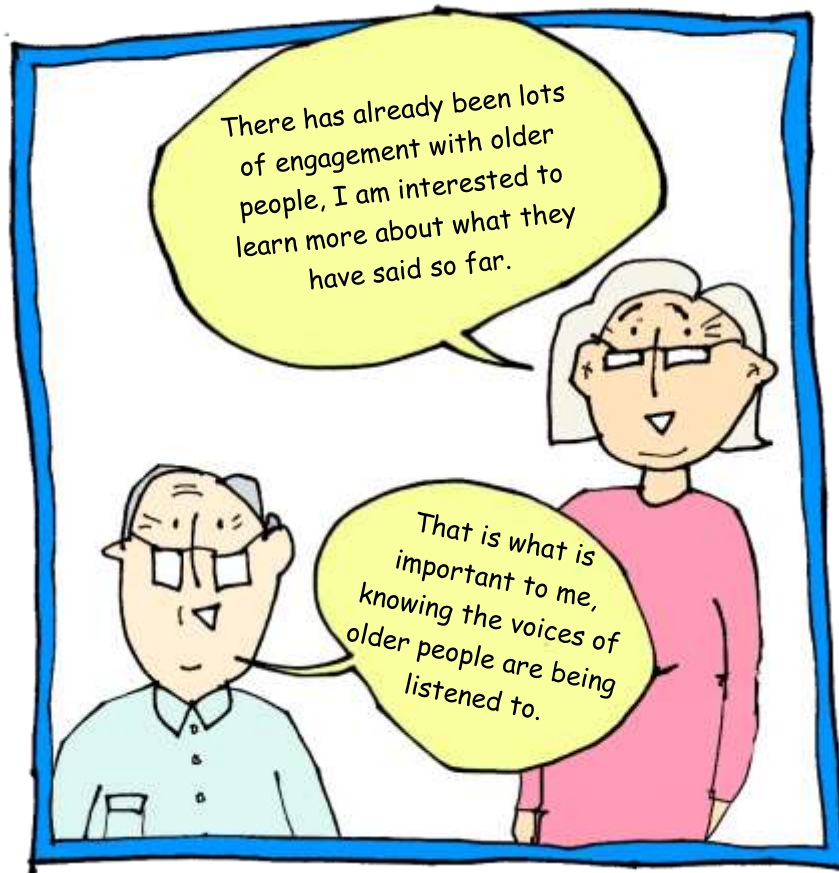


What have older people said?



The Ageing Well Strategy aims to build a grassroots movement creating opportunities for healthy ageing in South Ayrshire that is owned and supported by all.

In developing this strategy engaging and working with older people has been at the heart of our approach. Older people have been involved at every step and what follows sets out how this has been achieved.

How did this start?

On 8th June 2023, Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) brought together over 100 older people in Ayr Town Hall to mark the start of our Ageing Well journey. We set out our ambitious plans for the year ahead and pledged to return in the Spring of 2024 to share our learning and our journey this far.



At the event we asked those in attendance to write down mock newspaper headlines of articles they'd like to see reported about older people in South Ayrshire in years to come, here is a snapshot of those headlines.

"Group of pensioners rescued from ocean after skinny dipping cruise goes wrong"

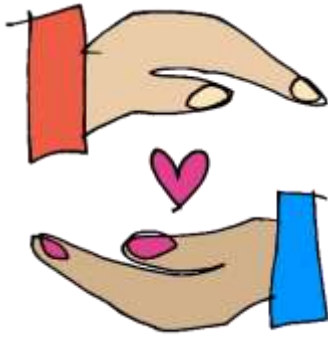
"Pensioners lifted for doing slosh in Girvan High Street"



We know that people across South Ayrshire are ambitious to improve opportunities for our ageing population and this date marked the start of our journey in developing this work.

One of the early pieces of feedback we had was that whilst this work was originally billed as a strategy from our conversations with older people we hear that this is more than a strategy. The phrase 'movement' was coined and adopted.

The journey so far...

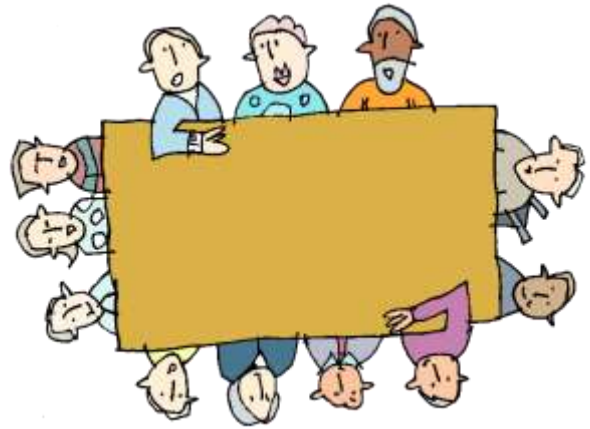


Over the past year and since the event there have been many conversations in a range of places across South Ayrshire, bringing together older people in our community to be a part of this movement.

The below sections detail how we have engaged and responded to what older people have told us.

The Ageing Well Strategy and Movement Board

A key part of this work has seen the development of an Ageing Well Movement and Strategy Board with membership from South Ayrshire Council, Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Third Sector and our Community Planning Partners. The purpose of the Ageing Well Movement and Strategy Board is to bring together key stakeholders and decision makers to develop long-term strategic planning in the arena of ageing well in South Ayrshire.



The Board's main aims are to understand the existing and future needs of our older population whilst addressing demographic challenges. The board takes into account the local, national and international evidence which identifies ways older people can live well and how we can look to influence work at local level in South Ayrshire.

There is always representation of older people on the Board in order to ensure the views and decisions are reflecting the views of the people in our communities.

Ageing Well Champions Board



As part of South Ayrshire's commitment to becoming an age friendly community the Ageing Well Champions Board was created in 2023 supported by VASA.

This has grown and there are now three Boards located in Ayr, Girvan and Troon and have a combined membership of over 150 older people. These individual boards hold the Ageing Well Board to account and provide a feedback loop between the different boards to ensure views are represented. Members of each Champions Board can contribute their views on how we develop our

local strategy but also raise issues along the way that we need to address.

The Chairs of the Champions Board attend regular monthly strategic planning meetings where they provide feedback on behalf of the boards so that their views and voices can be heard throughout the process.

Organisations can seem like mazes, but it's great to be invited to have a say and begin to understand what's going on in our community.

I'm happy belonging to the ageing well champions board, being asked our opinions, hearing of new things and being able to be part of decisions for older people not only for the short term but for long term planning of things to make the lives of older people better for them and all the community too.

It is so important that the public can have a say about our future and others that we can support. We have the knowledge of our area, the problems that we see and feel around. We can talk for others.

Themed Discussions



A series of themed discussions were held in the early part of 2024. This was an opportunity to bring together individuals with expertise in the specific areas related to ageing well alongside members of the Champions Board. Each discussion considered key themes as set out in the Age Friendly Community model with the dual purpose of learning and to inform the content of the Strategy. The topics and key themes are detailed below:

Transport

The Transport session highlighted the importance of working with local communities and having open and honest discussion around both costs and existing resources that communities can access. It was agreed there is a need for improved sharing and provision of easy to access information on all forms of transport, ranging from lift share through to bus timetables. This would also include information on where to access funding for Transport.

Places and Spaces

This session focussed on the need to be ambitious and develop South Ayrshire into the 'Florida of Scotland', by turning our assets into opportunities. It was recognised that offering inter-generational activities can increase social connections and develop purpose and self-worth. This has the potential to improve the physical and mental health of older people. The key elements are: Using green space better and opening up community buildings for wider use and improving access.

Communications, Marketing and Access to Information

We know that there is a need to provide improved information and advice. There are a lot of great services that are available to access in South Ayrshire, but the information needs to be better communicated and more easily available in the right place at the right time. The Ageing Well process aims to have continued engagement with communities in order to improve how we work together to deliver consistent and accessible information across agencies including Health, Social Care and the Voluntary Sector. We are confident that engagement with local employers to promote the role of older people who have skills and experience the bring to the workforce could be beneficial to all.

Civic Involvement, Engagement, Volunteering and Influencing

A number of key priority areas were identified to support the Ageing Well Strategy:

Promotion of South Ayrshire as an Age Friendly Community to all Elected Members, South Ayrshire Council and Health and Social Care Partnership staff;

The views of Older People to be included in discussions relating to key Age Friendly themes, including housing, transport, outdoor spaces and buildings, community support and health services, communication and information, respect and social inclusion, volunteering, employability and social participation;

Promote and encourage more civic participation and engagement, linking into Democracy Matters, and working with the Local Employability Partnership to create criteria for Age-Friendly Employers and promote this;

Offer pre-retirement programmes especially to those who will have minimum income after retirement; and

Intergenerational delivery – support opportunities for volunteering or targeted employability opportunities for those over 50 who are long term unemployed.

Nurturing Whole Family and Whole Community Culture Change

Ageing well should start long before retirement age and inter-generational relationships can transform and enrich all our lives. The key themes that emerged out of this session were that there needs to be a whole culture change and that all organisations should be working together from the start of life to support the whole family unit. This would involve “cradle to the grave” services that support people from birth until death and reduce the number of new teams that people have to access throughout their lives.

To do this will require better communication between providers and better information for service users. Further points raised include changing the narrative and language around older people and that a “contract” similar to that of the Wellbeing Pledge could be created within Ageing Well. This would see each part of society taking ownership for their role in helping people to age well.

Technology Enabled Care and Support

We need to embrace the role of technology and provide training for individuals and families on available digital services. There also needs to be enhanced digital communication between organisations and individuals to ensure transparent access to information and services.

We also found that there are ways we can get better at utilising technology to ensure there is clear information and easy access to support services within communities.

Food and Nutrition

We know that more recognition is required at both a local and national level regarding the importance of nutrition and hydration to support the life cycle and our ageing population. A number of key points were raised from this discussion including the work required to support a community-based approach with early intervention so that people who can be supported early on do not reach a high-risk level of malnutrition.

We identified there needs to be an increased understanding around the cost of living and the impact this is having on older adults and their ability to afford nutritious food and consider options to support those who cannot afford to maintain a healthy diet.

There is opportunity for increased training for services across Ayrshire that were highlighted at this symposium and an agreement that the presentation from this session will be shared with more teams across the South Ayrshire working with older people.

Webinars



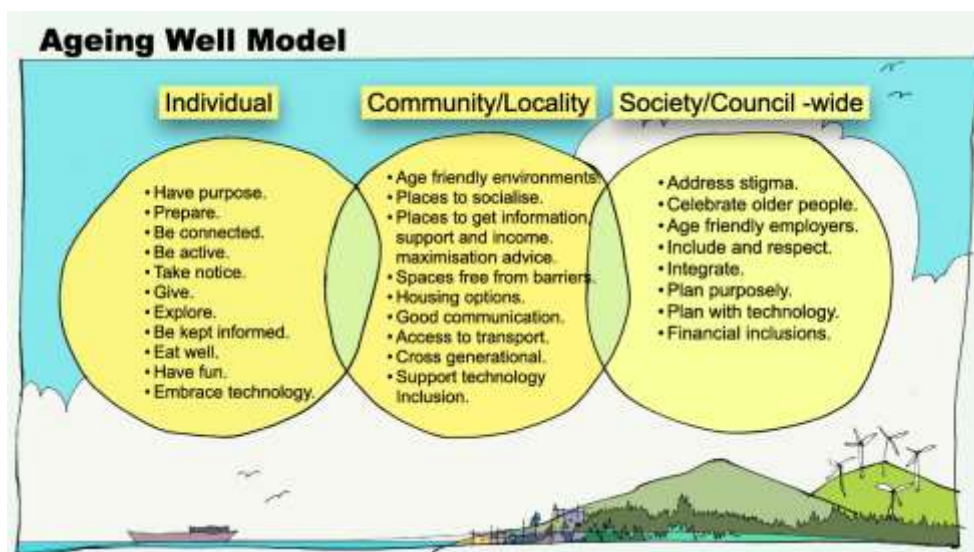
A series of Ageing Well Webinars were held during the Autumn/Winter of 2023 that have sought to inform the content of our Ageing Well strategy. These webinars engaged with and considering the work of ‘experts’ in the field of ageing or related developments across the UK.

The format was a simple 30-minute presentation followed by question and answers. The audience was widespread including health and care staff, partners, third sector and members of the Champions Board. Whilst not everyone who signed up to the series were able to attend, the webinar content was been recorded. Access to the presentations can be found on the Health and Social Care Partnership website.

The Webinars allowed key stakeholders in South Ayrshire to hear from national and international experts linked to healthy ageing and to begin to identify common strands that need to be in place. All of this was linked to the Age Friendly Communities model which sets out the themes that need to be considered to support ‘ageing well’.

The themes that need to be addressed include actions that individuals and families need to undertake, those that need to take place within local communities and those better addressed at a more structural, local authority (or Community Planning) level. We have thought about this as a local ‘ecosystem’ that supports older people to age well.

We have pieced together these themes into a simple ‘Ageing Well’ model:



Cultural Programme

As part of our engagement, we have developed an arts and culture programme. A small budget was allocated to support this work which had the following specific aims:

- o *Celebrating the contribution older people have within our communities.*
- o *Challenging outdated stereotypes of what older people should look and sound like.*
- o *Using arts to explore some key emerging themes linked to ageing.*



The programme has included:

- Working with the Gaiety Theatre in Ayr to engage with older people to explore the concept of frailty. We have been working collaboratively with older people and a play has been developed – Don't mention the 'F' word – that explores the challenges linked to frailty. This will be performed by professional actors with the intention to use the play in theatre or video form as a further engagement tool.
- Working with the Gaiety theatre on a series of theatre events that are aimed at people living with dementia that involved music themes such as Doris Day, Sixties Hits and Big Band.
- The development of four smaller funded programmes that focus on:
 - o Working with older people on a mural in the Wallacetown community.
 - o Developing an older people's podcast.
 - o Developing dementia related arts work with the Dementia Arts Trust.
 - o Working with a rural community arts group to develop an arts programme in South Carrick.



Along with these developments we also have ongoing competitions for poetry, art and photography to engage with older people in our communities.



Further engagement

We know that for this movement to be successful we require the support of all generations living in South Ayrshire. In celebration of Ageism Action Day on 20th March 2024 there was a successful inter-generational event, Age Without Limits, organised by VASA at Belmont Academy, Ayr. This was a wonderful sharing of insights from one generation to another and further intergenerational events are planned in the coming months to support the consultation period.

What happens now?

Following the launch of the draft strategy on 30th May 2024, we will enter a period of formal consultation on the strategy until September. We will be visiting community groups and organisations across South Ayrshire to understand what this means to older people in our communities. This will help us to understand if our approach is heading in the right direction and start to form actions which we can implement and make real change in the coming months and years.

This work goes beyond what a typical strategy would look like, this is the start of a movement that will create impact across South Ayrshire.

We'd love you to get involved, here's how...

Telephone: 0800 432 0510

Email: ageingwell@vasa.scot

Scan the QR code below on your smart phone to take you straight to the survey.

