodation or community based facilities within the Community Council area and to qualify and communicate that need within the Community.

The project involves three stages, the first being the analysis of the 2008 Survey results. This is followed by two focus groups and then dissemination of results to the Community and Stakeholders. The dissemination of the results is in-hand. The survey shows that respondents feel that a move to accommodation outside the town will isolate them from friends and family. The lack of social activities and especially the lack of a “drop-in centre” is seen to weaken the community and, from an individual’s perspective creates concerns about their future social exclusion.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks to establish whether *“there may be a need for sheltered housing, care homes or community care services and facilities within the Community Council area and to qualify and communicate that need to the Community”*.

The findings are based on 136 valid questionnaires and two focus groups from retired and some disabled members of the community.

When asked whether they had *“ever considered living”* in sheltered housing 75 respondents answered no compared with 59 respondents who answered yes. 93 respondents would expect to be able to live in Sheltered Housing in Coupar Angus and 34 of these would consider only sheltered housing in Coupar Angus. **All** 36 who expect to live in sheltered housing within the next five years expressed concern about the lack of facilities in Coupar Angus. There is demand from 17 respondents for sheltered housing within two years.

When asked about Care Homes, 67 respondents already knew someone who had entered a care home of whom 20 knew more than 5 people. 97 people would consider a care home in Coupar Angus compared with 24 who answered would not.

In terms of social activity there is a high level of awareness but a low level of attendance. The survey indicates that mobility is one of the issues restricting attendance for local clubs. It is notable that most respondents do not separate between day and community centres and that there is a preference for a *“centre for all age groups, with or without a disability”*.

The survey shows that respondents feel that a move to accommodation outside the town will isolate them from friends and family. The lack of social activities and especially the lack of a *“drop-in centre”* is seen as weakening the community and, from an individual’s perspective creates concerns about their future social exclusion.

Based on population figures it is estimated that the Questionnaires represents approximately 28% of the potential number of retirees in the town. However they exclude anyone in Ardler or Bendochy and does not represent disabled members of the community. So while the survey is statistically significant, it underestimates the demand – especially for sheltered housing.

Introduction

The intention of this project is to assess the need for a range of care accommodation, facilities and services in Coupar Angus. These are to include sheltered housing, care home accommodation and well-being, leisure and social facilities identified by the community. The report has been prepared by Contract Marketers Scotland who have provided the additional marketing resources and expertise to analyse survey data, fill in gaps from the original survey and to identify a way forward that meets the needs of the Community. This report has been completed with support from the Scottish Community Action Research Fund.

METHODOLOGY

The findings are based on two forms of primary research; questionnaires undertaken within the community and focus groups. The first stage of the analysis is based on 136 valid returns from the survey of 153 questionnaires conducted in October and November 2008. This survey was undertaken by members of the Community Council under the guidance of SCARF. Like any Survey there are limitations to both the depth and the extent of the information gathered. Focus Groups have been added to minimise this impact and to address the following limitations:

The survey targeted two groups – elderly people and people with disabilities. The members of the survey team pooled their knowledge of who might fit these categories, and then contacted them individually. Approximately two thirds of participants completed the survey questionnaires in the context of an interview in their own homes with a member of the survey team. The remaining third chose to complete the questionnaires unaided. These were later collected by the survey team.

The views of disabled and especially the younger members are not represented by the questionnaires nor is there any means to separate out disability and age in terms of the participants. This is partly a reflection of the sensitivity of gathering such information through questionnaires. The concerns of this group have been addressed through the first of the Focus Group.

The survey team consisted of people whose professional or voluntary experience brought them into direct contact with older members of the community. They included the district nurse, a volunteer with meals on wheels, a church elder and three community councillors. The nature of some of these jobs may have impacted on choice of participants, tending towards people with health and mobility problems. Therefore it would not be possible to say with certainty that our survey sample was representative of all elderly people in Coupar Angus.

In general the data gathered can be described as “judgemental” because it represents the views of older members of the community towards Sheltered Housing, Care Homes and Community Facilities. The fact that over 136 responses have been gathered means that the information is statistically significant in terms of this age group.

There are gaps in the questionnaires gathered especially those relating to age and for questions 17 -21. There are also inconsistencies in the method of gathering information – whether these are face to face interviews or self-completion. This has reduced the number of viable questionnaires from 153 to 136, which is still a significant number.

The questionnaire was divided into four parts;

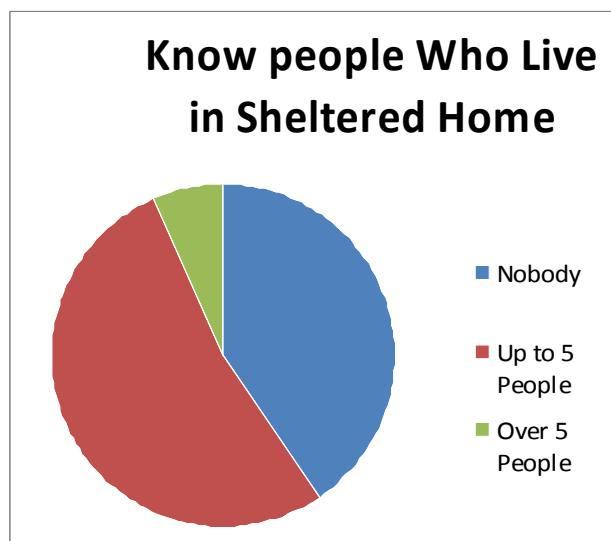
1. The need for Sheltered Housing
2. The need for Care Homes
3. Social Activities
4. The need for Day Centres or Community Centres

This information is supplemented by Focus Groups which were used to investigate issues arising from the Questionnaire. A summary of points arising from the focus groups and a summary of the points discussed is provided in [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#). Focus Groups comments have been added to the Findings since the Focus Groups were used to further investigate issues arising and gaps in collection of the questionnaire.

This survey deals with the attitudes and concerns of individuals and this means that the survey does not report individual needs. The contribution of those taking part is greatly appreciated and the information provided is not attributable and it is not reported on an individual basis. This report should be viewed as a community centred study – it reports on collective needs and attitudes towards care and well-being.

FINDINGS

1. SHELTERED HOUSING

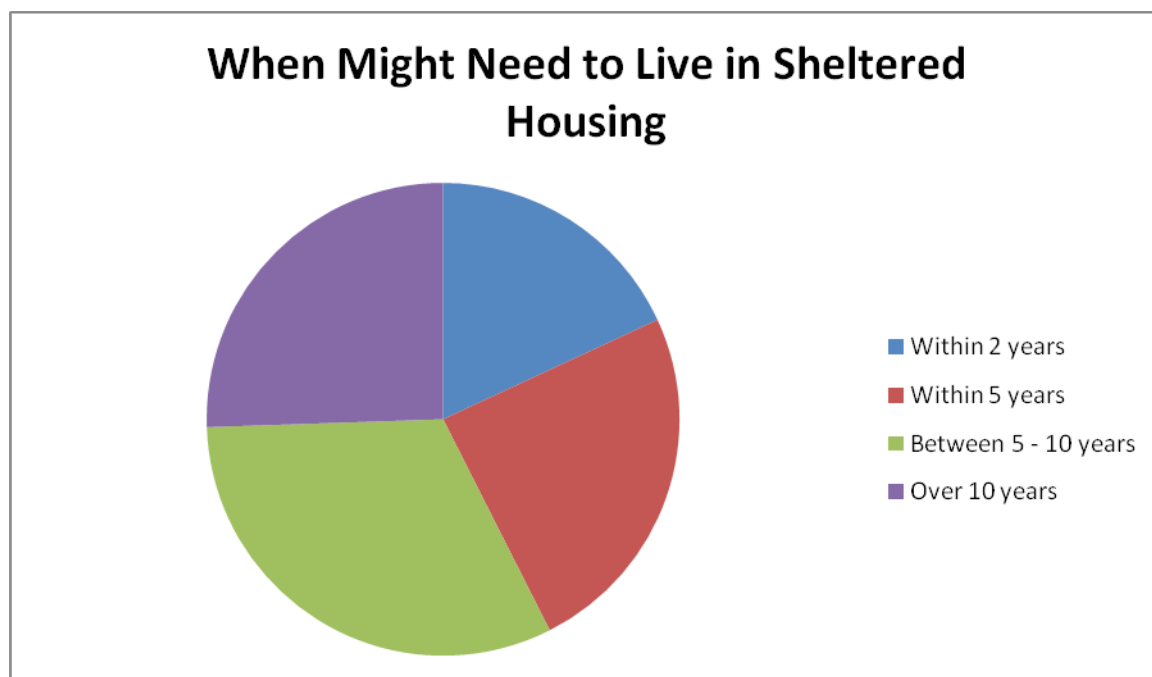


There is a correlation between those people who have considered living in sheltered housing and those who in the future might wish to live in sheltered housing. When asked whether they had ever considered living in sheltered housing 75 respondents answered no and 59 respondents answered yes. In response to the question [4] *“at some point in the future might you want to live in sheltered housing”*, 93 answered yes and only 28 answered no. This indicates a high level of community based concern over the availability of sheltered housing. This indicates that the study encompasses two

groups – those who have a need for sheltered housing and those who may in the future have a need for sheltered housing. Both groups are clearly concerned over the lack of facilities.

A more telling statistic is the timeframe within which people expected that they may wish to live in sheltered housing or care homes. This gives an insight into the age profile of those surveyed and the community level experience of sheltered and care homes. What is important about this information is that it implies that the availability of sheltered housing and care homes affects both the individual who may need to use it and those who may be their friends or relatives.

The survey indicates that 93 expect to live in Sheltered Housing in Coupar Angus and 34 of these would only consider Sheltered Housing in Coupar Angus.



The Survey shows that there is immediate demand from 17 respondents who are looking for sheltered housing within the next two years. 23 people might need to live in Sheltered Housing within 5 years, 30 between 5 and 10 and a further 24 in over ten years. Every one of the 36 people who expect to live in sheltered housing within the next five years expressed concern about the availability of facilities in Coupar Angus. An alternative perspective is that of the 25 people who were not worried about the availability of sheltered housing in Coupar Angus, 9 expected to move in 10 years or longer and 15 did not reply.

Overwhelmingly the respondents would prefer local provided Sheltered Housing. There is resignation that when the times comes, despite any personal choice, the sheltered housing will be in Blairgowrie.

“I was living in sheltered housing in England for 3 years. I know quite a few people in the area. That would be a reason for staying in Coupar Angus – if I had the choice.”

“Blair is depressing, horrid. I’d sooner go to PRI where it’s nice and bright.”

“It’s a shame to have to leave your home town to get the service you need.”

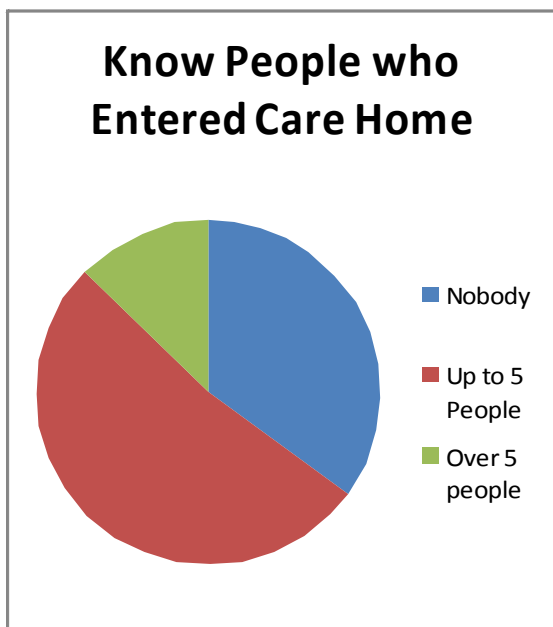
CARE HOMES

The number who knew someone who had entered a care home was 67 of whom 20 knew more than 5 people. This compares with 36 who did not know anybody. 33 did not answering the question.

The number of respondents who would consider moving into a care home, even if it meant leaving Coupar Angus, is 66 compared with 62 who answered no. The number that would consider a care home in Coupar Angus is 97 compared with 24 who answered no. 89 respondents noted that this

was a concern, compared with 28 who did not. Of these who were not concerned about Care Homes in Coupar Angus, half (14) were willing to go outside Coupar Angus.

It is notable that there are more comments about the need for a care home to be in Coupar Angus in order to be close to family and friends. Comments include:



“If you have lived all your life in Coupar Angus it would be anguish to leave it - should be a home available in Coupar Angus.”

“Not got a choice waiting for sheltered housing in Blair, got Parkinsons.”

“Moving away from a familiar home away from friends and relatives can have a detrimental affect on some people.”

“For folks who have stayed here for years and years, they would prefer to stay here. I have only lived here for six years so less bothered.”

This again indicates a clear preference for local care homes, from those who have always lived in Coupar Angus and who still have family in the area. The qualified answers reinforce the importance of family and friends having access for visits and indicate a worry about the isolation associated with moving away from Coupar Angus. This same feeling of isolation comes through in comments about social activities.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

There is a high level of awareness about the different social activities;

90 people were aware of the Lunch Club although only 8¹ indicated that they attended.

75 aware of TOC-H and 28 attended showing the importance of this Activity.

74 of tea dances and 12 attended.

65 of the Indoor Curling and 21 attended.

The high level of awareness further reinforces the importance of local clubs and activities for local people as a means of socialising and “getting out the house”

The question of traveling outside Coupar Angus “put-off” 57 people, compared with 71 who were not put off. Being immobile was an issue for 39 people. Every one of these people was aware of the

different social activities and was limited in their ability to attend. 9 people indicated that they were unable to attend any social activity.

It is not possible to accurately separate out the answers to the question about any priority between Day Centre and Sheltered Housing. The indications are:

- 51 people placed Sheltered housing over Day Centre
- 25 place a Day Centre before Sheltered Housing
- 8 place Care Home over Sheltered Housing

The interpretation to Question 21ⁱⁱ is that 73 (out of 108) responses do not see facilities as being separate but provided as part of the same package of services. The preference is for sheltered housing to be provided with day centre. This response is consistent with both the Focus Groups. The most common response in terms of assistance (q16) was help with transportation and this is clearly a major issue for those members of the community with mobility problems in terms of their ability to socialize. The answers suggest that this includes social events within the community as well as access outside the community. This point is reinforced by the Disabled Focus groups, although all members were (still) mobile, they expressed concern about their own future mobility and also about those who were not so mobile – and who were “isolated”.

DAY CENTRES & COMMUNITY CENTRES

There is a clear preference for a “*Community Centre for all age groups, with or without a disability*”. 21 respondents preferred a Day Centre and the reason given was one of “peace and quiet” and “a dislike for noise”.

This compares with 73 who preferred a Community Centre. The responses indicate a desire for “*a greater social mix*” and “*people helping one another*”. Critically there were fewer than 16 respondents compared with 21 who visit Community Centres activities regularly. Consideration is required with this question since there are inconsistencies with the responses, which may be due to question construction. Comments include:

“Mixed age group is best - all use facility but at different times.”

“A better mix of ages, keeps you young!”

“There is no harm with young people mixing with older people. Having a day centre for just one age group can make people feel more segregated and create bad feelings between different age groups.”

The Community Centre idea and the social mix were exclusively favoured by both Focus Groups. The consensus is that “*socialising keeps the grey cells active*” although there was concern whether younger people would want to mix with older people. There was no doubt that older people wanted to mix with younger people”. What is notable for both Focus groups is the importance of a “drop-in” centre that is associated with any sheltered housing or care home.

The discussion implied a “wee lounge” would have greatest benefit on maintaining a community spirit – regardless of where this was situated. At the same time a “drop-in” centre could provide well-being services such as podiatry and other therapies.

A DROP-IN CENTRE

It is notable that both the Focus Groups saw social facilities and “well-being” as being key issues. The second focus group of older residents would welcome sheltered and care homes but the majority of the discussion was on having access to social and well-being facilities in Coupar Angus. They feel that *“Coupar Angus looses out compared with the rest of Perthshire”*. One of the comparisons made was with Alyth, which was felt to be a stronger community. It was noted that Alyth has a lunch club with “65 members who pay £1 each”. It was also noted that the Alyth has its own cook and provides a “full Christmas lunch for £3.00” and “even the pub does community lunches”.

One model discussed was the Strathmore Centre for Youth Dialogue, a “drop-in centre” in Blairgowrie. Whilst this was for young people, it was developed as a neutral place and received over 600 visits a month. It was open 12 – 18.00 (28 hours a week) and had funding of £25,000 a year to operate out of a rented shop in town. It was suggested that this might provide a model for providing support to this older group.

It was noted that a community centre would provide a focus for existing activity within Coupar Angus. The curling club (‘New Age Kurlers’) had proved popular and was being run by 2 volunteers. The original Toc-H was currently looking for funding to (re) purchase its premises and both the Scout Hut and the Town Hall were occasionally used for events. The Community Council has also been running the Freedom Coach with grants from the Carmichael Trust and the Community Council. However it was felt that these activities needed a “home” and a regular schedule of activities to suit the needs of different groups.

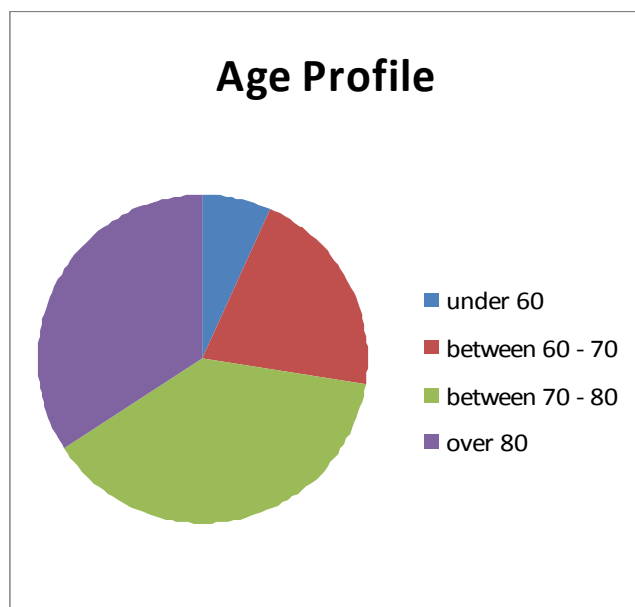
A community centre was also a consideration for the disabled group. As well as socialising this group was concerned with “well-being”. For disabled members of the community a community centre could provide a “therapy centre” for alternative therapies, exercise facilities and out-of-home health services especially podiatry and Citizens Advice. It might also provide respite care for relatives. It was noted that Fife Council are especially well organised and that although disabled Groups including the Multiple Sclerosis Society Scotland, Macmillan Cancer Support and Scottish Disability Sport offer excellent “therapy” centres, this assumes that members can travel.

The group noted that the Health Centre in Candlehouse Lane provides adequate health care and that advice on housing, welfare and income support were available though the public sector welfare officers. However it was suggested that a community centre could offer help with filling in forms and accessing the right type of support.

Both Focus Groups emphasise that the any community/drop-in facility should include *all* age groups; young people, young mothers, disabled and elderly members of the community.

AGE PROFILE

A date of birth has been provided by 77 people, 5 of whom were under the age of 60 years old. The



number of respondents who can be defined as retired and over the age of 65 is 64 (85% pro-rata). 26 people were over the age of 80. Assuming that is representative of those not giving a date of birth, 33% of the respondents are over the age of 80, and almost 72% are over the age of 70.

Separating out the over 70 age group, (56/77) there is no discernable difference in their attitudes towards sheltered housing, care homes and social activities.

According to the 2001 census "10% of residents in Perth and Kinross were aged between 65 and 75 and a further 8.6 per

cent aged over 75 years. This compares to 8.8 per cent aged between 65 and 75 and 7.1 per cent aged 75 and over in Scotland as a whole."

The 2004 population of the town is estimated as 2,600. Assuming that this survey consists of 85% of retirement age, the number of retirees in the survey is 115 and the estimated number in Coupar Angus is 409. The Questionnaire therefore represents approximately 28% of the potential number of retirees in the town and excludes anyone in the parishes of Ardler or Bendochoy.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

It was noted in both the questionnaire and the focus groups that people from Coupar Angus are less likely to attend social events than people from (say) Alyth or Blairgowrie. The suggestion is that Coupar Angus is a "divided community" (i.e. divided between those who like to participate in community events, and those who don't), and that this can be discouraging for those who organise social and community activities. Alyth, which shares many geographical and demographical characteristics, proves that where demand exists that demand can (or should) be met by the community – for the community.

The question which remains unanswered is what factors reduce participating in Coupar Angus? The Survey indicates that mobility is one such factor. Other suggestions include the regularity of organised events and their available budget. However, the overriding indication is that no one single facility and one single group is taking the initiative to co-ordinate social activities.

The issue for Coupar Angus is that *"the same people are involved in Community Activities"*. The suggestion from the Focus Groups is that this needs to be widened out to include more volunteers and encompass a wider group within the community. The missing link would seem to be young people who are capable of helping older people in club based activities eg internet or café.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Combining the Questionnaires and the Focus Groups, this study shows that there is high level of demand for locally delivered Sheltered Housing and care Homes. What it clearly indicates is that local people want locally delivered accommodation and care services and that the age and demographics of the town and surrounding area have the critical demand to support such activities. The number of people who already know someone who has moved into high amenity housing, sheltered housing (89) or care homes (in Blairgowrie) (103) is high.

In terms of providing local accommodation and services, respondents are clearly responding to the idea that a move to accommodation outside the town will isolate them from friends and family. Furthermore the lack of social activity weakens the community and, from a user's perspective, creates concerns about the future social exclusion.

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APPENDIX 1: FOCUS GROUP FOR DISABLED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

Participants from this focus group had different disabilities in term of mobility or medical conditions. Given the sensitivity associated with various conditions, the focus group members were asked to relate their experiences as members of the community rather than in dealing with the terms of their specific condition. What is evident is the level of consensus that would seem to exist about a missing gap in welfare provision. It is important to note that the views expressed cannot be said to be a representative. Those attended were physically disabled and the views expressed do not cover those with mental disabilities such as autism. Nor can these views be said to represent the views of the disable's carers. The five focus group members were (still) mobile and were active members of their community. However there is no indication that the views expressed would not also be the views of "the silent majority".

This document is not a transcript although the discussion was recorded to insure an accurate representation of individual views. Although it may not be sequential it is based on themes discussed over one and one half hours. The candour of the respondents is appreciated. The views of this group are particularly important since a traditional questionnaire would not be able to extract such diverse groups opinions.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

There was a clear consensus about the need for the "a drop-in" type of community centre. There was some discussion as to whether it should be adjacent to the health centre or whether it should be part of the "Toc-h" Centre. It was noted that the Toc-h had recently gone into receivership and that £40,000 would be needed to purchase the property. Fundraising was in hand. Toc-h was seen as having an important role in specially the Thursday afternoon meetings. These were mostly for the elderly. The present facility could support approximately 50 people.

A PLACE TO GO

It is generally agreed that the drop-in centre "should be available to all". This suggests a mix of different age groups -- young and old. There was concern from everybody that no such facility existed within Coupar Angus. Each person went to a different location for health, therapy, and exercise and these included Blairgowrie, Perth and Dundee. Concern was expressed that whilst members of this group had access to transport and were mobile, a lot of other members of the community, especially the elderly, would not be able to use facilities outside the town.

WHAT TYPE OF FACILITIES

There was a lot of discussion about the existing service providers and these would seem to divide into two distinct groups; the statutory agencies and the voluntary support charities. Both provided valuable welfare, financial and physical support. Neither was seen as supporting the "well-being" of the individual and this is where the gap exists within the community.

WHAT FACILITIES ARE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

This discussion took the part of an exchange of information -- something which implies that it is difficult to know what facilities are available to whom when and under what conditions. In effect both the needs and expectations will differ according to the disability and there is insufficient information available to assess this. It was suggested that Fife Council were a model operator.

It was noted that the Relax Group had moved from Coupar Angus, where it used to be available through the school and was now in Rattrey. This meant that it was not available to most of the community. The aerobics class run on Friday was very popular as was the fitness class at the gym. Again these are not readily available or accessible.

One of the biggest concerns is podiatry and the importance of regular visits would be of great benefit not just to those attending this focus group but other members of the community.

The consensus was that to access services you had to travel outside Coupar Angus and this assumes access to private transportation. Buses were not viewed as being convenient for somebody with disabilities.

NEW FACILITIES THAT COULD BE PROVIDED BY A COMMUNITY CENTRE

The general consensus is that there is a need for a community centre. This would offer [for disabled people] therapy exercise and accessibility to specialist health, welfare and well-being services. These services which are currently provided outside Coupar Angus in Dundee, Perth and Blairgowrie. It was suggested that Fife Council were an example of what could be achieved.

APPENDIX 2: FOCUS GROUP FOR OLDER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

Eight people attended this focus group all of whom were actively involved in organizing activities and events within the community. This means that their views represents the older members of the community and that they were also able to talk knowledgeably about the challenges of organising activities for older people in the community. As for the previous focus group the candid comments are greatly appreciated. In line with the previous group, this discussion also focused on community activity rather than sheltered or care accommodation.

BEING NEIGHBOURLY

The discussion started off about the need for members of the community to look after one another. It was noted that it was the onus of the individual to look after the welfare of their elderly neighbours. However concern was expressed about the difficulties of looking after somebody who was infirm especially in terms of being able to provide them with physical support to move around. It was noted that high amenity housing, somewhere with a warden, is the ideal situation. The Servite Housing Association and McCarthy Stone were seen as being good models, however with the latter there was a 25 pound charge each month to pay towards a warden. The respondent noted that it was not always clear who in the Council is responsible for adult services and was also noted that people from the country quite often need to move into the town and into high amenity [sheltered] housing.

There was a consensus that all members of the community must "have to have a purpose to get out and socialise".

ALYTH AS A COMMUNITY

Looking at facilities it was noted that "Coupar Angus missed out in comparison with Alyth". Alyth has a lunch club of 65 people who pay £1 each. This allows them to have cooked meals and even to provide a full Christmas dinner for £3. It was also noted that the public house did a community lunch. This was seen to be a good idea because it was a neutral location. The possibility of using the Enverdale Hotel as venue for Coupar Angus was considered. It was noted that the lunches in Coupar Angus were not subsidised and that's around 20 to 30 people would attend with 12 attending regularly. The overall opinion was that people in Coupar Angus are less likely to attend community events than people in Alyth. The reason for this is not immediately obvious. There was agreement that lunch clubs and other social and community events should be regular -- but this was subject to funding being available and some events needed subsidised to make them viable .

There was overwhelming agreement that what Coupar Angus really needed was a place to meet. This was described as being a "wee lounge" which could be attached to an existing service such as high amenity or sheltered housing.

DROP IN CENTRE

The "wee lounge" should be run as part of a drop-in centre, a neutral point, and somewhere that young people and old people could meet up. For example "grannies bring their kids to the New Age Kurling" and that this was very successful social activity -- but one that was run on a shoestring. The kurling had got a grant, it was run by two volunteers on a weekly basis and that those attending paid £1 for tea biscuits. The benefit to those attending was the opportunity to get out of the house and mix with other people -- an opportunity to avoid isolation.

It was noted that a 41 bedroom residential home was being planned for Coupar Angus and should be ready within 18 months. (This may partly explain why the group's interest was with social activity rather than accommodation).

There was some discussion about location -- it could be behind the Town Hall, Union Place or St. Anne's Hall (?) It could also be associated with the Servite Amenity Housing. What was important, apart from accessibility, was that it should be a dedicated facility for the community.

VOLUNTEERS

The importance of volunteers was noted and it is suggested that around 12 people within the community were responsible for most of the organised activities. Toc-H was one example of this and the group was currently seeking to raise [up to] £40,000 to buy-out the existing building from the receiver. It was suggested that there were "lots of little groups" and that there was a need for everything to be better coordinated. The example of the Strathmore Center for Youth Dialogue was used to show what can happen if you have a co-ordinator and funding (£25,000). The group has a rented a shop in Blairgowrie and hired part-time staff. Although this is a drop-in centre for young people the same model of the community co-coordinator could work for Coupar Angus. It was noted that this activity which has 600-800 drop-ins each month still relied upon volunteers. Providing transport for selected members of the community was also deemed to be important.

There was consensus that any drop-in centre should not be exclusively for older members of the community, but should be mixed.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEVELOPMENT TRUST

When discussing the setting up of a Development Trust, there was a general enthusiasm about the community being able to organise its own events and its own activities. It is not seen as responsibility of (Perth and Kinross) Council to do this. It was noted that an existing core of volunteers existed, but that this core could needed to be increased.

The consensus was if other towns could do it, Coupar Angus could. However it was recognised that there were parts of the community that were excluded from social activities and it was felt that an

effort was needed to engage these older members of the community. It is also noted that the community was changing [again] with the influx of workers from Eastern Europe.

ⁱ This question is not considered reliable since there were inconsistencies in the completion.

ⁱⁱ What new facility or service would be the highest priority for elderly or disabled in Coupar Angus, for example sheltered housing, care homes, day centre or new social activity (or something else together)?