

# HAVING YOUR SAY

KILKENNY OLDER PERSON'S COUNCIL  
COMMUNITY GATHERINGS 2022







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# Foreword

The Kilkenny Age Friendly Programme, in place since 2010, aims to meet the identified needs of Kilkenny's older citizens in the design, planning and delivery of services across eight World Health Organisation Domains: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Transportation, Housing, Respect and Social Inclusion, Social Participation, Communications and Information, Civic Participation and Employment, Community Support and Health Services. Several age friendly initiatives have been launched with the assistance of the Kilkenny Age Friendly Alliance and influenced by the Kilkenny Older Peoples Council.

To further support our ability to be more fully representative of older people throughout Kilkenny City and County, we obtained funding from The Community Foundation of Ireland through its Older Persons' Fund -Supporting Older People's Voices at a Local and National Level. With their support we engaged in a series of Community Gatherings, targeted at older people, particularly in areas where the Kilkenny Older Peoples Council had least engagement.

These Gatherings provided the attendees with up-to-date information on the role and functions of the Older Peoples Council at a local and national level and other agencies that work throughout Kilkenny City and County to support older people as they grow old. The Crime Prevention Section of An Garda Síochána gave updates on how to keep safe in the home and community, Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership gave updates on their activities in supporting older people in keeping active and engaged in social activities, Kilkenny/Carlow Education & Training Board provided information on available programmes designed to support older people, ALONE provided information on all the services they provide to older people including its befriending services and personal alarms.

In addition to provision of information, the greatest value was obtaining the views of older people, through facilitated consultation workshops, at each of the venues - Urlingford, Castlecomer, Ferrybank, Mullinavat, Graiguenamanagh, Kilkenny City (East) and Kilkenny City (West). The findings from these workshops and questionnaires have been analysed and presented in this report and will be presented to Kilkenny Age Friendly Alliance to inform the development of the next Age Friendly Strategy from 2023.

I express my thanks to all the participants, to the facilitators, the reporters and all who assisted. I thank Kilkenny Library Services, Kilkenny Local Link, Family Carers, Kilkenny Leader Partnership, Kilkenny Education Training Board, ALONE, Health Promotion -Health Services Executive, for providing information stands. A special thanks to Dr. Debra O'Neill, and Dany El Amin for the preparation of this report and for guiding us through the consultation process.

Finally, I would like to thank The Community Foundation of Ireland for the funding provided for this initiative which has enabled older people throughout the City and County to have a voice in the development of the next Age Friendly Strategy for Kilkenny City and County.

Michael Delahunty,

Chair, Kilkenny Older Person's Council.

Mary O'Hanlon

Kilkenny Older Person's Council



## 2.0 Kilkenny's Age Friendly Journey

The Kilkenny Age Friendly County Initiative was launched at a public meeting in Kilkenny on 26th March 2010 by Hollywood Actress Maureen O' Hara. The Kilkenny initiative is part of the World Health Organisation Age Friendly Programme which has been rolled out nationally and adopted into policy by national agencies and stakeholders. Since its inception in 2010, consultations and participation of older adults in the county has underpinned the ongoing development of Kilkenny as an age-friendly county. As a result, the local area development plans and other local government services have been informed by the views and priorities of older people and their organisations.

The inclusion and cooperation in the design and development of services by older adults in the county have led to several successful initiatives and projects over the last ten years.

In 2014, Kilkenny City became the first city in Ireland, receiving Age Friendly status from the World Health Organisation.

The same year, The Ormond Hotel, in consultation with older customers, was awarded the first Age Friendly Hotel in Ireland.

St Luke's General Hospital launched their Age Friendly Initiative and GEMS service in 2019

Graiguenamanagh Library became the first Age Friendly Library in Kilkenny and more followed.

The objectives of the consultation process as outlined by the Kilkenny Age Friendly County (AFC) Alliance members is to:

- ✓ Ensure that the priorities and ambitions of all key stakeholder groups, particularly older people and their organisations are reflected strongly in the AFC Strategy for Kilkenny City and County
- ✓ Build support and interest among older people and other stakeholders in the programme
- ✓ Give older people and their organisations a strong sense that their views will influence the final strategy
- ✓ Identify how the various stakeholders and older people and their organisations can contribute to the programme



- ✓ Identify mechanisms by which the older adults in Kilkenny can become genuine partners in the ongoing design and delivery of services in the county

This report is a summary of the views and opinions expressed during *The Gatherings*, or active listening workshops, which were designed to inform the development the next Age Friendly County Strategy (2023) The Kilkenny Older Person's Council and the Age Friendly County Alliance are excited about the findings from *The Gatherings*, which will advise priorities for age friendly actions across the local stakeholders. Over the months of June, July, and September 2022 nine public and community gatherings /consultations were held. In addition a questionnaire was also distributed to attending older adults to determine how age friendly their community was. These gatherings were organised in community centres and resource centres across the city and county. In total 189 people attended and expressed their view. The main aim of The Gatherings was to get as close to the community as possible and make venues accessible for local people to attend. While the consultation was framed around the eight main themes of the World Health Organisation as detailed below; the gathering also allowed individual issues to be discussed and recorded.

- 1. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings:** Street lighting, seating, level accessible pavements, access to parks and gardens; consultation in respect of town planning and access to information on town planning; sufficient time for traversing at pedestrian crossings; safety and security – feeling safe where you live and out and about in the country
- 2. Transportation:** Access to transport, availability of public local and rural transport, and parking; traffic
- 3. Housing:** Remaining in your home when you are less mobile and in need of support; access to quality supported including home supports and home help, supported housing and access to nursing homes if required
- 4. Respect and Social Inclusion:** Attitudes or behaviours towards older people in the community and being included in an accessible way, with all elements of community living.
- 5. Social Participation & Engagement in your Community:** engagement and involvement with family and friends; opportunities for volunteering and participation, community involvement, opportunities for participation in sport, leisure, and sporting events, opportunities for participation in the arts.

6. **Communication & Information:** Information on what is going on in your county, Public Service information, Voluntary Service information, Citizens Information; ensuring the AFC initiative is an informative, inclusive, and consultative body
7. **Community Support and Health Services:** initiatives to promote healthy living; facilities and supports for older people living with chronic health conditions; access to good quality local health that is community-based, access to good hospital services in the county
8. **Civic Participation and Employment:** Opportunities for older people to set up businesses, opportunities for older people to remain working after 65 if they so wish, opportunities for flexible working, and information on income and entitlements

### 3.0 Kilkenny Older People's Council

The order to become active partners in Kilkenny's age friendly plans the Kilkenny Older People's Council was established in 2010 as part of the initial consultation process. For the first time older adults had the opportunity to have their voices heard at the decision-making tables of local government. The structure of the Older People's Council was agreed by older adults who attended the first Age Friendly consultation and represented established groups and organisations in their community. The overarching purpose of the council is to ensure that Kilkenny City and County is the best place to grow old and this is achieved by.

- Ensuring that older people participate in the decisions that affect their lives
- Providing an active channel of communication between the Older People's Council and the Age Friendly Kilkenny Alliance, which is the overarching group made up of local government agencies that provide services to older people.
- Work together and represent the views of older people at local, regional, and national level.

The council is the formal representation group of older adults in the county and plays an integral part in the development, delivery, and monitoring of the Kilkenny Age Friendly County Programme. The Executive Committee of the council is elected by its members, who are drawn

from individual older people and older people's groups across rural and urban communities in Kilkenny city and county. Members include younger older adults (55-80 years) and more vulnerable "older" older adults (80+ years) as well as a diverse mix of older adults including different ethnic and socio-economic groups and those who represent specific groups like Men's Sheds, Active Retirement, and other groups. Members of the Older People's Council are represented on local government structures including Local Community Development Committees, Joint Policing Committee, The Public Participation Network, The Integrated Care Pathways for Older People (HSE) and the Strategic Policy Committee.

The Council is a voluntary group and membership is free. Due to COVID the last Annual General Meeting was February 2020, which was well attended. Planned activities including annual conferences and regional gatherings were also postponed during 2020 and 2021 however the Executive Committee continued to meet on-line and produced a newsletter for their members including exercising at home, health advice and useful contact numbers. During 2020 the Council also relocated from their old office at 42 Parliament Street to No 1 Hebron House, McDonagh Junction, Kilkenny. The current council is listed below and can be contacted on 087 6218589 or emailed at [agefriendlycounty@gmail.com](mailto:agefriendlycounty@gmail.com)



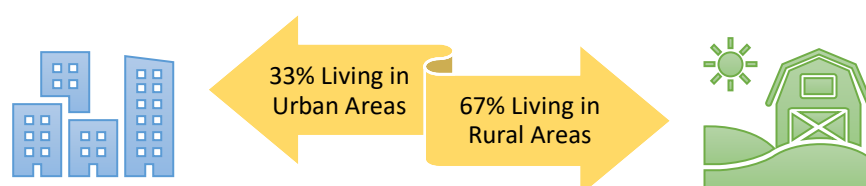
#### Kilkenny Older Person's Council 2022

Michael Delahunty (Chair)  
Betty Dewberry (Vice Chair)  
Kathleen Meagher (Secretary)  
Eileen Ryan (Treasurer)  
Frank Cody (PRO)  
Mary Harding  
Paul Clarke  
Rita Tynan  
Liviv Iftine  
Janice Cully  
Murty Brennan  
Liz Dermody  
John Kavanagh

## 4.0 Profile of Our Age Friendly Kilkenny

The number of older adults in Ireland continues to rise and currently 19% of the population are over 65 years, with over 37% being over forty-five. Kilkenny is slightly above the national average for those 65+ years old, standing at 20.2%. The average age in Kilkenny City and County is 36.6 years old versus 34.3 years for Fingal being the youngest electoral area and Mayo at 40.2 years being the oldest electoral area. However, there are several rural areas in County Kilkenny where the age profile is older than the national average of 36.6 years being Johnstown (41.4), Freshford (43.00), Inistioge (42.10) and surprisingly Kilkenny City Urban area 2 (43.30). While most older adults have expressed a preference for remaining at home as they age, according to the 2016 census there were 366 females and 236 males over the age of sixty-five in the country residing in nursing homes.

According to the Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy (2017-2022), 23% of men 70+ years and 36% of women 70+ years are currently living alone and often isolated in their communities. As Kilkenny is a largely rural area; two thirds of people aged 55+ years in Kilkenny live in open countryside or in a small village.



While a considerable volume of work has been completed in the last ten years there are still many challenges, as this report outlines. As our society changes, we must continue to meet the requirements and address the inequalities reported by older adults living in the research areas. These concerns, if overcome, can ensure that all older adults living in Kilkenny will have access to a healthy, active, and fulfilling life as they age.

*“This demographic change provides policy makers with many opportunities and challenges. Research is important and it is vital that we understand that not all older people are the same”.*

**(Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy (2017-2022))**

## 5.0 Scope and Format of Consultation

The workshops were organised, to encourage participants to contribute to discussions on the eight themes, which determine an age-friendly community using the following four questions:

1. What is good about this theme in your community in Kilkenny?
2. What would improve this theme in your community in Kilkenny?
3. What can you yourself do to improve this theme in your community in Kilkenny?
4. What can others do to improve this theme in your community in Kilkenny?

Each workshop was organised as a round-table discussion, using group sizes as small as three people to as many as fifteen people at some of the venues. A group facilitator and a group recorder attended each table to support the discussion and take notes on the discussions and the comments. The gatherings were also support by service providers who delivered presentations and provided information to attendees including the Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership, Kilkenny & Carlow Education and Training Boards, Kilkenny Library Services, ALONE, Ring-A-Link, County Kilkenny Leader Partnership, Health Promotion (HSE), Family Carers and An Garda Síochána.



## 6.0 Findings from Individual Gatherings

In total seven active listening workshops were organised in diverse areas of the county including Urlingford in the far east, Castlecomer in the north, Ferrybank and Mullinavat in the south and Graiguenamanagh in the east, and two in the city. These selected Community Gatherings areas are on the boundary of surrounding counties and often considered by older adults to be disconnected from Kilkenny City because of their geographical proximity to other county towns. The following is a summary of what older adults in these four dispersed areas contributed at the individual workshops.

### 6.1 Urlingford and Johnstown

Venue: The Mill Family Resource Centre, Urlingford

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Facilitators & Recorders: Siobhan O' Brien (CKETB), Margo McGrath (Kilkenny Library Service), Garda Pat Lyons (Gardai), Martin Rafter (KCLP).

Participants: Urlingford, Johnstown & Graine (n = 12)

Gender: 2 male / 10 female

The first of the gatherings took place in The Mill Family Resource Centre in Urlingford, which was well attended by 12 older adults. Several organisations provided information stands and presentations including CKETB, An Garda Síochána, ALONE, Ring-A-Link, Library Services, Family Carers Ireland and Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership. Following the presentations the round table discussions commenced, with each table being given two themes to discuss. The discussions were reported back to the main group and a summary of the active listening workshop findings as listed below under each theme.

#### Outdoor Spaces & Buildings:

- Good age friendly infrastructure has been noted in the community
- There is a new playground and sensory garden in Johnstown which is very pleasant
- There is a need for better, smoother, and safer footpaths and an increase in pedestrian crossings throughout.
- Request for free grocery parking

### Transportation:

- Transport in general needs improvement with focus on rural areas and a more targeted service for the community
- Ring-A-Link is a good service and is very much needed
- The regular bus times at 0800 & 1400 and coming back at 1600 & 1800 help with access to schools in Kilkenny and for those working in Kilkenny.
- CIE stopped their buses 5-6 years ago citing time & cost as the issues and now only use motorways
- more regular bus links to connect outer areas.
- Heavy Good Vehicles, Large trucks are causing a real problem in Johnstown

*“HGVs are using the main roads in Johnstown and Urlingford to avoid paying tolls. Would like to see the restriction of HGVs and better management of traffic as the speed is an area of concern. There is a case for the removal of fees for HGVs on the toll bridge to promote the use of toll roads over main roads within Urlingford and Johnstown.”*

- (Group Participant)





### **Housing:**

- Age friendly home improvements and support has been requested as people would like to continue living in their home. Grants should not be means tested – no one chooses to be old or disabled.
- There is a lot of social housing; however, there is a lack of knowledge provided as to if these are two-story or single-story housing. There is also a huge number of derelict houses that could be revived and used.
- As the Council are currently rehousing people from the city areas into Urlingford, it has created problems of drugs and alcohol and has shifted the anti-social behaviour, this combined with a lack of Garda presence to handle the problem, is creating an atmosphere of unease. People should feel happy and safe going out of their homes.

### **Respect and Social Inclusion:**

- A lack of confidence, social isolation and shyness are reported as barriers for new individuals to get involved in the community.
- A large portion of foreign nationals reported to be members of this community but there is a lack of engagement – increased resources are needed to insure this new Irish community can feel included and have their voices heard.

### **Social Participation & Engagement in your Community:**

- The same individuals are involved in the community groups and participants feel there is a need for new voices
- Increase financial support is needed in Johnstown to provide dedicated facilities for older people to meet, sit, feel at ease, and be socially involved.
- More encouragement from community leaders for older people
- There are opportunities for older people's voices to be heard and the community are happy with the level of activities available, but encouragement is needed to participate.



### **Communication & Information:**

- KCLR radio provide good information on local deaths and bereavement
- Better broadband in the area is needed to allow for connectivity – but hard-copy notice boards would make information more accessible.
- The church bulletins for the two parishes are appreciated but there is also a proposal to extend this to more information boards around Johnston Village and for KCLR to provide increased information on services available for the community.

### **Community Support and Health Services:**

- Health care needs more in-person contact and less connection over the phone.
- The bank is closed in the area and the nearest branch is Castlecomer or Kilkenny. People left to use online banking which is not always user friendly or accessible. Less technological enabled banking and more face-to-face contact is needed.
- Technology is simply moving too fast for some sections of society. There should be a choice as to whether you can use phone or personal consultations. In general, we want more human contact when it comes to community support, health care, banking and other services that rely heavily on technology now over personal connections.
- There is a lack of healthcare services in the area and only minimal provided locally, with no chiropodist which is necessary.

### **Civic Participation and Employment:**

- Good education and learning opportunities, in particular ETB training has been noted
- Community has stated that there is an increased desire to be included in decision making within this location.



## 6.2 Ferrybank

Venue: Ferrybank, Hillsfield Community Centre

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Facilitators & Recorders: Siobhan O'Brien (CKETB), Teresa Curran (KLP), Sophie Walsh (Ferrybank Library Services)

Participants: Ferrybank (n = 14)

Gender: 5 male / 9 female

The consultation in Ferrybank followed the same format as other areas and was also attended by Local Sergeant Deirdre O'Neill, Colette Power from ALONE, Theresa Curran and Maria Murphy from County Kilkenny Leader Partnership, Sophie Walsh from Ferrybank Library, Seamus Nugent from KRSP and Siobhan O'Brien from CKETB. Attendees discuss the same themes and advised on the following.

### Outdoor Spaces & Buildings:

- Better pavements are required all around but particularly where there are no pathways.
- Seating along pathways and in areas where there are a lot of inclines needed
- A request for a footbridge across the river
- There are some improvements that could be made around traffic lights in the area, such as the traffic light system to allow time for pedestrian crossing by new primary care location and local locations.
- Somewhere to go that you know is open where you can meet others such as coffee shops.
- Regarding safety, an increased presence of Garda patrolling is requested.
- A say in the planning of the area as older people currently feel uncomfortable if development creates high rise housing and apartments.

### Transportation:

- Hourly / frequent bus service was praised with a request for a Sunday service.
- Location of bus shelters to be improved alongside sign posting for stops.
- The distance between bus stops can cause difficulty, particularly the bus that does not go into the village, leaving too long of a walk which is not always possible.
- A complaints resolution procedure that is more user friendly, so voices can be heard, and action felt in the community around transport.

### Housing:

- Participants have stated that they do not know who to contact for small jobs and feel a directory of people willing to either volunteer their time or carry out small things around the house or garden would be very beneficial.
- Participants have also noted that this difficulty extends to additional support. An age friendly document would alleviate this barrier which might give a clear indication of services, who to contact and volunteers in the area.

### **Respect and Social Inclusion:**

- Mutual respect has been commended as being present in the community and felt.
- Improved facilities to promote social inclusion such as a coffee shop in the centre of the village has been requested.

### **Social Participation & Engagement in your Community:**

*"I would like to see the use of targeted events to promote more participation. Women seem to be more active in the community. There is a definite decline of older men in active retirement and the use of targeted events could promote more participation"*

**(Group participant)**

- Allotment in Ferrybank has been favourably mentioned within the group
- Women are noted to be more active in the community. Declining rate of men in active retirement and the use of targeted events could promote more participation.
- Interest in partnering with 'Alone' or developing a befriending service, particularly for those that live alone.
- Interest in local champions in the community to promote events and groups.

### **Communication & Information:**

- Community is looking for advanced communication from local authorities, as they are seeking greater participation for local area plans.

### **Community Support and Health Services:**

- Would like to see an improvement in facilities around health services particularly around those that are missing the face-to-face opportunities. More user-friendly approaches have been requested with more time given during visits with clear communication.
- New primary care centre mentioned favourably.

### Civic Participation and Employment:

- It is felt that there is no longer a desire to work among the older generation, however, there has also been an interest in some volunteer positions.
- This could give the option for those wanting to share their knowledge and skills with the wider community.



## 6.3 Castlecomer

Venue: Castlecomer Community Centre

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> June 2022

**Facilitators & Recorders:**

Siobhan O'Brien (CKETB), Mary O'Hanlon (Older Persons Council), Betty Dewberry (Older Persons Council), Elizabeth Dermody (Older Persons' Council), Rita Tynan (Old Persons' Council), Michael Delahanty (Old Persons' Council), Trevor Shore (Garda), Moira Duggan (KLP), Karen Deegan (Library Services)

Participants: (n = 42)

Gender: 5 male / 37 female

According to the 2016 Census the population of Castlecomer is reported at 2,318 of which 547, or 23.5%, are over the age of sixty. The population also consists of 116 widows/widowers living alone. The consultation was well supported with a turnout of 42 adults and a large contingent of service providers. Older people who attended the gathering in Castlecomer told us about the areas which make an area age friendly.

### **Outdoor Spaces & Buildings:**

- New Bridge is loved and safe. The hotel with its outdoor seating is particularly good and there has been increased parking.
- The Discovery Park is a great place to meet for outdoor walks with a cafe, however some of the outdoor seating is restricted to those buying coffee.
- Need for smoother paths for wheelchair users - Footpaths in Barrack Street are particularly bad.
- As for traffic - there is a need for a roundabout on Square and car parking spaces in general need to increase in size as there are lots of SUVs. An increased number of pedestrian crossings are also needed.
- Participants have stated they can be more social and some ideas to do so were organising a street party and holding a picnic in the Discovery Park. Participants have also stated the desire to be active in the Tidy Towns and to ensure homes are attractive with flowers outside, painted doors and clean windows.

- Participants have stated they would benefit from county council grants for improvements and sponsorship from local businesses with a community approach to participating, especially young adults.
- Ask for more bottle bank facilities with better access to allow older people to be environmentally conscious.

### Transportation:

- The bus service to Kilkenny from Portlaoise is a daily service which stops at St. Luke's Hospital.
- The bus needs to come more regularly with earlier and later times as early hospital appointments are not serviced and there are no evening services. We need a bus service that suits different appointment times.
- It is also difficult to know when the buses operate or where they drop off - need more information that is easy to access.
- The stop at St. Luke's hospital has a bus shelter but there should be no parking allowed in front of the bus shelter. Car's parking in bus spaces makes it difficult and dangerous to walk around.
- There is a need to bring back the services that go directly to physio and other departments and not just the main hospital.
- Participants wondered if they could ring Ring-A-Link to see if the service could cover Castlecomer. Also understand that to make changes they need to lobby politicians and involve the media to highlight the situations that need changed.

### Housing:

*"There is a big concern about older men who find it difficult to cope when their partners die. People want to continue living at home but sometimes their wives did a lot for them. Some are more able than others to adjust to the services but there are those that will not allow services to come in and support them."*

**(Group Participant)**



- Information around grants for home improvements needs to be easier to locate. Many of us want to stay at home but need adjustments made to the home. Some grants do not cover everything, and it is not easy to know what might be covered or needed - grants for doors and windows are not enough.
- There are some people who do not want to live in care homes and need Home Help, but it is very hard to get home help and there isn't any available at the weekends.
- Government is pushing new heating systems, but they need bigger grants to cover this because older people cannot afford to do this.
- There is no help for those living in rural areas and they are forced to move. We would benefit from community housing for rural people.

#### **Respect and Social Inclusion:**

- Participants have stated how nice it feels to be valued as you get older and to be respected
- Younger people tend to be impatient, according to this group.
- There might be an opportunity to teach the younger generation some of the old ways that can be lost with time, and this could decrease the stigma that is sometimes felt in the community.
- "We have much experience and knowledge to pass on."

#### **Social Participation & Engagement in your Community:**

*"It is hard to get some of the older members involved in the active retirement association, for example the Men's shed in Castlecomer only has two current members. I think Covid has affected older people going to these groups. People need some reassurance as many are still scared about leaving their homes and attending gatherings."*

**(Group Participant)**



- A community development officer to help organise things needs to be appointed. They could help organise things like a new Male voice choir, Bridge, Drama Groups, or line dancing.
- GAA is great for getting people engaged.

#### **Communication & Information:**

- A local newsletter could keep the community up to date on anything social happening in the area. The only way to get people to attend events is to promote the local clubs and activities. For those with more technical knowledge a community website could even be created.
- A drop-in centre for digital issues would be appreciated. So many forms are now online and some people either do not have access or do not understand how to use websites. Group has stated that it would be nice to have somewhere to get assistance, for example if a bus pass were to run out for free travel, applying online for another is the only way to engage with the service. There is no clear number to ring.
- Participants have stated they wish to speak to real people instead of dealing with online systems.
- So many people are using mobile phones only and do not use landlines anymore but there is no directory for mobile phones, and this can mean we are cut off from neighbours. A lot of 1850 numbers have also disappeared since covid.

#### **Community Support and Health Services:**

- The day care centre is a good asset. They pick you up and drop you home, but we need a primary care centre.
- The local GPs in Ballyragget need extra resources, maybe a nurse and another GP. The local Doctor cannot take any more patients and a nurse could help to ease the pressure. A nurse could also lead initiatives such as routine health checks, taking blood pressure etc. Something like this could be so beneficial if people were seen every 6 weeks and then if there were any issues you could be passed to a doctor.

- If Doctor Hogan retired, patients will have to travel to Kilkenny Ayrfield, and it can be very difficult to get an appointment here.
- Area would also benefit from a local chiropodist. If you are waiting to see one publicly the wait list can be very long. There is a private chiropodist in Castlecomer who will travel to your home but the previous service where one would travel to O Gorman's Nursing home has stopped.
- Castlecomer has always been serviced better than Ballyragget. "You could live in Castlecomer without leaving it."
- Some rules are unclear - People are wary about providing lifts to others that cannot drive because of the insurance implications.

#### Civic Participation and Employment:

- Banks have been noted to be very difficult to deal with
- Credit unions are the preferred options as the staff have been noted to be more friendly and patient with older people.



## 6.4 Mullinavat

Venue: Mullinavat Community Centre

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Facilitators & Recorders: Martin Rafter (KCLP), Sophie Walsh, Siobhan O'Brien (CKETB), Betty Dewberry (Old Persons' Council), Mary O'Hanlon (Older Person's Forum), Mary Harding (Older Persons' Council).

Participants: n = 23

Gender: 5 male / 18 female

The gathering in Mullinavat seen 23 older adults attend the consultation which was supported by a host of service provider who both facilitated and recorded the discussions on the age friendly themes as well as providing information on home security, education and learning opportunities and local library services in Ferrybank.

### Outdoor Spaces & Buildings:

- Mullinavat and Kilmacow both have good community spaces and a good community centre but there is an opportunity to add to existing spaces and use what we already have.
- Accessibility needs to improve; some areas have no paths that can be used safely, particularly in Kilmacow. In Mullinavat, there is a need for a pathway from the GAA pitch into the village.
- Older people want to stay environmentally conscious but there are no rubbish bins on the streets of Mullinavat.
- Glenmore does not have a shop and no post office although there is a move being made to put in a community shop.
- Listerlin has very disjointed facilities and no community space.
- Older people need to have community spaces and be included alongside the teenage communities and sports clubs. It should have the same priority and it should be the same everywhere.
- Some of these matters could be improved by the community contributing to local elections to have a representative on the County Council.

### Transportation:

- The Ring a Link is available twice a week and it is a good service where it is available. There is a need, however, for more routes, with an increase in frequency and more availability. Kilmacow and Tullogher do not have a service at present and sometimes the bus does not stop in Glenmore.
- At present there is a lack of coordination of services such as the train, bus and Ring a Link which makes public transport difficult.
- There is no bus shelter in Ballyhale which is needed, and traffic also needs to be calmed throughout Mullinavat.
- Need access to physical information such as on notice boards. Getting information on delays and bus timetables is not easily available. We need improved advertisement and information. Information needs to be truly accessible.
- To overcome some of these difficulties the community has stated they could contact Ring a Link, after having a discussion with the community to capture our needs. This would give a voice to the demand to the service provider.

### Housing:

*“The council has built houses on a bend with no facilities, a footpath that leads to nowhere, and there is no infrastructure where these homes are being built. We need more housing in the village where we can get to shops and services. There seems to be no joined up processes in planning that can connect housing with services.”*

#### (Group Participant)

- The criteria to get housing does not make it accessible.
- There is nowhere to downsize for people living in a large home alone.
- We need more housing, more support needed for people living alone from the community as well as family.
- The county council needs to communicate what is available in terms of community housing or even paid housing as we do not always know what is out there.

- Some of the above could be solved by collecting everyone's problems and bringing this to the County Council as one voice. This could be done particularly at election times and in writing a letter. To do this people need to be committed to change and turn up for meetings to resolve issues.
- A local committee could be formed that could look to meet with engineers.

### **Respect and Social Inclusion:**

*"We have difficulty adapting to social changes and more individuals both in and outside of the community need to try. The rate of change is too much, and it is difficult to get to know your neighbours as everything is ever changing. We need to get to know our neighbours to increase social confidence and any means to help us along would be very beneficial, otherwise this leads to isolation."*

#### **(Group Participation)**

- To tackle some of these issues a personal development programme would help to build confidence and help people feel important in their communities.

### **Social Participation & Engagement in your Community:**

- There is a lot available such as hurling clubs, community centre in Mullinavat and nice walks but there is a lack of information on the availability of facilities and activities. There is not enough information sharing or good communication on what is happening and when in the community. We need a way of sharing this such as a leaflet or in the newspaper.
- Suggestion for an age friendly logo on some of this information, it would make events and gatherings better known.
- Communities have become larger and there is a need to join clubs and be active and communicate between groups to stay included. There is a need to invite people into groups and be welcoming.
- To increase engagement in larger communities there needs to be a willingness to be a support to younger isolated people. Older people need to give to have social inclusion and not simply expect it. Younger people can be taught valuable

skills and life lessons. We need to get out to be included and be inclusive, reaching out to others.

#### Communication & Information:

*“Some members feel very unconfident with the technology and the pace it is progressing group training on how to use sites would be very helpful. To combat this contact with the ETB could be made to supply classes.”*

**(Group Participant)**

- Broadband is available in Ballyhale, but it is not widely available elsewhere such as the centre in Kylemore where broadband is not good. Broadband in rural areas is very bad at present and needs to be improved.
- An older people's HUB/Citizen centre locally would be great to pass out information and set up a leaflet with information on services and resources.



### Community Support and Health Services:

- Kilmacow has great facilities with forty-eight clubs. Mullinavat needs more activities like Kilmacow.
- There is no GP in the health centre and the centre is deteriorating considerably and needs attention. Must travel to Waterford for a CP practice and this is very difficult if you have no car.
- Noted that it would be nice to have exercise machines outside and more walkways so people could meet and walk safely. Adding more seating would be helpful also for those wanting to meet to walk outside and exercise.
- It has also been suggested to form a designated walking group for older people to get together and become more active.
- Traffic calming is required

### Civic Participation and Employment:

- There is a need to identify a centre or HUB for civic engagement. Older people have skills they would like to utilise.
- Elderly people can add a lot with a wealth of knowledge and skills and there should be more engagement in the wider community to pass this along. There is a need to set up a programme and share skills that are already in the community.
- There is a need for some local counsellors in Mullinavat to engage within the community

## 6.5 Graiguenamanagh

Venue: Graiguenamanagh, The Hub

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Facilitators & Recorders: Eileen Ryan (KPC), Alison Iramonger (KLP), Majella Byrne (Library Services), Siobhan O'Brien (CKETB), Mary Harding (KPC), Mary O'Hanlon (Older Person's Council)

Participants: n = 28

Gender: 13 male / 15 female

Of a total population of 1,817 reported in the 2016 Census, 22% are over the age of sixty. In this electoral area. There is also an equal number of men and women in this population area. As with other areas, older widowed females outnumber men 5:1. However in this area the attendance was nearly 50/50 male / female. Below is a summary of what the attendees told the facilitators and recorders.

### Outdoor Spaces & Buildings:

*"The bridge needs to be more accessible as the steps make it hard to move onto the bridge with shopping. They need improvement. There should also be lights on the bridge to control the traffic as the speed also makes this area unsafe. The electric cars are silent, and some people do not use bells on their bikes and use the walkways. We need more cycle paths. Safety needs to be given a priority. The walkway to the Solar Wood should be gravelled. There is also a need for better footpaths throughout."*

### (Group Participant)

- Aldi is great in the town, but more parking spaces and seats are needed throughout the town. There is also a need for more crossings to make getting around the town to services for those who want to walk easier.
- Some outdoor gym equipment at the Hub would help the community to stay active and the Hub should be accessible to get a cup of tea and sit down.
- People are using poo-bags for their dogs but as there are not enough bins for this in the town people are tying them to trees or gates which is horrible to come across.



- Some of these issues can be decreased by a group approaching politicians and services to see what is available.

#### Transportation:

- There are not enough taxis in the town for those that do not have easy access to a car.
- Traffic speed is a problem for safety but especially coming into town. Ramps could help to slow cars and create more safety for crossings.
- A regular bus service is needed in the town and a link to the train station for Bagenalstown and Thomastown. The train station in Thomastown for example, is a long way outside of the town. It would be great to have Ring-A-Link in the area. There is also no longer a bus to Dublin
- Bikes are an issue but there should be a ban on scooters in the area, particularly on the footpaths. There could be a tax placed on bikes and scooters.

#### Housing:

*“There are a lot of empty buildings in the community. These could be rejuvenated and supply more housing. There should be compulsory purchase orders for derelict houses. Fixing these and allowing people to live in them and look after their homes would also increase the presentation of the town. It brings the community down as it is hard to win competitions such as tidy towns”*

#### (Group Participant)

- Alongside the above, housing aid could provide support and assistance with things like gardening or small household jobs.
- St. Mullins' private houses are empty and not being maintained - this is also having an impact on some neighbours.
- It is very difficult getting planning permission to build on your own land. This issue prevents families building beside their parents to look after them when they get older.

### **Respect and Social Inclusion:**

- The Men's shed has been shown to be very good and a Ladies shed is now requested.
- Older people would feel more socially included if buildings were set up for the direct use for social groups which also need to be expanded.
- People of this community have noted that they can also decrease the level of social isolation by staying connected with older friends and being friendly and saying hello to neighbours.

### **Social Participation & Engagement in your Community:**

- The community centre in Inistioge is well used by people of all ages, however Graiguenamanagh does not have a lot to offer.
- There is a walking track and the G.A.A but it is lacking other things and it is difficult to get younger people to join in activities such as Bridge.
- A walking group could improve social participation for those who like to stay active.
- St. Mullins community facility at present does not offer activities or a space for older people – there is a need to contact those in charge and ask for permission to advertise and use the space more.
- People seem to be reluctant in the community to join groups locally and therefore the same people end up running everything. To expand services more individuals need to come forward from the older person's community to volunteer their time.

### **Communication & Information:**

- There is a need for a central notice board (possibly in the G.A.A. or Health Centre) that can build awareness of events – something similar was once run by the Scouts. Kilkenny people and the Kilkenny Community Radio station may be able to disperse information of events and groups also or on Post could deliver a newsletter.
- So much is now done online, for example Internet Banking. There is no bank in the town and people must travel if they need any kind of assistance that is not automated or requires knowledge of Internet Banking efficiently.
- There is a need for more ways of communication between individuals in the community and sharing information between one another. A WhatsApp group could help this.

### Community Support and Health Services:

- There is a need for a GP contact in Thomastown as there is not enough face-to-face. Patients must bring blood to St. Luke's themselves and this makes things very difficult.
- Graiguenamanagh needs a day care centre for older people to gather and socialise
- The community would really benefit from Meals on Wheels.
- Helping another by giving them a lift is not an option anymore as people are afraid of insurance implications when asking or offering lifts.



### Civic Participation and Employment:

- Training is needed at CIE stations on how to use the Ticket Booth.
- To make the area more age friendly there is need for more part time opportunities for older people without discrimination. It is felt that there is discrimination against older people because of age from younger people.
- There is a need for other volunteers of different ages to assist older people in the community.

## 6.6 Kilkenny City (East and West)

Venue: Orchard House, New Orchard Road & Hoban Hotel, Ring Road, Kilkenny City

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Facilitators & Recorders: Mary O'Hanlon (Older Person's Council), Mary Harding (Older Persons' Council), Michael Delahunty (Older Persons' Council), Laura Tyrrell (Older Persons Council), Kathleen Meagher (Older Persons' Council), Betty Dewberry (Older Persons' Council), Eileen Ryan (KCP), Catherine Power (ALONE), Damien Brett (Older Persons Council), Elizabeth Dermody (Older Persons' Council), Teresa Hennessy (HSE).

Participants: n = 70

Gender: 7 male / 63 female

### Outdoor Spaces & Buildings:

- Positive response time noted by local authority contacted regarding dumping.
- Safety has been noted to be a concern with a more visible garda presence requested and concern over the time that the streetlights are being turned off.
- Toilet facilities (public toilets) are far away from shops in shopping centres and toilets need to be on all levels to be accessible. McDonagh Junction was noted and complimented for the cleanliness of toilet facilities. There is also a need for the introduction of changing spaces/facilities and later toilets for those that need to be hoisted or assisted.
- Not in favour of the introduction of unisex toilets.
- Although the seating at the Credit Union has been praised, overall seating is a big issue that was discussed, including the need for more seating in built up areas, shopping areas and within shops. More seating is also needed by the boardwalk by Lacken and bus shelters, as the slanted seats, though proving to be good by some of the community, are difficult to sit on for others, and more accessible seating would be appreciated here. Many participants stated it would be helpful to consult residents on the placing of seats.
- Parking has been commented on as spaces can be small and where parking spaces are up against walls it can be difficult to reverse in and out of spaces. Disabled parking in safe spaces with even ground and age friendly stickers have

- been requested to improve parking as younger people seen to park in designated older people parking spaces.
- Parking on footpaths also make these footpaths inaccessible or unsafe.
- There is a need for awareness of electric cars approaching as these cannot be heard and scooters on pavements and streets cause a risk to pedestrians, especially if they cannot move out of the way quickly.
- Dog fouling has been noted in gardens, on footpaths and other public areas with many dogs not being kept on leashes.
- Uneven footpaths are causing difficulties in car parks, as above, however there is also a need for safer, even footpaths in Dean Kavanagh place, Vicar St., and Patrick St.
- Some footpaths have also been noted to have high steps and hinder mobility in the centre with some members sharing experiences of falling due to steps and uneven footpaths.
- An additional pedestrian crossing was requested by the Garda Station.
- Exercise machines need to be more central in the Kilkenny Castle, where there are none at present. An Adult exercise area is needed. Others have noted it feels silly to exercise in public and still struggle being in public after Covid.
- At Loughboy Riverview, lights are blocked by overgrown trees making it unsafe at present and in areas of the town roots of trees are coming up from the footpath.
- The Older Person's community wish to encourage members of their community to look after their own areas, maintaining overgrown trees and hedges with family taking responsibility for unoccupied properties, and responsibility of reclaimed properties to sit with banks. Local Authorities should contact those that are seen to not maintain their areas.

#### Transportation:

*"Most do not use the bus services anymore because of mobility issues. It is a long walk to most bus stops and there are not enough buses. We need more buses, especially in, or near, the estates. By the time you walk and wait for a bus you could walk into town, but this depends on the mobility of the person. You do not see many older people on buses and a lot of school kids use them and more of the public as the fuel prices rise. They are just too busy now"*

(Group Participants)

- Hospital service has been positively noted as it drops visitors directly at the front door.
- Train services to Dublin have been noted favourably as there is easy access with free parking. Free travel has also been positively commented on in general across all public transport.
- Many changes to bus routes have been noted to be negative. There are no stops near Newpark and Newpark Close now and Ring-A-Link, though noted to be a good service, has discontinued coming into the estates. More bus routes and extra buses are required for a growing city.
- To stop people walking a long way and then waiting for a long time on the buses, better access is needed to timetable. Timetables should be printed and distributed, with the use of bulletin notice boards, local media, church, and community groups.
- More accessible times, something that could be easier to remember like every ½ hour.
- Need for more bus services for schools, no bus at all from Rath Ullard and these need to link with school times.
- We want to be part of the effort to help with Climate change and would like to use buses and for others to use buses as traffic is terrible, especially at school times. We need to be enabled in this effort.
- The community needs to be encouraged to use the bus more through advertising the service and surveying the users to see who and where the most travel is taking place.

### Housing:

- Enable older people who want to continue living at home in their own community with the neighbours they know, and families close by.
- More housing is needed for individuals with accommodation for pets with two bedrooms near amenities.
- More technology enabled homes with appropriate design features to assist with living into later life, such as houses considering wheelchair users or visitors.
- Trusted tradesmen have been noted to be unavailable with many having to either choose unsafe and costly tradesmen. Changes to the home can be difficult to make, for example, is it very difficult to get someone to make ramps for housing and one

experience was shared that one individual was unable to enter their house for months due to this.

- Desire to set up a voluntary housing agency.

*“We understand that to push for these changes there is a need to advocate as a group, lobby politicians, be part of Residence associations & Pride of place. Older people need to get involved politically to support these changes, but we need the resources to use the skills older people have or learn new skills to participate. We need organisations and Council to listen. Having a spokesperson for older people at the local level could be a solution.”*

#### **(Group participants)**

- The community requires more support for older people in the forms of accessible application for grants and funding for healthcare. There is the feeling that grants should be 100% covered for home adaptations and need to be more accessible and quicker to apply for.
- Some members have stated they are open to downsizing if this is a way of obtaining some of these changes.

#### **Respect and Social Inclusion:**

- People are respecting Older People in the community and people with disabilities.
- The Newpark resource centre, and the “Nifty 50s Club” has been praised.
- There is all inclusive residency on Ballybough Street.
- More intergenerational relationships are forming and relationships forming with new neighbours. It would also be nice to see more intergenerational projects in the community, such as the ability to volunteer with Homework clubs, to strengthen inclusion and grow these relationships.
- Harmful labelling of older people by media - need for guidelines for media and advertising.
- Safety has been noted with the opinion that a neighbourhood watch would be helpful in this regard, but unsure how to get this set up. A back up service for lighting has also been commented on as being a concern around safety.





### **Social Participation & Engagement in your Community:**

- Entertainments have been complimented, including theatre and cinema
- Other services that have been complimented are Kilkenny ladies' friendship club, Meals on wheels, ICA, knitting club in Loughboy library and the Women's group at St Canice's Parish operating 10am – noon on Mondays.
- The community acknowledges that there is a need to be more respectful towards the younger generation as they are the future.
- Education as to what living as part of a community is and how to create those needed dialogues between people to help us to all work together to find solutions to problems.
- There is a need to get men involved more as it has been noted there is a difficulty in building relationships as women are seen to talk more and form



relationships easier. It can take men more effort to talk and 80% of the time is taken up by the working environment. A Kilkenny 'Men's Shed' has been suggested as a solution.

- GAA groups would also be good for involvement and as physical activity has been noted by the group to help both mind, body and spirit, dancing groups have also been suggested to promote activity and fun.
- As we approach the winter months there is a request for more indoor events during the day.



#### Communication & Information:

*"Telephone services are no longer as age friendly as they used to be. Having more people to speak to on the phone would be immensely helpful, like with Eir. Everything is digital and there is often only the opportunity to speak to robots and not a person. Not everyone desires to fully live a digital life and would prefer face-to-face and the use of cash. The 'human touch' is missing." (Group Participant)*

- The Parish newsletter and text alert has been noted to be exceptionally good, alongside the free paper and local radio.
- Information is needed on existing training in technology in the area. The group acknowledged that technology is moving on and there is much change. There is a need for acceptance and to get email addresses and learn a little about the digital world where possible.
- On the topic of technology and Internet access and speeds needs to be revised in the area.
- If technologically knowledgeable, the use of WhatsApp groups could keep people connected, and others have noted that if this is not possible, a return to writing letters to one another could be a resolution to this concern.
- People providing technological training need to be patient and ensure learning is at the pace of the learner.
- The local Radio needs to be used more to communicate things happening in the community.
- There is a need for Age Friendly Ireland to communicate with insurance companies etc. to make information clearer for older people.

#### **Community Support and Health Services:**

- Compliments in this area included how good the system is once you get into the system. One participant noted that they have no complaints and feel they are treated the same as they were 10 years previously.
- A walk-in health clinic operating on a regular basis could help notice issues at an earlier stage when things can be treated easier and quicker to not impact on daily living.
- It was nice to have someone visiting and have a link into ALONE and other similar services and more availability of home visits by GPs as they currently visit nursing homes but more people living at home now.
- Request to restore full medical cards for all over seventies.
- Criticism has been noted with CareDoc service and a local doctor would be preferable. When ringing CareDoc it is hard to get through as there are too many questions and then you are rung back. Nothing immediate.

- Sitting in chairs for a long time in casualty is not good for certain conditions and is painful.
- Need for improved home help with extended hours if required. If family are not available members rely on these services.
- Having a community worker in each centre would really help.
- It has been difficult to get back out after Covid, but we want to join groups and we acknowledge the need to stay active. Before covid, many were involved in KRSP classes (Pilates) and aqua aerobics but have not reconnected with these activities as some are no longer available.
- Need to involve community Gardai to help with safety concerns and make garda clearance easier.
- There is a stroke support group which meets at Orchard – more support groups are needed locally with information shared in community groups.

#### **Civic Participation and Employment:**

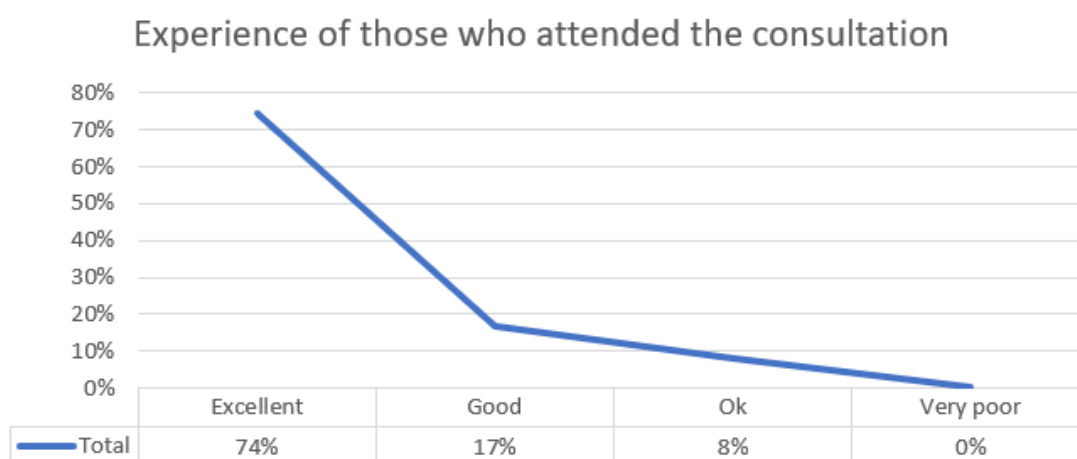
- ETB training is welcomed in this group.
- There needs to be discussion on the role of men and women in local councils with an obligatory 50/50 split of work.
- Learning opportunities are needed in the community to give older people options for learning new skills.
- There is a need for an established older peoples' forum and membership established.
- As a community, we do not have enough female representatives in the County Council.
- The citizens advice service is closing and there is a reduction of volunteers doing the face-to-face support which is more accessible for the older population.



## 7.0 Summary of Consultation Findings, Annual Conference & Conclusion

During the consultation phase, a grand total of 189 older people participated. Feedback on experiences during the consultation was very positive and most people felt it allowed their voice to be heard. 74% described the consultation and workshops as excellent and a further 17% said they were very good. Refreshments were served to all participants on arrival followed by lunch at the end of the sessions. At the Annual Conference which took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, attendees were also given the opportunity to make comments on matters arising from initial report findings, these additional comments are presented at the end of each relevant section .

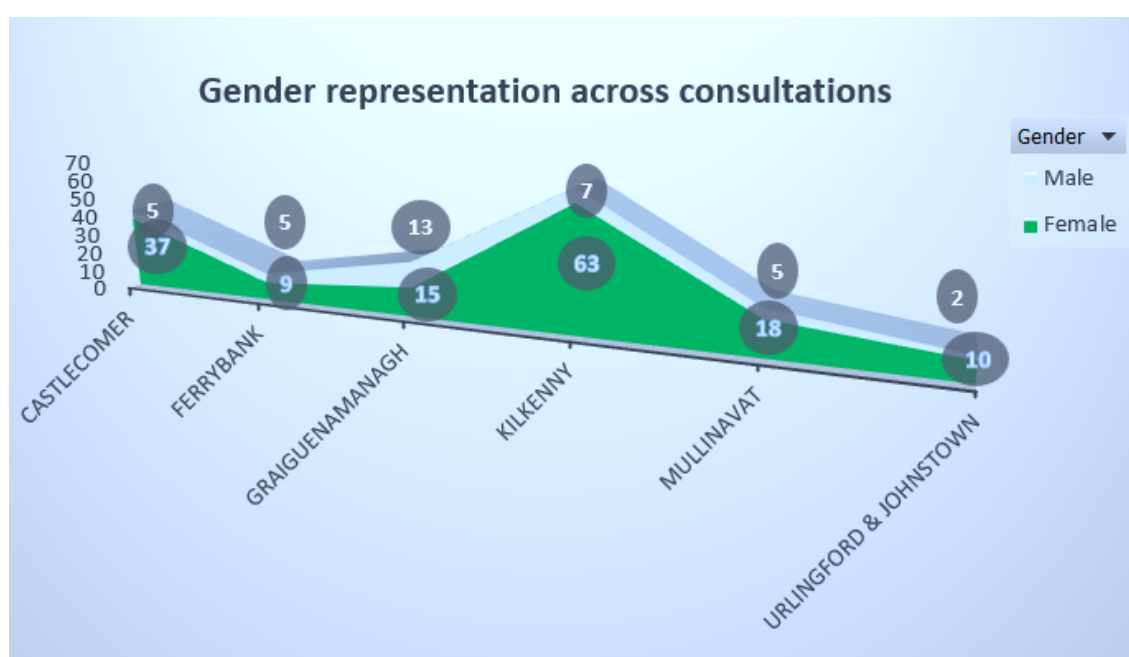
*Figure 1 Satisfaction with Consultation Workshops*



Out of the 189 individuals who attended and took part in discussions, there was a higher participation among females as the sample included 80% female (n=152) and 20% male (n=37).

*Figure 2 Gender of Consultation Participants*

This low attendance of men was seen throughout all consultations except for Graiguenamanagh which has equal number of men and woman followed by Ferrybank to a lesser degree. The challenging of engaging men was discussed at several workshops without conclusion.



*Figure 3 Gender of Participants by Consultation*

Consolidating the feedback from older adults across the consultations, the following themes keep emerging.

**Outdoor Spaces & Buildings:** Improvements have been made over the years in many towns and villages in the realm of outdoor spaces. Seating and improvement in community gardens and green spaces where completed are excellent, however some places have missed out. Footpaths have been noted across all consultations as being a safety concern with a request for smoother footpaths. Increased seating in public areas is also required, particularly around bus stops and on walks to allow those to remain active but also rest when required. On the point of parking, larger spaces and an increase in dedicated spaces are requested. Participants also showed a great interest in ensuring public areas as well as private gardens and residential areas were maintained and welcoming. The problems were noted with derelict buildings, litter, and finding a solution to dog waste bags being inappropriately disregarded. Public toilets should also have a larger cubicle to allow for assistance, e.g., hoisting, when needed. Lastly on this point, an increased presence of Garda patrolling has been requested.



**Transportation:** Frequency of buses and bus routes were discussed at all consultations with better access needed for rural areas and housing estates. Ring-A-Link has been complimented in many areas however some areas are still without access. An area of concern for safety has been the increased presence of electric cars which make little noise approaching alongside pedestrians and the speed of traffic, including scooters. Lastly, clear communication on the insurance implications when offering or requesting lifts is needed. At the annual conference held on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov 2022, many older adults commented on the size of parking spaces, and the difficulties with getting in and out of tight spaces





**Housing:** More technology enabled homes are needed with appropriate design features to assist with living into later life, also homes which can consider wheelchair users or visitors. There is the feeling that grants should be 100% covered for home adaptations. Improvements are needed to allow older people to live at home longer, with a specific note around directories for services that can assist around the home with smaller jobs. Trusted tradesmen have been noted to be unavailable with many having to either choose unsafe and costly tradesmen.

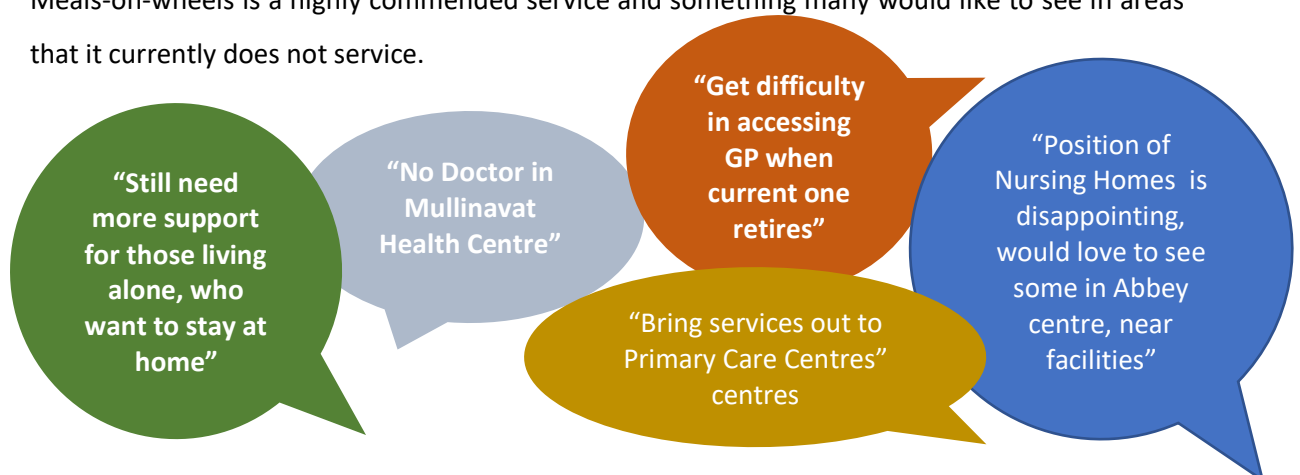


**Respect and Social Inclusion:** Most older adults felt they were respected in their community and are building intergenerational relationships. There is, however, a lack of confidence and a feeling of isolation regarding people returning to public activities after the Covid pandemic. Harmful labelling of older people by the media is also felt with a request for guidelines for media and advertising.

**Social Participation & Engagement in your Community:** A theme that kept emerging was the desire to have more engagement with local councils. Women have also been noted to be more active in the community and an increase in events which targeted men could promote more participation. Where in operations, the Men's Shed has been very favourably mentioned. There is also an interest in local champions to promote events and groups and a partnership with 'ALONE' or befriending services for those living alone.

**Communication & Information:** Recognition that local radio needs to be used more as it is a good source of information however a large portion of participants are looking for information boards which could communicate services and activities in the area and promote participation. Newsletters have also been suggested throughout all consultations. Better broadband for interconnectivity has been requested however there is also a concern for those that are not as technologically capable. Training in this area would be beneficial alongside a return to face-to-face services as banks have been commented on to be very difficult as they, and many other services, have moved to operating predominantly online, excluding some older people. Drop-in clinics around digital support have also been suggested, including services to set up phones, apps, and other online services. Increased communication from local authorities has been requested throughout. This was also mentioned at the annual conference on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022, a drop in centre for help rather than training on smart phones etc. Older also noted at the conference that reading and writing can be a challenge for some people.

**Community Support and Health Services:** Where day care centres and primary care centres are in operation they have been greatly received, however there are still areas without these services. In-person contact is a theme that emerged time and time again. Lack of health care services and the already stretched resource pool is felt by the community. Increased access to doctors and specialised services, such as access to chiropodists are required local. One suggestion, which emerged throughout, was the better use of more nurses which could alleviate pressure in local GPs. CareDoc has been noted with some criticism due to the lengthy and complicated process. Meals-on-wheels is a highly commended service and something many would like to see in areas that it currently does not service.



**Comments from Annual Conference 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022, Kilkenny Ormond Hotel, Kilkenny**



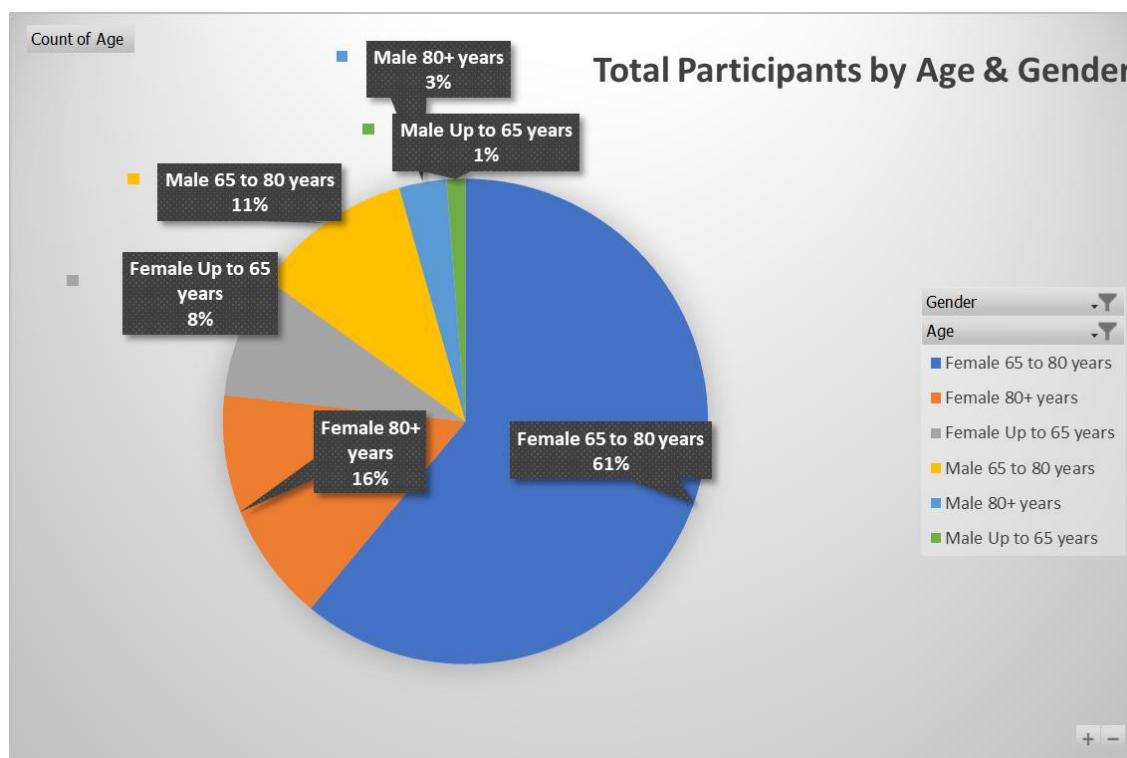
**Civic Participation and Employment:** The consensus is that many do not feel the desire to return to employment however more opportunities to engage in volunteer activities, particularly with the younger generation would be appreciated, and allow generational skills to be passed onwards. Increased learning opportunities are also requested that are not so “basic” and “generic”.



## 8.0 Findings from Age Friendly Questionnaire

As part of the county wide consultation old adults who attended the consultation were also asked to complete a short survey on the age friendliness of their community. The survey (Appendix 1) received 166 responses out of the 189 who attended the consultations.

*Figure 4 Survey Participation by Age & Gender*

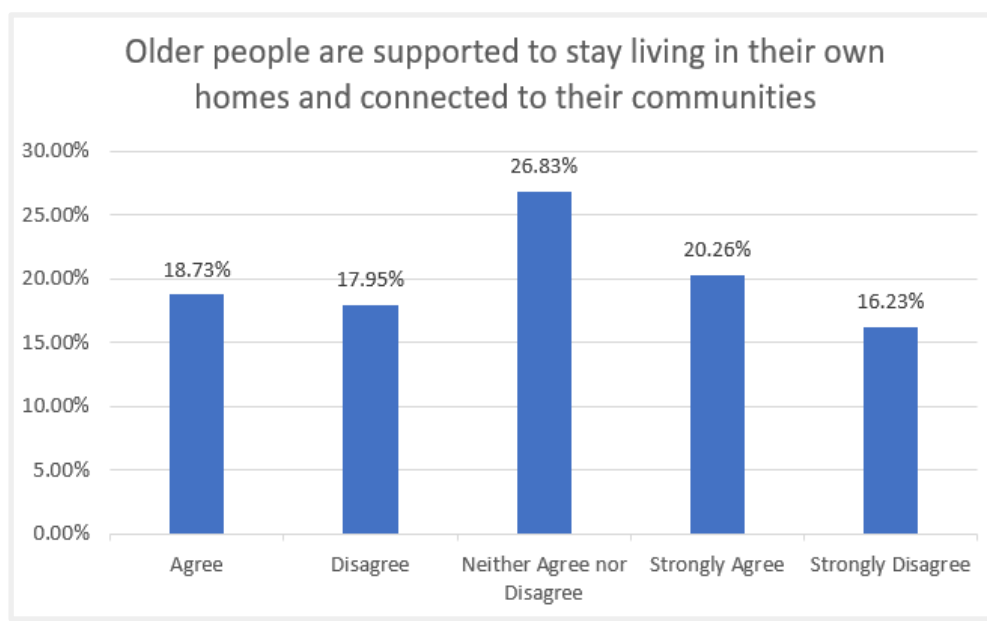


The survey aimed to capture experiences across eight World Health Organisation age friendly themes: Housing, transport, Respect & Social Inclusion, Communication & Information, Outdoor Spaces & Buildings, Community Support & Health Services, and Social Participation & Civic Participation. Participants were asked how strongly they felt about questions given, using the Likert Scale of 1-5 (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The following results were reported.

## 8.1 Housing

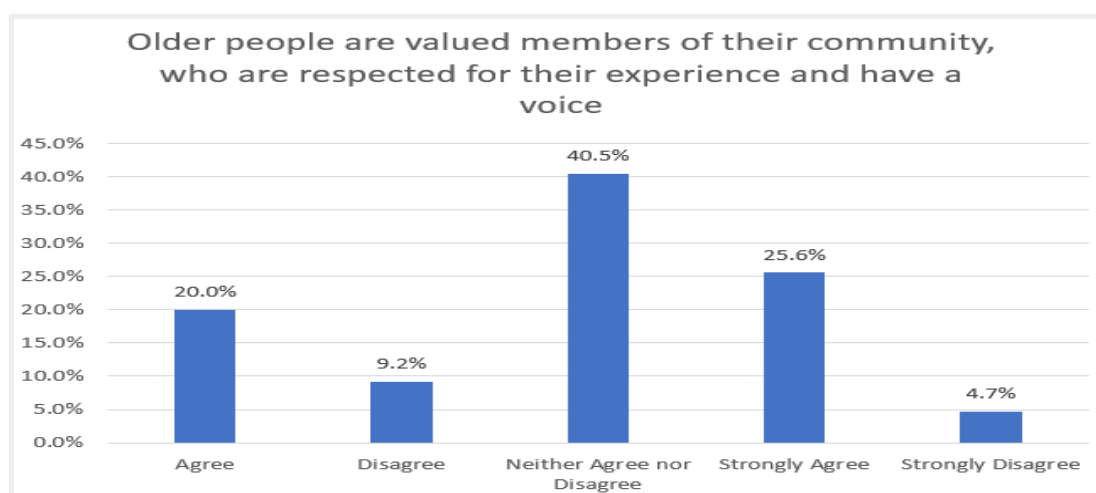
This data represents all of those who responded to the question across all consultations. The largest percentage of participants 'neither agree nor disagree' with this statement. Positively 39% either 'Strongly Agree', or 'Agree' that they felt supported to remain living in their own home. Only 16.2% strongly disagreed with the statement. Some participants choose to expand on their comments and suggested the following improvements were needed 1) Increase in grants for improvements to the home 2) A directory of tradesmen 3) More communication and information with local authority on availability of housing.

*Figure 5 Survey Response on Housing Supports*

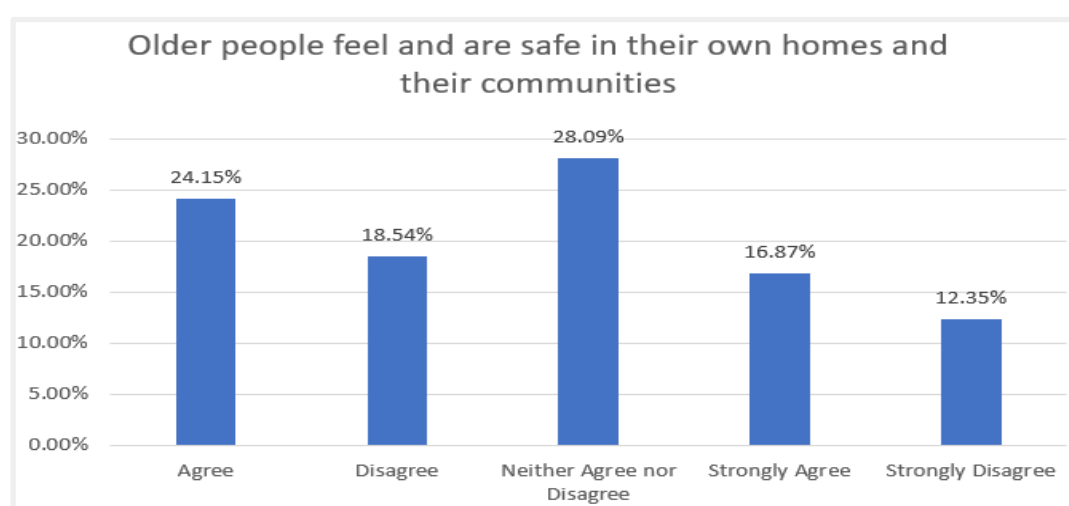


## 8.2 Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Older people want to live in places where the streets, areas, services, and buildings enable them to be out and about. This data represents the findings from the survey completed across all consultations. The largest percentage of people 'neither agree nor disagree' again with this statement. With 24% strongly 'Agree' that they feel safe in their own homes and communities (Figure 6). However just over 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they felt safe. Some comments were received from the survey participants which indicated that there should be 1) upkeep or refurbishment to derelict buildings 2) Increased seating placed throughout 3) safer, smoother pavements and finally 4) traffic calming measures.



**Figure 6 Survey Response on Safety at Home & Outdoors**



**Figure 7 Survey Responses on Respect & Inclusion**

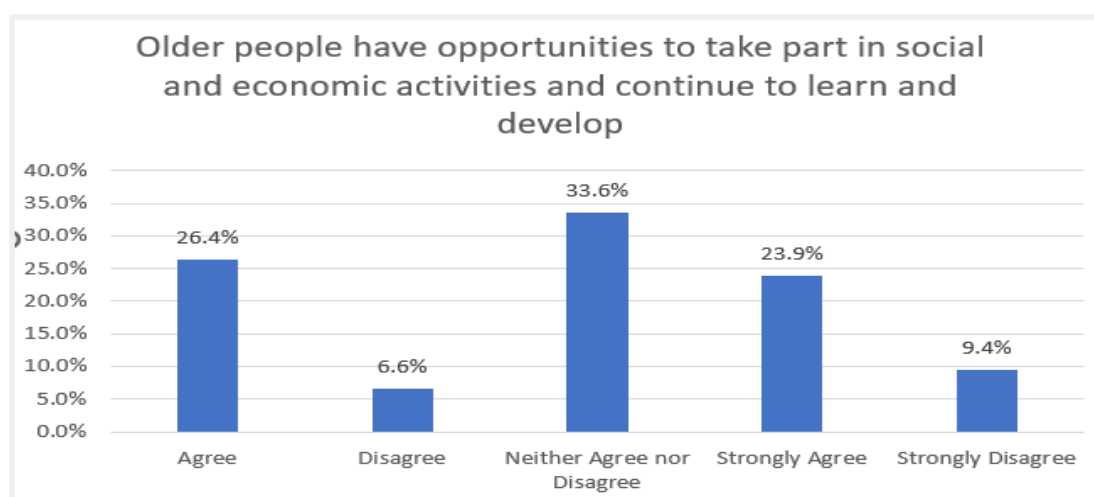
### 8.3 Respect and Social Inclusion

The survey also asked participants to select their agreement with a statement on a scale of 1-5. The statement was older people were respected and included in their community (Figure 7). The largest percentage of people 'neither agree nor disagree' with this statement. Positively just over 45% 'Strongly Agree', or 'Agree' that older adults are respected and included in their community. Less than 5% of participants strongly disagreed with the statement (Figure 7). Additional comments included 1) a need for an increase in intergenerational relationships and activities which could be aided by more groups and activities 2) a desire to get to know new neighbours and 3) Assistance in leaving the house as confidence has been diminished since Covid.

## 8.4 Social Participation, Civic Participation & Employment

When stated that older adults had opportunities to participate in social and economic activities in their community again the largest percentage choose the middle ground. On a positive note, just over 50% felt they had the opportunity (Figure 8), answering they agreed or strongly agreed. Participants also noted on there survey that they 1) wanted more opportunities to learn new skills, 2) particularly skills which would allow ease of movement through a digital world 3) also a means by which their skills can be passed to a younger generation 4) There was no general desire for paid employment.

**Figure 8 Survey Participation on Social, & Civic Participation**



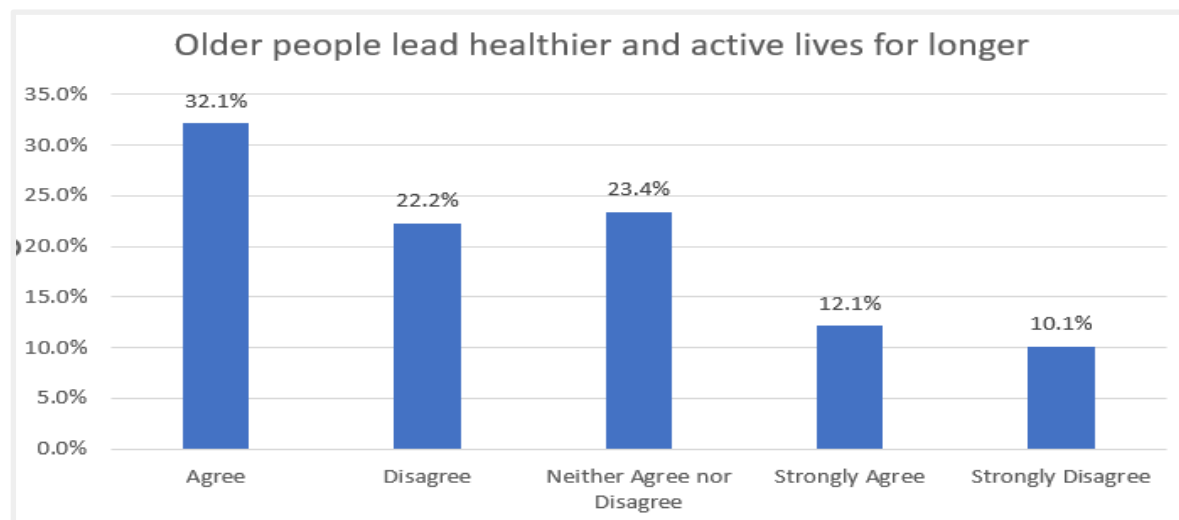
## 8.5 Community Support & Health Services

Asking about this theme most participants (44%) 'agree' or 'strongly agreed' with this statement, with 10% considering that they did not have access to community supports and health services in their community. Survey participants also noted on their questionnaires that the wanted 1) increase in face-to-face medical care, and an increase in nursing where there is a lack of doctors to ease the stretch on resources. 2) specialised care such as Chiropodists delivered locally and 3) more support groups for illnesses so that the community can assist one another.

## 8.6 Transport

Figure 10 demonstrated the opinions participants had on the transport statement, which is obviously influenced by the area you live, if you drive or have access to public transport. The largest percentage of people 'neither agree nor disagree' This is followed by 'Strongly Agreed' at 22.46%. However, this is a very large topic, and many attendees voiced their experiences during

**Figure 9 Survey Participants on Health & Active Living**



the consultation as follows

- Revision or increase of bus routes, particularly in rural areas.
- Ring-A-Link was highly praised and requested in areas where it does not service.
- Increase in bus shelters and bus stops as many find there is a long walk at times.
- More visibility of timetables.
- Scooters, electric cars, and bicycles were all mentioned as area of concern

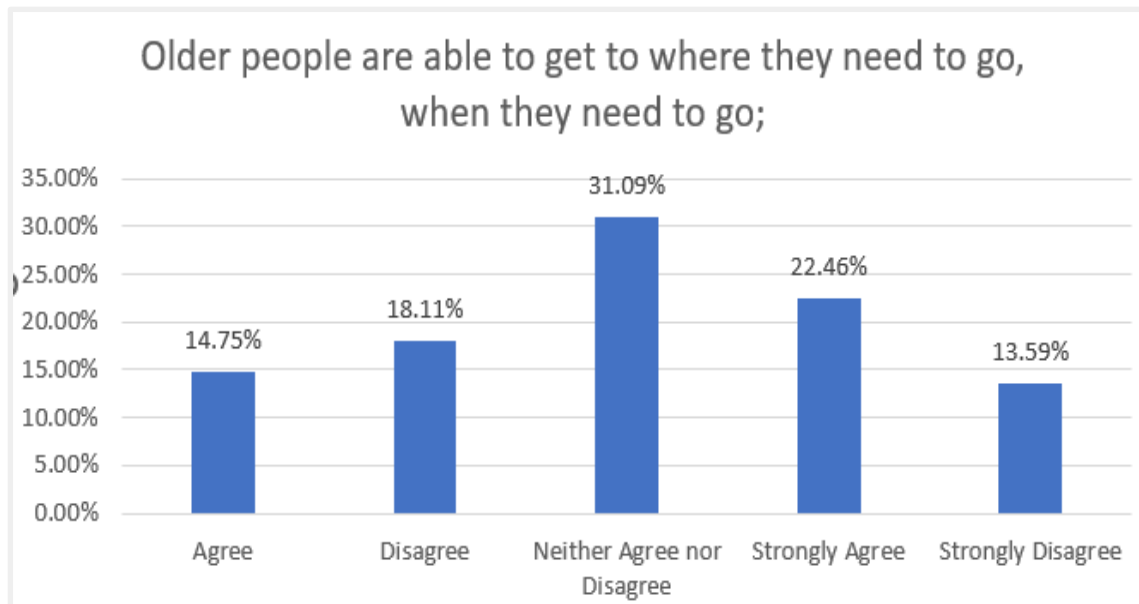


Figure 10 Survey Responses on Getting Where you need to Go

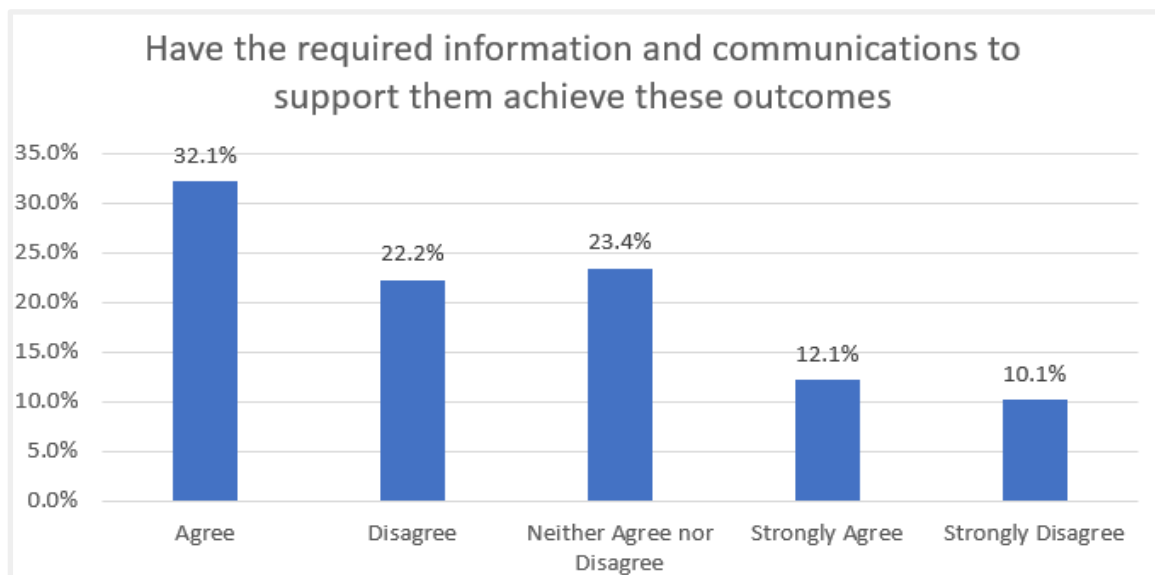
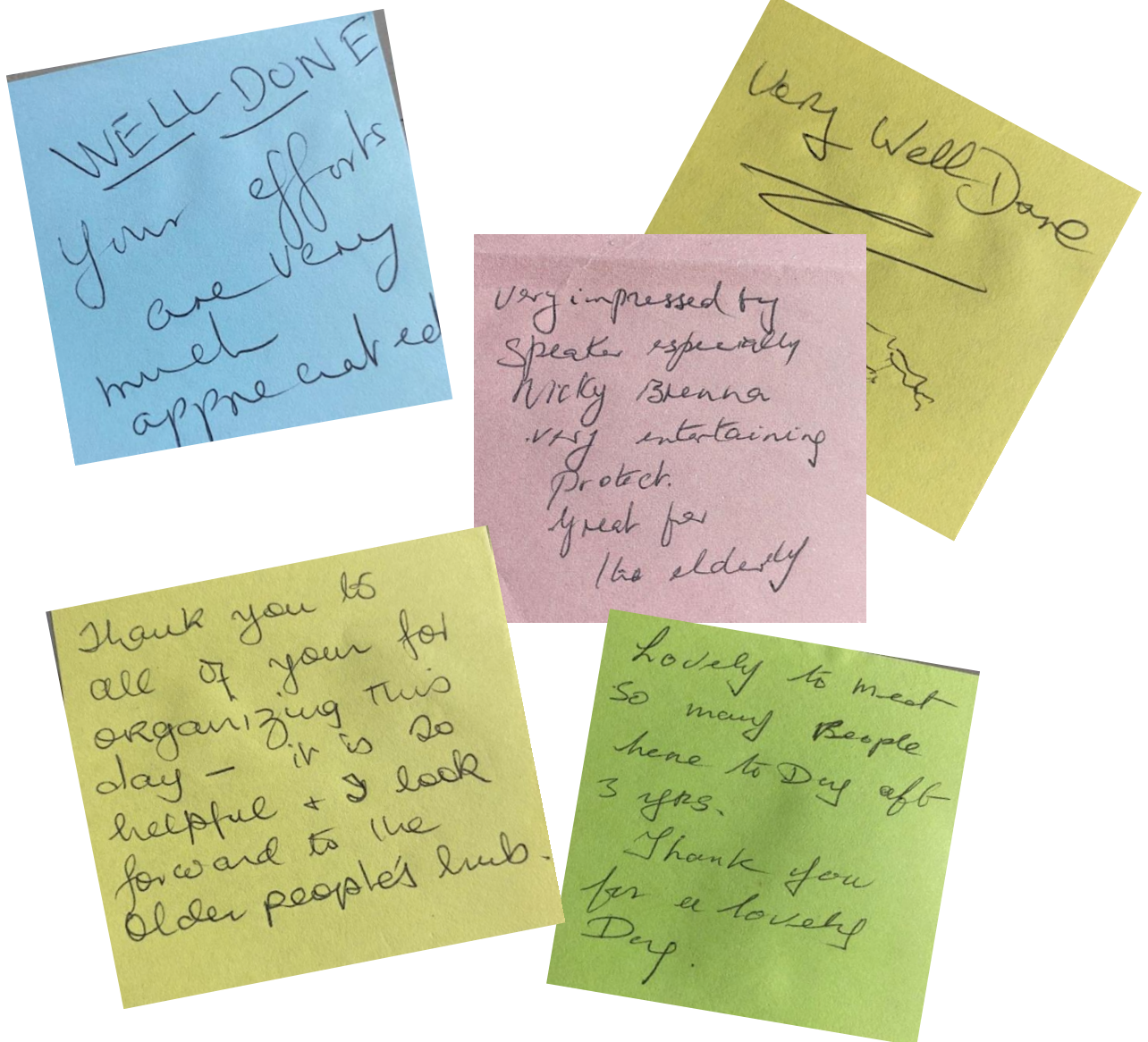


Figure 11 Survey Response Having the Information you need



## 8.7 Communication & Information

Final the survey asked if participants had the information to achieve the other outcomes listed in the survey. Over 32% of older people agreed that the communication and information was available, while another 12% strongly agreeing. Only 10% of participants strongly disagreed suggested that they did not have the information they needed. The middle ground is represented by 23.4% which can sometimes be interpreted as "I don't know". Good Communication and information are cross cutting themes that is they effect all other areas housing, transport etc. Age Friendly information in a suitable format is important in all areas and across all themes. In general notes on the survey suggested that older adults wanted 1) Leaflets showing different activities and communication 2) Increased use of local radio by service providers, as the service is good 3) More face-to-face communication and phone services which do not lead to automated responses.





## Appendix 1 Consultation Facilitators and Records

Name of Facilitator / Recorder	Organisation
Alison Iramonger	Kilkenny LEADER Partnership
Betty Dewberry / Rita Tynan	Older Persons' Council
Catherine Power	ALONE
Damien Brett / Laura Tryell	Kilkenny Library Services
Elizabeth Dermody / Kathleen Meagher	Older Persons' Council
Karen Deegan	Library Services
Eileen Ryan / Mary Harding	Older Person's Council
Majella Byrne & Margot McGrath	Library Services
Martin Rafter	Kilkenny LEADER Partnership
Michael Delahanty / Mary O' Hanlon	Older Persons' Council
Moirá Duggan & Teresa Curran	Kilkenny LEADER Partnership
Paul Lyons & Trevor Shone	Garda
Siobhan O'Brien	Kilkenny Carlow Education & Training Board
Sophie Walsh	Ferrybank Library Services
Teresa Hennessy	Health Service Executive

## Appendix 2 List of Kilkenny Age Friendly Alliance Members

Name of Member	Organisation / Agency Representing
Sean McKeown	Acting Chief Executive, Kilkenny County Council
Michael Delahanty	Chairperson, Kilkenny Older Person's council
Frank Cody	PRO, Kilkenny Older Person's Council
Conor Nolan	Sargent, An Garda Síochána
Anthony Farrell	Inspector, An Garda Síochána
John Hurley	CEO, Kilkenny Chamber
Fergus Horgan	Kilkenny LEADER Partnership
Barbara Murphy	Health Service Executive
Tara Hunt	HSE Manager of Older Person Services Carlow/Kilkenny
Teresa Hennessy	HSE Health Promotion
Mary Corcoran	St. Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny
Nicola Keeshan	Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership
Margaret Whelan	PPN Development Officer
Siobhan O' Brien	Kilkenny Carlow ETB
Seamus Nugent	Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership
Josephine Coyne	County Librarian, Kilkenny Library Services
Annette Fitzpatrick	Programme Coordinator, Kilkenny County Council
Andrew Wall (Supported by)	Kilkenny County Council

## Appendix 3      How Age Friendly is Kilkenny ?

### How Age Friendly is County Kilkenny?

#### General :

1. Are you male or female?

- ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Which category below includes your age?

- ☐ Up to 65  
☐ 65 to 80  
☐ 80+

3. Name of your town/ area /village /neighbourhood?

#### Outcomes

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1 = strongly disagree    5 = strongly agree

1. Respect and Social Inclusion

• Older people are valued members of their community, who are respected for their experience and have a voice.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Social Participation + Civic Participation and Employment

• Older people have opportunities to take part in social and economic activities and continue to learn and develop.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Housing - Older people are supported to stay living in their own homes and connected to their communities.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Community Support and Health Services - Older people lead healthier and active lives for longer.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**5. Transport - Older people are able to get to where they need to go, when they need to go;**

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**6. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings - Older people live in places where the streets, , areas, services and buildings enable them to be out and about;**

• Older people feel and are safe in their own homes and their communities.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**7. Communication and Information- Have the required information and communications to support them achieve these outcomes**

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Overall**

**8. Please identify the top three things we do very well in our county.**

1.	<input type="text"/>
2.	<input type="text"/>
3.	<input type="text"/>

**Please identify the top 3 improvements you think are needed.**

1.	<input type="text"/>
2.	<input type="text"/>
3.	<input type="text"/>

**9. Please give your assessment of the consultation meeting?**

**1 = Very Poor 10= Excellent**

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Thank you for your participation which is important to the project.**

**Kilkenny Older Persons Council**

## about the authors

**Dr. Debra O'Neill PhD, MBA, MMII** is a Research Fellow with the Population Health and Behaviour Research group at Trinity College Dublin. Her main research interest is in healthcare reform and transformation. She has conducted researching in the areas of mental health including dementia, disabilities, homelessness, older adults, and substance misuse. Debra is an experienced mixed methodologist and currently an Executive Board member of the Mixed Methods International Research Association. She is a certified mediator and experienced facilitator. She works across the public, private and not for profit sectors developing sustainable healthy organisations. Debra undertook this work on a pro bono basis.

**Mx. Dany El Amin** holds a Masters (M.Sc.) in both Sociology (2007) and Psychology (2012) from King's University Aberdeen. Prior to joining LinkAge full-time, Dany worked as Global Data Analyst for an international Learning and Development company, with over six million global clients, including Pfizer, Google, and Microsoft. With an interest in substance misuse, mental health and the younger generation, Dany also works with Childline as a child counsellor and mentor and has held the post of Senior Researcher & Project Manager at LinkAge Consultancy for 10 years.



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