

Northern Fells Group



Action through Community



# Village Action Project Evaluation Report (v1.0)

February 2020



*Wingspan Consulting*

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Spinning Group (© Northern Fells Group)

Front cover: Men-in-Sheds (© Wingspan Consulting)

## Acknowledgements

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**Walking Group (© Northern Fells Group)**

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### Summary

The Northern Fells Group (NFG) is a charity that operates primarily for the benefit of people living in the seven sparsely populated parishes in the Northern Fells area of Cumbria (Boltons, Caldbeck, Castle Sowerby, Ireby & Uldale, Mungrisdale, Sebergham & Welton, Westward & Rosley). Its aims are to:

- combat rural social isolation and exclusion
- alleviate deprivation
- improve access to services
- enable people to remain independent, living in their own homes and in the area

NFG seeks to achieve these aims through the delivery of a wide range of services and activities. Some of these are offered via the Village Action project, which consists of two component projects: Village Agents and Men-in-Sheds. The project, which is funded primarily by the National Lottery, started in October 2015 and is due to run until October 2020.



**Wi-Fi Drop-In (© Northern Fells Group)**

In September 2019, NFG asked Wingspan Consulting to carry out an evaluation of the Village Action project. The evaluation was based on a combination of desk research (eg analysing project data, reports and other relevant material), interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders, a survey of project beneficiaries and direct observation of project activities.

The evaluation shows that the project is being delivered by a very able and dedicated team of staff, all of whom work much longer hours than they are paid for. The staff team is supported by large and equally dedicated group of volunteers who make a vital contribution to the project.

*Life in this area would be a great deal more isolated, boring and confusing without the Village Agent. She provides support, information and encouragement and increasingly provides new support and challenges – always interesting and fun – without fuss. I have gained so much from Northern Fells. (Client comment)*

The project is engaging with large numbers of clients. It is very highly valued by its clients. And it is having a very positive impact on the wellbeing of its clients. The project is delivering its aims very successfully – addressing social isolation, improving health and wellbeing and building community and individual resilience, esteem and confidence. And it is also delivering its intended outcomes very successfully:

1. Elderly and disabled people **are** less isolated through having better awareness of and access to information and services
2. Elderly and disabled people **do have** improved self-confidence to attend services resulting in greater independent living
3. Residents **do have** improved health and wellbeing through their participation in social events /activities

The single most important lesson to emerge from this evaluation is that NFG should continue to do much of what it is already doing. If this doesn't happen, then the gains that have been made in terms of reduced social isolation and improved individual and community wellbeing would be lost.

The loss of the project would also result in the loss of 35 to 40 regular volunteers who both support the Village Action project and benefit from it. This includes people who cook, serve and organise drop-ins and lunch groups, walk leaders and individuals accompanying clients to the theatre.

More specifically, the Village Agents component of the Village Action project is critical to the successful delivery of all of the NFG services and activities. Not only does it deliver a wide range of activities itself; it also signposts clients to other NFG services and activities, such as Lend-a-Hand, the community minibus and benefits advice.

This does not mean that nothing at all should change. In fact, change – in response to evolving client needs and interests – is one of the successful ingredients of what NFG has done over the years – both in this project and more generally. There is scope for developing new groups and activities and for more strategic developments in areas such as:

- Dementia
- Support for carers
- Poverty, deprivation and the most socially isolated people
- The impact of Brexit on the farming community

There is also scope to explore ways in which NFG could engage with more men – for example, by offering a wider range of groups and activities that are likely to appeal to men.

A number of technical lessons can be learned from this project that could benefit future projects. For example, targets for all project outputs and outcomes should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-based), an evaluation plan should be developed at an early stage, and project governance should focus on the extent to which the project is being delivered as planned – including progress towards agreed targets.

*My husband was greatly helped by Men in Sheds and the lend a hand group for escorting him on walks etc which helped me too. It gave me some freedom when I was not able to leave him alone. (Client comment)*

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 About this Document

This document is a report on the evaluation of the Northern Fells Group's (NFG's) Village Action Project. The report is structured as follows.

- **Section 1:** Introduces NFG, the Village Action Project and the evaluation
- **Section 2:** Explains how we carried out the evaluation
- **Section 3:** Presents our key findings
- **Section 4:** Sets out our conclusions and the lessons learned

## 1.2 About the Northern Fells Group

The Northern Fells Rural Project, one of HRH The Prince of Wales's three 'Rural Revival Projects', was launched in 1999. This was replaced by the NFG in 2002 in the aftermath of the 2001 foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak and in response to publication of the following reports<sup>1</sup>:

- **Foot and Mouth in the Northern Fells** – a report on the economic and social impacts of FMD on the Northern Fells area, published by the Centre for Rural Economy at the University of Newcastle (2002)
- **Under the Stones: Hidden Need in Rural Cumbria** – final report on the Northern Fells Rural Project (2002)

NFG is the working name of the Northern Fells Rural Community Development Group. It was registered as a charity<sup>2</sup> and incorporated as a company limited by guarantee<sup>3</sup> in 2002. The NFG limited company is overseen by a group of 15 directors, 14 of whom are also trustees of the associated charity.

NFG operates primarily for the benefit of people living in the seven, sparsely populated, parishes in the Northern Fells area:

- Boltons
- Caldbeck
- Castle Sowerby
- Ireby & Uldale
- Mungrisdale

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<sup>1</sup> Both available on the NFG website: <https://www.northernfellsgroup.org.uk/about/background/>

<sup>2</sup>

<http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities/CharityWithoutPartB.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=1093814&SubsidiaryNumber=0>

<sup>3</sup> <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/04504085>

- Sebergham & Welton
- Westward & Rosley

The table below, based on 2011 census data, provides some basic demographic data for the parishes in the NFG area<sup>4</sup> (which, collectively, cover an area of around 200 square miles).

Parish	Population	Households	Working age adults	People over 65	Single pensioner households
Boltons	630	270	395	130	35
Caldbeck	735	310	425	210	55
Castle Sowerby	345	140	230	70	15
Ireby & Uldale	460	200	280	115	25
Mungrisdale	295	125	160	90	15
Sebergham & Welton	365	140	240	60	20
Westward & Rosley	840	330	540	175	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,670</b>	<b>1,515</b>	<b>2,270</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>185</b>

The latest version of the postal database for the NFG area indicates that there are now 1,726 households in the 7 parishes.

The aims of NFG are to:

- combat rural social isolation and exclusion
- alleviate deprivation
- improve access to services
- enable people to remain independent, living in their own homes and in the area

NFG seeks to achieve these aims by delivering a wide range of services and activities. Some of these are only available to people living in the NFG area:

- Benefits Awareness project
- Community Minibus
- Lend a Hand scheme

Others are open to all, irrespective of where they live:

- Holiday play schemes
- Men-in-Sheds group
- Social and recreational activities including physical fitness, health improvement and well-being
- Village Agent services

<sup>4</sup> Source: <http://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/Resources-Publications/Parish-Profiles>

These services and activities are delivered by a team of 11 part-time staff and more than 100 volunteers.

### 1.3 About the Village Action Project

The current incarnation of the Village Action Project is primarily funded by a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund under the Enabling Communities programme. The project is due to run for 5 years from 1 October 2015 to 30 September 2020.

The project continues work started under previous rounds of funding from various funders – providing support to clients who are mostly retired/elderly and often dealing with issues such as loneliness, dementia, mental and physical health problems and bereavement.

#### 1.3.1 Project Aims and Outcomes

The grant application states that:

“The key issues to be addressed are social isolation, improving health and wellbeing and building community and individual resilience, esteem and confidence.”

It goes on to set out the following outcomes for the project:

1. Elderly and disabled people will be less isolated through having better awareness of and access to information and services
2. Elderly and disabled people will have improved self-confidence to attend services resulting in greater independent living
3. Residents will have improved health and wellbeing through their participation in social events /activities

#### 1.3.2 Indicators and Targets

The grant application also sets out indicators, targets and units<sup>5</sup> for each of the three outcomes. These are shown in the tables below.

The activities offered by the Village Action (Village Agents and Men-in-Sheds) Project are not restricted to residents of the NFG area. This means there is no restriction on the geographical scope of the target audience.

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<sup>5</sup> The units for all but one of the indicators are ‘people’. The exception is the first indicator for outcome 3, where the units are ‘new groups and activities’.

## Evaluation of NFG Village Action Project

Unless otherwise stated, the targets shown in the tables are annual targets and are not cumulative. This means the clients who are counted in relation to targets for years 2, 3 and 4 could be:

- The same those who were counted in year 1
- Entirely new clients
- Some combination of new and existing clients

<b>OUTCOME 1: Elderly and disabled people will be less isolated through having better awareness of and access to information and services</b>				
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Targets</b>			
	<b>Yr1</b>	<b>Yr2</b>	<b>Yr3</b>	<b>Yr4</b>
a) Rurally isolated people will report feeling less isolated and more aware of what other services can offer them	200	200	200	200
b) Rurally isolated people will report an increased understanding about the challenges they face and demonstrate more self confidence in resolving these	100	100	100	100
c) Rurally isolated people will report that they have access to services and information leading to an improvement to their social wellbeing and quality of life	1,000 by end of project			

<b>OUTCOME 2: Elderly and disabled people will have improved self-confidence to attend services resulting in greater independent living</b>				
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Targets</b>			
	<b>Yr1</b>	<b>Yr2</b>	<b>Yr3</b>	<b>Yr4</b>
a) Elderly and disabled people will report having more self-confidence and esteem by attending events resulting in greater independent living	100	100	100	100
b) Rurally isolated people will report that they have improved their health and wellbeing by attending social/community activities and improve their skills	100	100	100	100
c) Elderly and disabled people will report that they are more confident about independent living having access to other support services	1,000 by end of project			

<b>OUTCOME 3: Residents will have improved health and wellbeing through their participation in social events /activities</b>				
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Targets</b>			
	<b>Yr1</b>	<b>Yr2</b>	<b>Yr3</b>	<b>Yr4</b>
a) All residents will be engaged more with their local community by accessing new activities and groups	12 new groups/activities by end of year 3			
b) All residents will feel that they are more involved in their community and understand better the challenges facing their community	150	150	150	150
c) All residents will have increased health and wellbeing and a greater sense of citizenship having participated in activities and events	1,000 by end of project			

### 1.3.3 Village Agents and Men-in-Sheds

The Village Action project sought to deliver its outcomes by means of two distinct component projects:

- Village Agents
- Men-in-Sheds

The Village Agents project employs 4 part-time Village Agents (VAs)<sup>6</sup>. Each of these is associated with a specific geographical area (see below), but they are not restricted to working in these areas or only with people who live in those area.

<b>Village Agent</b>	<b>Parish</b>
Barbara Stoddart	• Westward & Rosley
Gillian Skillicorn	• Boltons • Ireby & Uldale
Helen Sturges	• Caldbeck • Sebergham & Welton
Philippa Groves	• Castle Sowerby • Mungrisdale

The VAs are responsible for:

- Facilitating oil and septic tank emptying syndicates
- Organising a weekly bus trip to a local town
- Organising energy switching for residents

<sup>6</sup> Paid for 12 hours per week.

- Organising Blue Badges for residents
- Organising other events and activities for local people
- Organising regular social, educational and recreational activities
- Providing support and information to all residents in their community

The Men-in-Sheds project is based in an old joiner's workshop in Caldbeck. It is coordinated by a part-time 'Shedmaster' (Ken Graham)<sup>7</sup>. The workshop was originally open for 4 hours on one day each week. This was then increased to two days per week and has recently increased again to three days per week. The participants (mostly but not exclusively men) spend most of their time working on wood-working projects and occasionally go on trips.

The Village Action Project is managed by means of:

- Quarterly Village Action Steering Group meetings attended by VAs, Geoff Hine<sup>8</sup>, Antoinette Ward<sup>9</sup>, Diane Barraclough<sup>10</sup>, Simon Braithwaite<sup>11</sup> and Libby Graham<sup>12</sup>
- Monthly Village Agent team meetings attended by VAs, Benefits Advisor, Diane Barraclough, Libby Graham and Simon Braithwaite
- Regular Men-in-Sheds meetings involving Diane Barraclough and the Shedmaster



**Singing Group (© Northern Fells Group)**

### 1.4 About the Evaluation

This evaluation was carried out by Wingspan Consulting between September and December 2019. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the extent to which the project has delivered the outcomes set out in the grant application and address a wider set of questions agreed with the client:

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<sup>7</sup> Also paid for 12 hours per week.

<sup>8</sup> Geoff is a trustee and the Chair of NFG.

<sup>9</sup> Antoinette is one of NFG's two Transport Coordinators.

<sup>10</sup> Di is the NFG Group coordinator and is responsible for line managing all NFG staff.

<sup>11</sup> Simon is the Coordinator of NFG's Lend-a-Hand project.

<sup>12</sup> Libby is the NFG Fundraising Coordinator. She wrote the original funding application for the Village Action project and is responsible for writing all reports to funders.

- Who benefits from NFG Village Action project and how?
- How responsive is the Village Agents project and how well do they listen to service users?
- Are there unmet needs and other parts of the community who could benefit from the Village Action project? What are the barriers to participation?
- What has worked and what has not worked? And why?
- What are the possibilities and needs for the focus of Village Action project work in the future?
- Who are the other Village Action project stakeholders? What is their level of buy in to the project, and how good do they think the Village agents are at 'joined up' working?
- What would be the impact of to users and the area of the project closing?



**Guitar Group at The Old Crown (© Northern Fells Group)**

## 2 Approach

### 2.1 Introduction

The evaluation was based on the following methods:

- Document review
- Focus group
- Interviews
- Observing project activities
- Survey

### 2.2 Document Review

We reviewed a range of documents to obtain information about the Village Agents and Men-in-Sheds projects, including:

- Data (anonymised) on activities and participants extracted from NFG database
- Funding applications
- Minutes of monthly Village Agents team meetings
- Minutes of quarterly Village Agent Steering Group meetings
- Monthly NFG Diary of Events and Activities
- NFG website
- Quarterly reports on Men-in-Sheds (produced by the Shedmaster)
- Quarterly reports on the Village Agents project (produced by the NFG Coordinator)
- Reports to funders (Cumbria Community Foundation, National Lottery)

We also obtained some background information (eg Parish Profiles) from the internet.

The purpose of the document review was to gain an overview of project activity and inform other elements of the research.

### 2.3 Focus Group

We carried out a focus group with 5 volunteers who help to deliver NFG events and activities. The purpose of the focus group was to explore volunteers' views on the Village Action project, covering:

- The extent to which it meets the needs of clients
- The impact on clients
- What is going well / not so well and why
- How volunteers themselves benefit from it

- Lessons learned and ways in which the project could develop in the future

After the focus group, we sent a copy of our draft notes to the participants, asking them to let us know if we had missed anything out or got anything wrong; and also giving them an opportunity to add any further thoughts they might have had. We then produced a final version of the notes based on the feedback we received.

We offered all participants confidentiality by:

- Not showing the notes to anyone else
- Not including the notes in this report or any other document

### 2.4 Interviews

We conducted interviews with:

- NFG staff:
  - Fundraising Coordinator
  - Group Coordinator
  - Shedmaster
  - Village Agents
- External stakeholders
  - Martin Woodham (Practice Manager, Caldbeck Surgery)<sup>13</sup>
  - Rebecca Dooley (Director, Amy's Care)<sup>14</sup>

Most of the interviews were carried out face-to-face. One was conducted by phone and another by means of an email exchange. The focus of interviews varied somewhat according to the role of each interviewee. But most of them included questions relating to:

- The extent to which the project meets the needs of clients
- The impact on clients
- What is going well / not so well and why
- Lessons learned and ways in which the project could develop in the future

As with the focus groups, we sent a copy of our draft notes to the interviewee for comment, and we offered all interviewees confidentiality by not showing their notes to anyone else or including them in this report or any other document, and asking for their permission to include quotations in this report.

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<sup>13</sup> Caldbeck Surgery has a longstanding involvement with NFG. Dr Jim Cox was a founder member of NFG and was a trustee for many years, and the surgery regularly refers patients to NFG.

<sup>14</sup> Amy's Care is a social enterprise in North Cumbria that specialises in providing day-care through social clubs for older adults, particularly those living with dementia. Many of their clients are also NFG clients. Rebecca has also been involved with NFG through her work with Caldbeck Surgery.

### 2.5 Observing Project Activities

We attended the following events and activities:

- Booklovers group
- Men-in-Sheds
- Rosley lunch group
- Walking group
- Wi-Fi drop-in group

The purpose of these visits was to get a 'feel' for what the Village Action project delivers in practice – and, where possible and appropriate, to have informal chats with clients to find out what they think about the service and activities delivered by NFG.

### 2.6 Survey

We carried out a survey of NFGs clients. The purpose of the survey was to explore the impact of the Village Action project on clients (in particular, in relation to the intended project outcomes) and the views of clients on the project more generally.

The survey was administered in two ways:

- **Online:** An email was sent to all clients for whom NFG has an email address. The email introduced the survey and included a link to online questionnaire.
- **Paper-based:** Village Agents and other NFG staff gave out paper copies of the questionnaire to clients who said they would prefer that to doing the survey online.

The questionnaires for the online and paper-based surveys were identical (see Appendix A) and included questions on:

- What events and activities clients engaged with, and how often they engaged
- Whether clients had ever contacted the VAs or Shedmaster for information or support and, if so, about what
- The impact of events and activities on respondents
- The best thing about the Village Agents or Men-in-Sheds projects
- Ways in which NFG could improve the services it already delivers
- New services clients think NFG should deliver
- Other comments
- Demographic factors (age, gender, disability and parish of residence)

The wording of the questions (especially those concerned with the impact of the project on clients) was chosen to reflect – as far as possible – the wording of the project outcomes and indicators so that we could use the data to determine the extent to which the project outcomes and targets have been delivered. At the same time, we tried to keep the wording

of questions relatively simple and the length of the questionnaire as short as possible in order to maximise the response rate.

Data from the paper-based survey were combined with data from the online survey to produce a single data set.



**Cheers! (© Northern Fells Group)**

## 3 Findings

### 3.1 Introduction

The following sections present the results of our investigation in relation to:

- Clients numbers
- Client demographics
- Participation in project activities
- Impact on clients
- Project strengths
- Challenges faced by project
- Delivery of project outcomes and aim
- Areas for development

This section also contains a number of vignettes – some written by clients themselves; others by Village Agents.

#### ***Vignette 1: Men's Cookery Group***

I heard about the Cookery Mornings for Men through the Northern Fells Group Newsletter. My wife pushed it under my nose as she was fed up of doing all the cooking! So, I went along to the next one and was hooked. It is not "Haute Cuisine" but good wholesome everyday grub. Everything from Margaret Brough's lovely lemon meringue pie to what can be made easily out of the store cupboard and leftovers. There has even been a recipe book published from the sessions – all tried and tested by us (I'm on the back cover, signatures later please).

On one occasion we made homity pie. We mixed our own pastry – wholemeal flour, plain flour, butter and egg – by hand. That was fun. We parboiled cubed potatoes, fried onion, leek and garlic (garlic optional if you hate it – but tasty if you add it) then combined with the potatoes and cheese, a few herbs if desired and placed it in the pastry case we had formed. We added cream and topped with grated cheese. We could not wait for them to come out of the oven. Fortunately, Philippa had 'made one earlier' so that was our delicious lunch. I proudly bought my pie home, along with some left-over pastry and filling, which I made up into a second pie. I definitely got the seal of approval from my dear wife when we ate the first. The second one we decided to take on our picnic on the Walking for Health walk the following day. This bought glances of curiosity from other walking group members when we sat down for lunch. When I explained that it had been made by me at the Cooking for Men group, everyone wanted the recipe. I still get asked if I have bought some homity pie when we go on our walks. All this would not have happened if it wasn't for the hard work of the Village Agents and the volunteers of Northern Fells Group.

## 3.2 Client Numbers

### 3.2.1 NFG Database

In 2017 NFG introduced a new database designed to record client data. Existing client data from a number of different datasets (going back to 2013) was imported as far as possible.

The database currently contains data on 1,343 different (unique) clients. This means that NFG has engaged with at least 1,343 unique clients since 2013.

#### ***Vignette 2: Gentle Exercise at Millhouse and Westward***

I was fed up sitting in the house on dark nights, sometimes dark mornings, doing nothing with my time and feeling I should be doing something about my weight and fitness. So, I decided to join the Northern Fells Gentle Exercise Class to at least keep me mobile. What I didn't expect was how much I really enjoyed it, and meeting the people, who like me found certain exercises virtually impossible. Debbie our trainer is wonderful, never pushing us too far, and always reiterating that we only do what we are comfortable with – nothing more!! Helping us cope with situations that we find difficult to get out of – rising from the floor the easy way for us instead of being stuck there!! We even play badminton with balloons – and surprisingly it is such fun. The people who attend really are delightful, positive and very encouraging, as is Debbie – I cannot praise her too highly. I would certainly recommend it to anyone of limited movement, or even anyone who finds the idea of Zumba or Aerobics daunting.

### 3.2.2 Client Inquiries

The database contains data on all clients who make client inquiries. (This is when a client contacts a Village Agent or other member of staff for information or support.) Searching the database for client inquiries reveals that since the beginning of the project in October 2015 there have been inquiries from 371 unique clients – many of whom have made multiple inquiries over the last 4 years.

The database also reveals the number of unique 'client inquiry' clients per year since the start of the project.

Project year	Unique 'client inquiry' clients
1	191
2	197
3	171
4	162
<b>Average/year</b>	<b>180</b>

Note: Adding the totals for each year in the table above (= 720) exceeds the number given earlier for the total number of unique 'client inquiry' clients (371). This is because many of the clients who made inquiries in one year also made inquiries in subsequent years. Thus, adding the totals for each of the four years would mean we were double counting many clients.

### ***Vignette 3: Walking for Health***

We moved to the area a few years ago and I was amazed to find how many activities there were to take part in through Northern Fells. As an experienced fell walker one of the activities that held immediate appeal was Walking for Health. I was able to put my experience of walking to good use by becoming a walk leader and my wife could benefit from the range of walks available. There are walks for different abilities and of different lengths. As a walk leader I am responsible for helping to organise the varying routes, assessing any risks, providing first aid if needed, making sure the pace is suitable for all and, last but not least, being friendly and welcoming to everyone. We have seen the group grow over time and walkers have mentioned how not only has it been beneficial to their physical health but also their emotional wellbeing as there is always someone they can talk to. After the walks there is always time for more chat over tea and cakes. There is also an annual Children in Need fancy dress walk and the December longer walk is always rounded off with a special Christmas pub lunch. New walkers are always welcome so get your boots on and give it a go.

### 3.2.3 Event/Activity Clients

The database contains records of the number of clients who take part in 'events', including classes and groups organised by Village Agents as part of the Village Action project. The table below shows the total number of clients who took part in events each year since the beginning of 2016.

Year	Female	Male	Under 16
2016	510	211	0
2017	2,562	886	6
2018	4,856	1,623	99
2019 (up to September)	2,846	969	6

These figures demonstrate the sheer scale of project activity over the lifetime of the project.

The table below shows the number of participants who took part in events in just a single month (September 2019) – demonstrating both the intensity and the variety of project activity.

Date	Event	Female	Male
2 Sep	Wi-fi drop-in (Caldbeck)	5	3
3 Sep	Walking for health (evening walk)	18	3
4 Sep	Westward coffee drop-in	29	
4 Sep	Art 4 All	12	3
4 Sep	'Pitch Up & Sing, Good in Parts'	5	1
5 Sep	Uldale lunch club	17	5
6 Sep	Peter's walk	21	7
9 Sep	Tea, cake and chat BLH's (drop-in)	4	
9 Sep	Wi-fi drop-in (Caldbeck)	5	4
10 Sep	Walking for health	14	5
11 Sep	Rosley coffee (drop-in)	7	2
11 Sep	Westward exercise class	7	
12 Sep	Rosley nail cutting	3	2
12 Sep	Westward lunch (drop-in)	38	12
16 Sep	Wi-fi drop-in (Caldbeck)	4	2
17 Sep	Printing with JG at Boltongate	6	
18 Sep	Art 4 All	8	2
18 Sep	'Pitch Up & Sing, Good in Parts'	14	1
19 Sep	Curthwaite coffee (drop-in)	5	2
19 Sep	Westward exercise class	8	
23 Sep	Wi-fi drop-in (Caldbeck)	5	6
24 Sep	Dry printing with JG at Boltongate	9	
24 Sep	Walking for health	15	2
26 Sep	Ireby lunch club (drop-in)	11	3
26 Sep	Woolcraft at Boltongate	4	

Unfortunately, the database does not record the names of clients who take part in these events. Since we know that many clients take part in specific events on a regular basis and many also take part in different kinds of event, we cannot draw any conclusions about the total the number of unique clients who have engaged with these events.

#### ***Vignette 4: Helpful Village Agents***

A client has lived alone since the death of her husband and is still very independent, living alone in her late 70s in a small hamlet. She attends several NFG lunch groups and coffee mornings on a regular basis. She uses her local Village Agent to help when a problem crops up (eg an unusually large bill which she needs help to query). As she finds it difficult to hear on the phone, she uses her Village Agent to help from time to time. She benefits from help with energy switching regularly, saving money on fuel costs.

### 3.2.4 Village Action Project Clients

The database cannot provide a figure for the total number of unique clients who have engaged specifically with the Village Action project since it started in October 2015. All we can say for sure is that it must be greater than the number of clients who have made client inquiries since October 2015 (371) – because client inquiries are part of the Village Action project.

In our client survey, about 70% of all Village Action project clients said they had made client inquiries (see Section 3.3). If this ratio applies to Village Action project clients more generally, then the figure for unique client inquiries quoted above (371 since October 2015) would equate to a figure of about 530 unique project clients since October 2015.

The same logic allows us to estimate a figure the total number of unique Village Action project clients per year.

Year	Unique 'client inquiry' clients	Unique VA project clients
1	191	273
2	197	281
3	171	244
4	162	231
<b>Average/year</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>257</b>

We can use additional data from the survey to estimate the number of unique elderly or disabled clients<sup>15</sup> who engaged with the Village Action project per year (see Section 3.4 below):

- Total number of completed questionnaires = 236
- Number who answered questions on both age and disability = 232
- Number who said they were elderly (60+) or disabled = 196
- Percentage of VA project clients who are elderly (60+) or disabled = 84%

This percentage allows us to estimate the number of unique project clients each year who are elderly or disabled.

Year	Unique client inquiry clients	Unique VA project clients	Elderly/disabled clients
1	191	273	229
2	197	281	236
3	171	244	205
4	162	231	194
<b>Average/year</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>216</b>

<sup>15</sup> This group is the target audience for a number of the quantitative targets (see Section 1.3).

***Vignette 5: Glad of Northern Fells***

I have had many occasions to be glad of Northern Fells Group. After 3 minor operations, I was able to use the NFG bus to attend appointments when I wasn't able to drive. I am in the Oil Consortium, which helps to reduce my fuel oil costs. I received a new electric blanket when my old one was checked and found to be substandard. The drop-in sessions are a good informal opportunity to meet other people in the village and find out what services are on offer. When I couldn't drive, the Village Agent took a parcel to the post office for me. I benefitted from the Lend-a- Hand scheme with cleaning up my back yard after being flooded with dirty run-off from a field in 2016. I also received help with moving furniture and cleaning carpets after a soot fall from the chimney. I have enjoyed participating in the Woolcraft sessions set up by the Village Agent and was able to pass on some of my skills there too. I am most impressed with the range of activities the Village Agents provide for us and our own Village Agent has become a friend and support when I have been through some trying times.

### 3.3 Client Survey

137 clients took part in our online survey and a further 99 clients completed paper copies of the questionnaire, giving a total of 236 completed questionnaires. We do not know how representative the respondents are of all Village Action project clients. But the response rate is large enough for us to assume that the survey findings are broadly indicative of the views of project clients more generally.

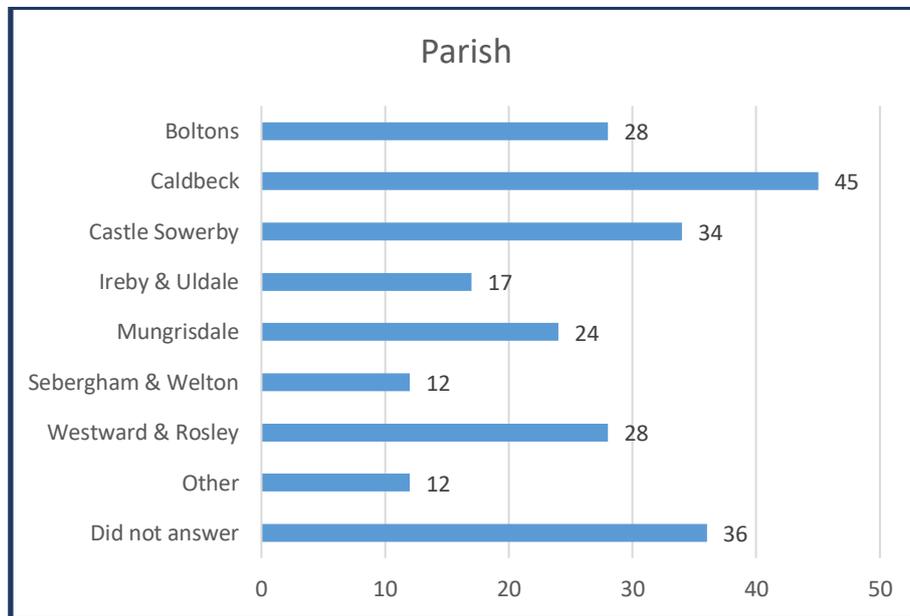
The following sections provide a summary of our survey results in relation to:

- Client demographics
- Participation in project activities
- Client inquiries
- Impact on clients

### 3.3.1 Client Demographics

#### 3.3.1.1 Distribution by Parish

The figure below shows the breakdown of respondents by their parish of residence.



This figure shows a good spread of respondents across all 7 NFG parishes, with the greatest number of respondents living in Caldbeck (the most populous parish). Of those who said they live outside the NFG area, all but one lived in parishes relatively close to the NFG area. Another person said they lived in the South Lakes.

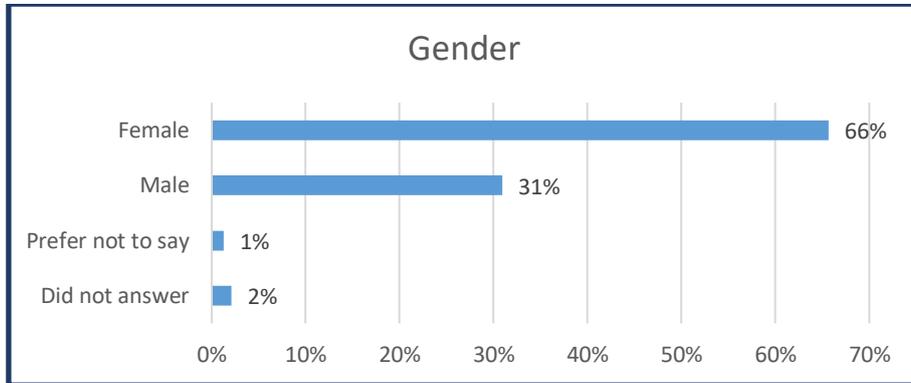
#### ***Vignette 6: Fiercely Independent***

A client has lived in the area for over 30 years, previously living in an isolated hamlet but latterly living in social housing in a village. She helped run a local post office and had been a teacher. On reaching her 80s she remains fiercely independent and uses the NFG minibus to attend hospital, go shopping etc. She is very sociable and attends many NFG lunch groups and coffee mornings, tea drop ins and encourages others to attend events by explaining how the NFG transport system works. She has no family with who she is in touch.

**PS:** Sadly, this lady recently became seriously ill. NFG was able to set up support for her neighbour who became her prime carer. Together the Village Agent and neighbour worked with health professionals at the local GP surgery to provide for her needs (with the client’s full permission). The Village Agent liaised with Social Services Social Care Department, to provide a re-ablement package. However, there was a delay for the care package and the Village Agent and NFG Lend-A-Hand team provided interim visits three times a day using 10 volunteers. Unfortunately, the client had late-diagnosed cancer and died after a brief spell in hospital where she was visited by many of the volunteers.

### 3.3.1.2 Distribution by Gender

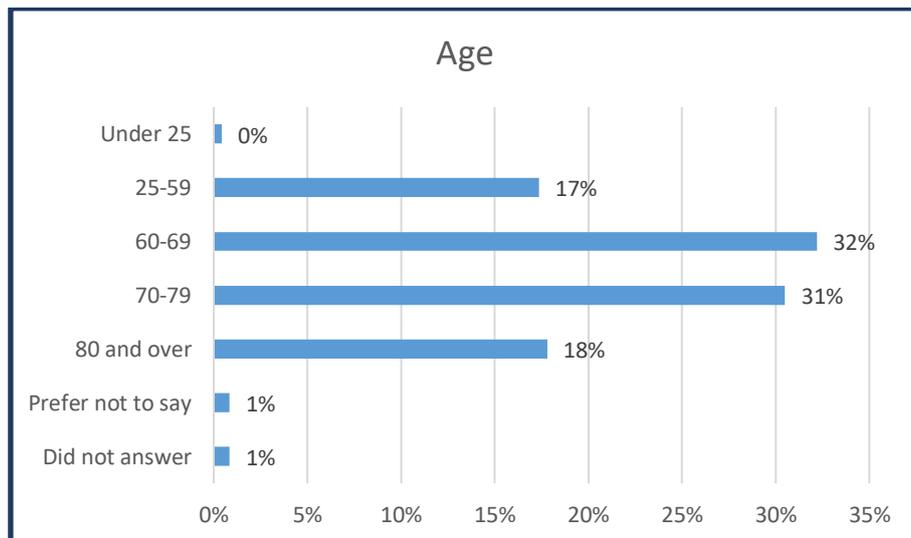
The figure below shows the breakdown of respondents by their gender.



This figure shows that approximately two thirds of respondents were female and one third were male. This is broadly consistent with the ratio of men to women recorded on the project database. Given that there are approximately equal numbers of men and women in the NFG area<sup>16</sup>, this means that men are underrepresented – both amongst project clients and NFG clients as a whole.

### 3.3.1.3 Distribution by Age

The figure below shows the breakdown of respondents by age group.



<sup>16</sup> For example, the Parish Profile for Caldbeck (based on 2011 census data) shows that 51% of local people are female and that 54% of people aged 65 and over are female.

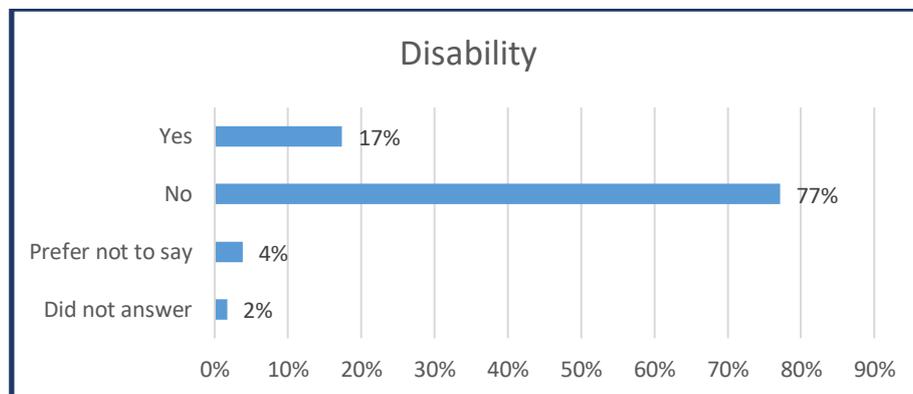
This figure shows that nearly two thirds of respondents were in their 60s and 70s, with the next largest group aged 80 or above and then people of working age. Only one person said they were under 25. This spread of ages broadly reflects the spread reported by NFG staff and the fact that one of the principal target audiences for the project is older people.

### ***Vignette 7: The Northern Fells Group is such a brilliant organisation***

A client has lived in the village since he retired from farming. He suffered from high levels of anxiety in the last few years which meant that phone calls and any letters or bills caused a great problem. Small things easily overwhelmed him. He lost confidence in himself. NFG provided social activities for him to attend on a regular basis such as Men-In-Sheds where he was a regular for many years until going into a care home. He attended lunch groups and looked forward to getting his large print version of the newsletter. The Village Agent assisted him with ordering household aids and with sorting and filing his bills and contacting utility providers when a new contract needed to be checked. He used the NFG minibus regularly when he gave up driving. He also used the Lend-a-Hand service to fit bathroom aids for safety. His daughter said in an email to the Village Agent. "The Northern Fells Group is such a brilliant organisation. Our Dad gets a lot out of all the activities you do. I am sure there is a lot of voluntary time and effort that yourself and many others do to keep it going."

#### ***3.3.1.4 Distribution by Disability***

The figure below shows the proportion of respondents who said they had a disability.



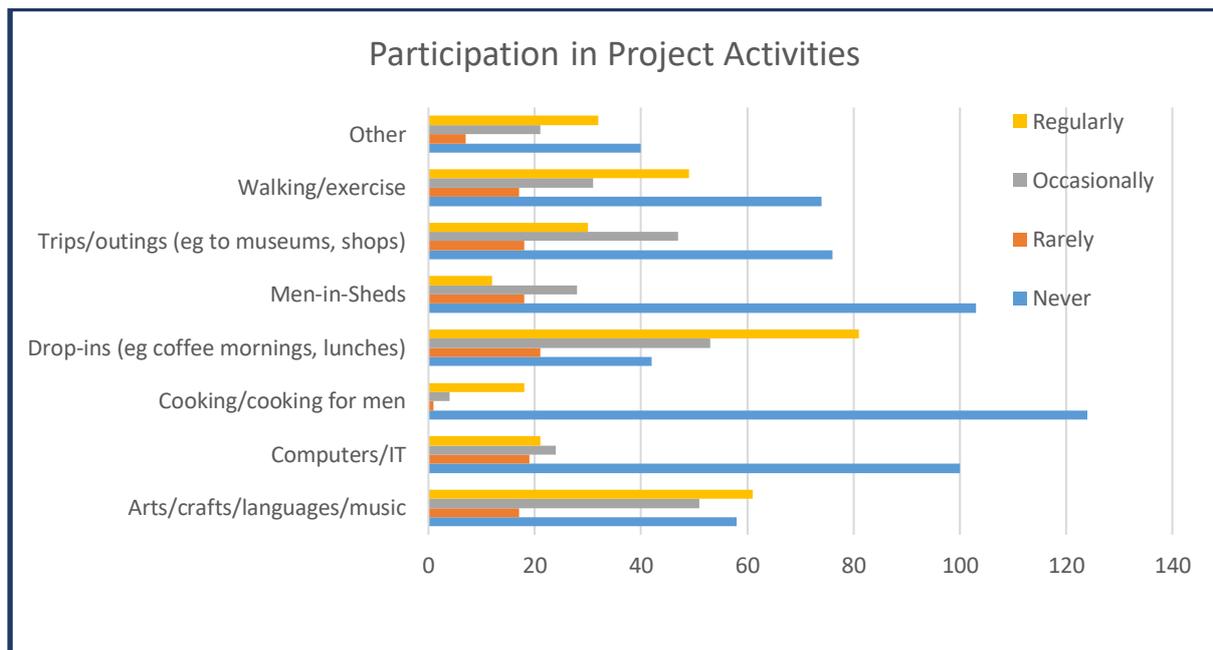
It is interesting to note that 17% of respondents said they had a disability. This is broadly consistent with the proportion of people with a disability amongst older people in the local population<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> For example, the Parish Profile for Caldbeck (based on the 2011 census) shows that 125 (17.2%) of local people (all ages) have a "limiting long term illness" (which encompasses disability).

Of those who said they had a disability, just over half said they had impaired mobility, with much smaller numbers of people mentioning sensory impairments, cognitive problems and diseases.

### 3.3.2 Participation in Project Activities

We asked people how often they took part in range of project activities, giving them the options of regularly, occasionally, rarely or never for their answers. The results are shown in the figure below.

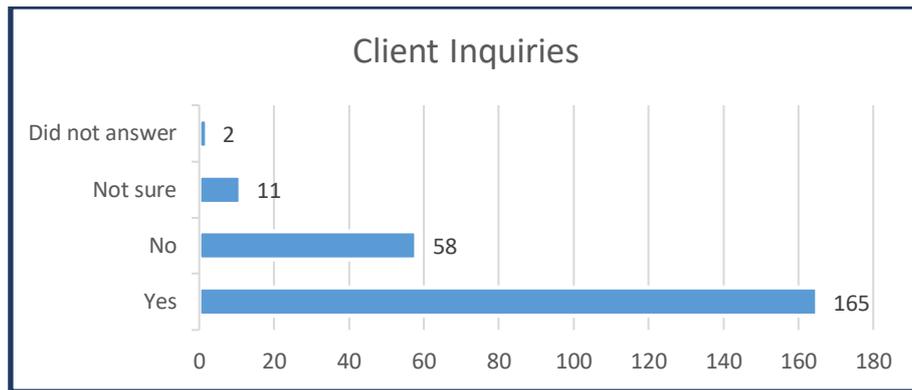


The figure above shows that the most popular activities (both in terms of the total number of people who have participated and regular participants) are the Drop-ins, Arts/crafts/etc and Walking/exercise. On the face of it, the least popular are Men-in-Sheds and Cooking for Men. However, Men-in-Sheds takes place in a workshop with limited capacity (maximum of 12 clients per session), so we would expect lower numbers for this. In addition, sessions are relatively long (compared with most other activities) and some clients attend more than once a week.

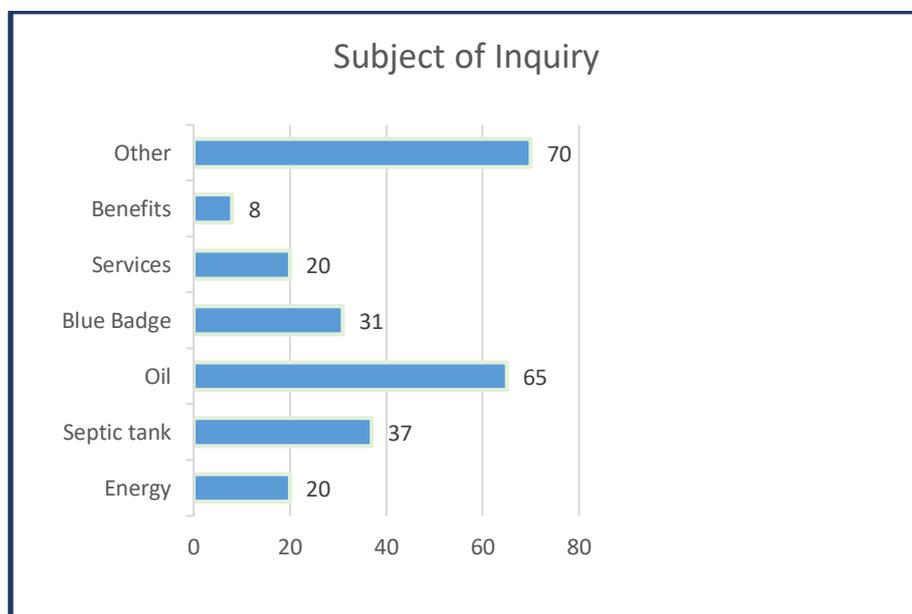
### 3.3.3 Client Inquiries

The figure below shows the number of respondents who said they had contacted a Village Agent or the Shedmaster for information or support (contacts which NFG logs as 'client inquiries').

## Evaluation of NFG Village Action Project



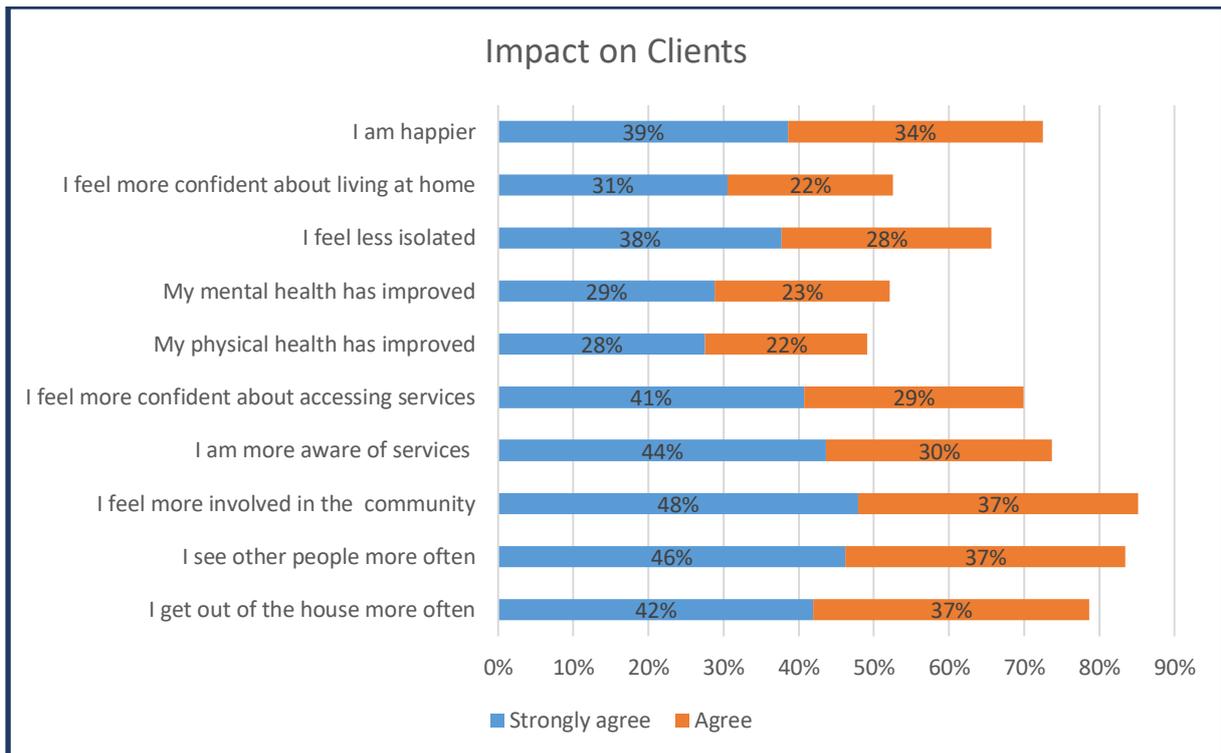
The figure suggests that people who make client inquiries only account for around 70% of all clients. We have used this finding in a number of calculations concerning client numbers (see Section 3.2). The figure below shows the subject of these inquiries.



The figure above suggests that Village Agents and the Shedmaster help clients on a wide range of subjects in order to help them continue to live independently.

### 3.3.4 Impact on Clients

We asked clients to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements about the impact of the project on them. The figure below the percentage of clients who agree or agreed strongly with each statement. (For a more detailed report on these findings, see Appendix C.)



The figure above shows strong levels of agreement about the impact of the project across all areas of impact. In all cases where respondents didn't agree that the project had had a positive impact on them, almost everyone either gave a neutral answer, said the impact in question wasn't applicable to them or didn't not respond to that particular question. The number of respondents who actually disagreed with any of the statements ranged from 1 to 6 people (in other words, never more than 3%).

### ***Vignette 8: Multiple Challenges***

A client has multiple challenges. She is registered blind, has physical mobility problems following a bad fall and has suffered from both physical and mental abuse. Her health problems left her feeling isolated. Relationships with her family had deteriorated and she was housed by a local Housing Association in social housing to recover following a period of hospital treatment. She received help from the local Village Agent when moving in and received hours of personal support to make phone calls to Social Services, to her housing officer and to her debt management adviser to help with her benefits. The NFG then took over directly and provided direct benefits support and information through our benefits worker. The Village Agent provided information on social events in the area and transport via our minibus to those events. She gained confidence; she attended the walking group and then she attended other social events like lunches and used the NFG transport to visit family and friends. She received 1-1 help with many matters and was regularly in contact for assistance with form filling. Lend-a-Hand provided practical help, including escorted shopping trips, painting and decorating and organising her home and contents. When she moved home, NFG volunteers helped her each time. She is most appreciative of the work the charity has done for her.

### 3.3.5 Other Comments from Clients

Towards the end of our online survey, we asked clients if they had any other comments to make on the Village Action project. A small sample of their responses is provided below, while a complete list can be found in Appendix D.

A fantastic service which is invaluable in providing cohesion and a spirit of community in such a rural area.

Approachable friendly people who help keep the community feel in rural life

Both excellent projects fostering a sense of community and combatting rural isolation with many positive spin-offs

Can't imagine life without them

I feel I can add something to the community

I feel more secure knowing there is someone nearby I can contact quickly if needed and the loan of a walking frame and wheelchair has been much appreciated. Their help is invaluable

I see the positive impact on so many. They are, in some cases, life savers and life enrichers

Just to keep doing the same, excellent job. You provide an essential lifeline for the community and I just wish my mum had the same where she lives!

Life in this area would be a great deal more isolated, boring and confusing without the Village Agent. She provides support, information and encouragement and increasingly provides new support and challenges – always interesting and fun – without fuss. I have gained so much from Northern Fells.

M in S is a life saver

Men in Sheds - somewhere to go - not to feel lonely

My village agent is always at the end of the phone or available at events to chat to and is very approachable and friendly, she is a gem.

They are all absolutely brilliant. The number of hours they work is way more than their contract. They should get a pay rise

They help sustain the community spirit on our tiny villages. They're the first port of call if you need to know anything. The communities would be very different without them

Vital that they continue

We are blessed to have them in this amazing community

These comments make it absolutely clear that clients benefit enormously from the project, see it as being a vital constituent of both their personal and community wellbeing and are desperate to see it continue.

### ***Vignette 9: Thriving in her 80s***

This elderly lady in her 80s lives alone in a hamlet. She is reasonably fit and still gardens. She attends 4 lunch groups regularly and really enjoys catching up with people then. She uses the Village Agent to get energy switching done regularly. This keeps her bills down as she is a high user of electricity. Having a hearing impairment, she values the bi-monthly hearing aids checks at Millhouse. The community theatre group is of great benefit to her because it means she doesn't have to drive herself all the way to Keswick. She has had help from the Village Agent on consumer issues and even some online shopping and finds that help with form filling (eg renewal of her driving licence) is most useful, as she worries that she may not get everything correct. She says that knowing the Village Agent is at the end of the phone is reassuring when you live by yourself in her position.

### 3.4 Project Strengths

We asked people (NFG staff, volunteers and clients, and external stakeholders) what aspects of the project were going well and why. The table below summarises the key points made by these different stakeholders.

Stakeholder	Key Points
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was general agreement that:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The project is embedded in the local community, with most residents knowing about it and knowing who their local VA is.</li> <li>○ The team works well together.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Most people highlighted the organic nature of the project – the way in which new groups and activities were developed in response to client demand. This process sometimes had unexpected results. For example, one man offered to run spinning sessions (on exercise bikes). NFG advertised this and lots of clients expressed an interest. But it turned out that they were actually interested in spinning wool. The upshot is that there are now about 30 people involved in wool craft!</li> <li>• Various groups were identified as being particularly successful, including the walking groups (some of which could now be self-sustaining), drop-ins (coffee mornings and lunches), Men-in-Sheds and Wi-Fi drop-ins.</li> <li>• A number of people mentioned:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 'Spin-offs' – for example, a group of clients that have started going to the cinema together and an Italian class that turned</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>into a group that meets fortnightly without any input from NFG.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clients having such a positive experience from the first group they joined that they went on to join other groups.</li> <li>○ Working with partners, including Age UK, Caldbeck Surgery local clubs and societies, parish councils, village hall committees</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Libby Graham (Funding Coordinator) made the point that the project makes a significant contribution to village halls (via room hire fees), as well as local pubs and cafes (used for meetings etc), thereby helping to sustain key local services.</li> </ul>
<b>Volunteers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Volunteers identified a number of strengths, making the following comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “It’s free”</li> <li>○ “It’s a lifeline”</li> <li>○ “The camaraderie”</li> <li>○ “Concerned support for local people”</li> <li>○ “It’s a win-win”</li> <li>○ “VAs are key – they join the dots; they go way beyond what they are paid for – and deserve every penny they get”</li> <li>○ “The model works – every area should have one”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Clients</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clients made a wide range of extremely positive comments covering both the Village Agents and Men-in-Sheds<sup>18</sup>.</li> </ul>
<b>External stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rebecca Dooley (Amy’s Care) described NFG as being very responsive, easy to deal with and prepared to go out of their way to help out. She added, “I’m amazed they can achieve so much on the money they have”.</li> <li>● Martin Woodham (Caldbeck Surgery) said, “NFG is quite an amazing organisation. It is a big part of this community – social glue. It keeps the whole community ticking over and tied together. I hope it is still there when I reach old age!”</li> <li>● Speaking about Men-in-Sheds, Martin said he had a lot of positive feedback on it - “It’s not just the practical activity, but also the company and in some cases the respite for carers. Ken does a great job. It’s really useful to the community”.</li> </ul>

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix B for a complete list of the verbatim responses from clients in response to the question: What is the best thing about the Village Agents or Men-in-Sheds projects?



<b>Volunteers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None of the volunteers in our focus group were aware of any challenges that the project has had to address.</li> </ul>
<b>External stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neither of the two people we interviewed were aware of any challenges that the project has had to address.</li> </ul>

### ***Vignette 10: Art for Wellbeing***

The art at Mae's Tearoom has given me the opportunity to experiment with paint, in a situation that was light-hearted and without expectations or pressure. By providing materials it has opened up possibilities which would not have been otherwise available. It was an opportunity to meet new people who offered support and interest. It is a valuable social experience. It has been a pleasure to join the group.

'Art 4 All' has been a fantastic opportunity for me to get back into painting and drawing. The group has been welcoming and inclusive and the relaxed atmosphere has allowed for those with some experience and those with little or none to feel confident enough to give it a go. It has been wonderful to have such a warm place to work with free materials and good company.

## 3.6 Delivery of Project Outcomes and Aims

This section assesses the extent to which the project has achieved the three project outcomes and the project aims set out in Section 1.

The table below summarises the evidence relating to delivery of the three project outcomes.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
1. Elderly and disabled people will be less isolated through having better awareness of and access to information and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>66% of clients feel less isolated</li> <li>83% see other people more often</li> <li>79% get out of the house more often</li> <li>85% feel more involved in their local community</li> <li>74% are more aware of local services</li> </ul>
2. Elderly and disabled people will have improved self-confidence to attend services resulting in greater independent living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>70% of clients feel more confident about accessing local services</li> <li>53% feel more confident about living independently at home</li> </ul>
3. Residents will have improved health and wellbeing through their participation in social events /activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>73% of clients are happier</li> <li>52% say their mental health has improved</li> <li>50% say their physical health has improved</li> </ul>

The evidence above shows that the project has been very successful in delivering all three of its outcomes – and, consequently, it aims of tackling social isolation, improving health and wellbeing and building community and individual resilience, esteem and confidence.

Although we firmly believe that the project has fully achieved its intended outcomes and aims, it must be noted that it has only achieved five of the nine quantitative targets for the outcomes. With the benefit of hindsight, we believe several of these targets went beyond stretching and were actually overambitious. For this reason, we have not included an analysis of performance against these targets in the main body of this report. However, a summary can be found in Appendix E.



Coffee and cake drop-in (© Northern Fells Group)

### 3.7 Areas for Development

We asked the people (NFG staff, volunteers and clients, and external stakeholders) if there were areas where NFG could improve what it does or new services and activities that it should introduce.

Stakeholder	Key Points
<b>Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a general view that the project is running well and should continue to run along broadly the same lines.</li> <li>• One of the VAs suggested a mobile café to engage with farmers – “They often work alone and are more reluctant to get involved than women. We need to find a way to reach out to lonely men.”</li> <li>• Di Barraclough (Group Coordinator) said that any future project would need to increase the budget for village hall room hires fees (to cover increased fees).</li> <li>• Libby Graham (Fundraising Coordinator) said NFG should do more in relation to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dementia</li> <li>○ Support for carers</li> <li>○ Poverty, deprivation and the most socially isolated people</li> <li>○ The impact of Brexit on the farming community</li> </ul> </li> <li>• She also said NFG needs to recognise the crucial role played by volunteers and explore ways in which it can better support volunteers to deliver services.</li> </ul>
<b>Volunteers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers made the following suggestions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Improve website – make it more interactive”</li> <li>○ “Provide more opportunities for volunteers to get together – including socially – to find out what else is going on, share ideas, provide mutual support – and have fun!”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Clients</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clients made a wide range of suggestions<sup>19</sup>.</li> <li>• Examples of suggested changes to existing services include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Alter days and times occasionally for people who work”</li> <li>○ “Better website”</li> <li>○ “Have open sessions perhaps to show what happens, without feeling you are making a commitment to be a regular member of a group”</li> <li>○ “Liven up the AGM and formal meetings. Perhaps combine with a fund-raising cheese and wine evening for example”</li> <li>○ “Produce a newsletter of what's going on, other than N. Fells activities. Combine with parish newsletter???”</li> <li>○ “Secure more funding for Men-in-Sheds to buy needed equipment”</li> <li>○ “Sometimes the system feels more centred on Caldbeck than in other areas. Also the Lend a Hand Group<sup>20</sup> could do with</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix F for a complete list of the verbatim responses from clients in response to the question: Are there any ways in which the Northern Fells Group could improve the services it already delivers? And see Appendix G for a complete list of the verbatim responses from clients in response to the question: Are there any new services you think the Northern Fells Group should deliver (that it does not already deliver)?

<sup>20</sup> The Lend-a-Hand service is not part of the Village Action project, so this comment should not be seen as a reflection on the project.

	<p>more 'team spirit'. Most tasks require just a single volunteer and I wonder if people would feel better motivated if they felt more part of a team.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “The agents could work more hours and then offer more events.”</li> <li>○ “The arts and craft sessions are excellent and more of them would be very good”</li> <li>● Examples of suggestions for new services include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Active exercise groups to encourage a younger clientele”</li> <li>○ “Activities for middle aged rather than the elderly”</li> <li>○ “Alternative technology workshops”</li> <li>○ “Babysitting for young couples who have no family living near”</li> <li>○ “Ballroom dancing classes”</li> <li>○ “Cinema trips”</li> <li>○ “Community arts project in liaison with primary schools”</li> <li>○ “DIY skills for women”</li> <li>○ “Knit and Natter group”</li> <li>○ “Litter picking walks”</li> <li>○ “Pilates”<sup>21</sup></li> <li>○ “Singing for pleasure for those less confident”</li> <li>○ “Teenagers – clubs, events”</li> <li>○ “Work with schools and older folk to promote memories and time past and now”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>External stakeholders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Martin Woodham (Caldbeck Surgery) suggested that the project ‘formula’ was replicable and said that he would like to see it rolled out in areas not currently covered by NFG (funding permitting!)</li> </ul>

<sup>21</sup> NFG does actually run Pilates sessions.

## 4 Conclusions and Lessons

### 4.1 Conclusions

The evaluation shows that the project is being delivered by a very able and dedicated team of staff, all of whom work much longer hours than they are paid for. The staff team is supported by large and equally dedicated group of volunteers who make a vital contribution to the project.

The project is engaging with large numbers of clients. It is very highly valued by its clients. And it is having a very positive impact on the wellbeing of its clients.

The project has been more successful at engaging with women than men. There is a widely held view that men are harder to engage than women – because, for example, they are less willing to talk about their problems. This might be true. But Men-in-Sheds and a number of other activities (eg the walking group and cooking for men) have shown that projects can engage with men if they are sufficiently interested in what is on offer. It is possible, therefore, that more could be done in this area in the future.

Overall, the project is delivering its aims very successfully – addressing social isolation, improving health and wellbeing and building community and individual resilience, esteem and confidence. And it is also delivering its outcomes very successfully:

4. Elderly and disabled people **are** less isolated through having better awareness of and access to information and services
5. Elderly and disabled people **do have** improved self-confidence to attend services resulting in greater independent living
6. Residents **do have** improved health and wellbeing through their participation in social events /activities

As noted in Section 3.11, the project has only achieved five of the nine quantitative targets for the outcomes (several of which we believe were overambitious). This does not in any way detract from what the project has achieved on the ground. Indeed, it is hard to see how the project could have had a bigger impact than it has had with the resources available. However, we do believe this issue could have been picked up sooner. The governance arrangements for the project focused largely on project delivery rather than on the extent to which the project was on track to achieve its targets. Some responsibility for the issue must also lie with the funder for (a) not requiring a proper evaluation plan to be developed at the outset of the project and (b) not having more robust systems in place for monitoring progress against targets as part of the annual reporting process. Had the issue been picked up at an earlier stage, it would have been possible to go back to the funder and agree a revised formulation for the outcomes and indicators, with targets that were stretching but attainable.

### 4.2 Lessons

The single most important lesson to emerge from this evaluation is that NFG should continue to do much of what it is already doing. If this doesn't happen, then the gains that have been made in terms of reduced social isolation and improved individual and community wellbeing would be lost.

The loss of the project would also result in the loss of 35 to 40 regular volunteers who both support the Village Action project and benefit from it. This includes people who cook, serve and organise drop-ins and lunch groups, walk leaders and individuals accompanying clients to the theatre.

More specifically, the Village Agents component of the Village Action project is critical to the successful delivery of all of the NFG services and activities. Not only does it deliver a wide range of activities itself; it also signposts clients to other NFG services and activities, such as Lend-a-Hand, the community minibus and benefits advice.

This does not mean that nothing at all should change. In fact, change – in response to evolving client needs and interests – is one of the successful ingredients of what NFG has done over the years – both in this project and more generally. There is scope for developing new groups and activities – perhaps drawing on suggestions made by clients (see Appendices G and H). And there are more strategic areas to be explored, such as those highlighted by Libby Graham:

- Dementia
- Support for carers
- Poverty, deprivation and the most socially isolated people
- The impact of Brexit on the farming community

There is also scope to explore ways in which NFG could engage with more men – for example, by offering a wider range of groups and activities that are likely to appeal to men (ideally based on research to establish what would actually be more attractive to men). It might even be worth looking into the impact of gender on engaging with clients. All four Village Agents are women. Would it make any difference if some of them were men? (This is not in any way intended as a criticism of the current VAs – who received extensive and heartfelt praise from clients – male and female – in our survey.)

A number of technical lessons can be learned from this project that could benefit future projects.

1. Targets for all outputs and outcomes should be SMART:
  - **S**pecific – ideally focusing on a single, clearly defined variable
  - **M**asurable – by means of methods available to the project team
  - **A**chievable – taking account of the resources available, the context and what similar work elsewhere has shown is possible

- **Relevant** – represents a legitimate measure of the change the project is aiming to achieve (which itself might be qualitative and relatively tangible)
  - **Time-based** – to be achieved by a certain time
2. An evaluation plan should be developed at an early stage – and then implemented. The plan should clearly set out the data needs for the evaluation, focusing on delivery of outputs and outcomes. It should also set out the actions, responsibilities, timescales and resources for collecting and processing the data.
  3. Project governance (eg steering group meetings) should focus on the extent to which the project is being delivered as planned – including progress towards agreed targets. To support this, internal management reports should (a) clearly show actual delivery of outputs and targets against planned delivery and (b) highlight areas of ‘exception’ (where actual delivery is behind planned delivery).



**Ukulele Group (© Northern Fells Group)**

## Appendix A: Questionnaire used in Client Survey

1. How often do you take part in the following activity classes and sessions organised by the Village Agents or Shedmaster?

Activity	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Regularly
Arts/crafts/languages/music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computers/IT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cooking/cooking for men	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drop-ins (eg coffee mornings, lunches)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Men-in-Sheds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trips/outings (eg to museums, shops, theatre, Fairfield Mill)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walking/exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: please specify .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Have you ever asked one of the Village Agents or Shedmaster for information or support?

**Yes**
 **No**
 **Not sure**

3. If your answer to Question 2 was 'yes', what was the inquiry about (eg energy switch, septic tank, oil syndicate, applying for a Blue Badge, services offered by other organisations)?

4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the overall impact of these activities on your wellbeing?

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Not sure	Not applicable
I get out of the house more often	<input type="checkbox"/>						
I see other people more often	<input type="checkbox"/>						
I feel more involved in the local community	<input type="checkbox"/>						
I am more aware of services available to me (eg from GP, NHS, Age UK, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>						
I feel more confident about accessing these services when I need to	<input type="checkbox"/>						
My physical health has improved	<input type="checkbox"/>						
My mental health has improved	<input type="checkbox"/>						
I feel less isolated	<input type="checkbox"/>						
I feel more confident about my ability to continue living at home	<input type="checkbox"/>						

## Evaluation of NFG Village Action Project

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Not sure	Not applicable
I am happier	<input type="checkbox"/>						

5. Did you know that the Northern Fells Group offers a Minibus Service?

**Yes**       **No**       **Not sure**

6. How often do you use the Minibus Service?

**Never**       **Rarely**       **Occasionally**       **Regularly**

7. What is the best thing about the Village Agents or Men-in-Sheds projects?

8. Are there any ways in which the Northern Fells Group could improve the services it already delivers?

9. Are there any new services you think the Northern Fells Group should deliver (that it does not already deliver)?

10. Is there anything else you would like to say about the Village Agents or Men-in-Sheds projects?

## Evaluation of NFG Village Action Project

The National Lottery (the main funder of the Village Agents and Men-in-Sheds projects) is committed to equal opportunities and has asked us to collect the following demographic data for monitoring purposes. You do not have to complete the questions below. But if you do so, your answers will help us to have a better understanding of who has benefited from the projects. All demographic data will be treated in strict confidence.

11. Which parish do you live in?

Boltons	Caldbeck	Castle Sowerby	Ireby & Uldale	Mungrisdale	Sebergham & Welton	Westward & Rosley	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>							

12. What is your gender?

<b>Male</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Female</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Prefer not to say</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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13. How old are you?

<b>Under 25</b>	<b>25-49</b>	<b>50-59</b>	<b>60-69</b>	<b>70-79</b>	<b>80 and over</b>	<b>Prefer not to say</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>						

14. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Prefer not to say</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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15. If you do consider yourself to be disabled, please can you tell us what your disability is?

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*Many thanks indeed for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.*

## Appendix B: Best thing about Project (Client Responses)

In our client survey, we asked people: What is the best thing about the Village Agents or Men-in-Sheds projects? A complete list of their verbatim responses is provided below.

- A great asset to our rural community
- A human point of contact for all manner of things. Marvellous people.
- A knowledgeable local person who helps in so many ways.
- A person to go to in need
- Accessing local activities run and attended by local people
- Agents; reliable contact when help is needed. Sheds; wonderful repairs to favourite old objects. In a way reassuring.
- All great
- Always available for advice
- Always available when you need them
- always give good advice
- Always inclusive and supportive
- Always know the facilities are there if needed
- Always ready to help and solve problems
- Always there for you
- Always there to call upon
- Annual get together of all services
- Availability
- Availability and helpfulness
- Available and very willing to help
- Available to all
- Benefits the whole community especially OAPs and those in an isolated areas. Run by very friendly and helpful hard-working agents and volunteers.
- Brilliantly dedicated agents and Shedmaster. We are VERY fortunate to have these volunteers involved in these isolated communities
- Bringing people in the community together .
- Brings community together and is great for mental health
- Brings groups of people together in their villages making a community
- Chat, tea, companionship
- Coffee mornings, charity events, fun events
- Community involvement
- Community projects and help available
- Community Spirit
- Community spirit and involvement
- Companionship, learning new skills, meeting new people, helping the community
- company and advise and mental and physical stimulation and having a good healthy hot meal .
- Contact

- Develops community spirit & is vital for support to elderly, in particular combatting the effect of isolation.
- Eager to help
- Easy going
- Enabling people to come together. Tackling isolation.
- Engaging with the community
- Everyone benefits
- Everyone is very friendly, welcoming and ready to help (efficiently!).
- Everything they do
- Excellent and easily available support of many kinds.
- Friendliness
- Friendly and very helpful
- Friendly Approachable Helpful
- Friendly contact, always able to offer advice or information, finding out about other activities I might consider.
- Friendly voice on the phone or when we meet
- Friendly, knowledgeable, helpful - connecting people and communities. Excellent partners
- Friendship knowing help is at hand
- Fun, relaxed sessions with others willing to share skills in woodwork.
- Gets people out for company
- Getting people together at social events
- Giving people motivation and providing activities i.e stimulation
- Going for the walks gets me out more. I meet new people local to the area. Therefore it benefits not only my physical health but also my mental wellbeing.
- Great for being inclusive
- Great that they help with projects
- Having an identifiable person in the community to help and assist
- Having lost my partner, I don't feel so lonely. I have a group of elderly friends in the village
- Help for those who are otherwise isolated from services
- Help in particular for people living alone and those without transport.
- Help take you feel part of the community
- Helpful
- Helpful
- Helpful
- Helpful
- Helpful agents who are kind and knowledgeable
- Helpful contact
- Helpfulness - nothings any bother
- Helping the community
- I am aware of the group of people who participate in this initiative as they relax in Heskett pub at the end of their day!
- Inclusive

- Information dissemination/contact point
- inspirational for bringing people together in shared activities
- Invaluable community service
- It brings the community together.
- It creates a supportive local community which is extremely valuable when you live alone in a rural area
- It enables me to meet other people that have similar interests as myself – a diverse section of the communities
- It enables men especially to have a place to go and be with others
- It gets me out of the house and I don't feel so isolated
- It gets people together who otherwise might be lonely.
- It is comforting to be able to find information from the Agents that you would not usually have access to. I think Min S is a good thing for both local men and folk who need repairs
- It is great to get out to the theatre in the afternoon and to see some countryside , to be with other people and have fun.
- It provides a broad range of activities that create opportunities for meeting people with similar interests.
- It's a fantastic lifeline for the villages. Brings a sense of togetherness.
- It's a great way to get men, who find it hard to admit they are lonely or depressed, out and talking. Too often these resources are geared towards/interest women more.
- Just being there
- Keeps people active and happy
- Kindness and helpfulness much appreciated
- Knowing help is always available
- Knowing it is there if needed for all, access to knowledge, advice and workshops.
- Knowing it's there, and the variety on offer
- Knowing the agents are there and contactable if help is required
- Knowing there are people there who can assist. Organised activities residents can participate if they want. Men in Sheds very helpful in giving practical advice and assistance. They are an excellent presence publicising the excellent work done by Northern Fells in so many ways.
- Knowing they are there
- Knowledge sharing and advice
- Liaison, willingness to find out, very caring and efficient
- Linking me to various activities (and services)
- Living in an isolated place I feel much more part of the community now
- Maintain community
- Making it possible to meet and socialise with other people and having a local person to contact for help
- Meeting people
- Meeting people
- Meeting people
- Meeting people. They are a lovely group of people who are there for support and providing events suitable for all ages and abilities.

- Men in Sheds is brilliant
- Men in Sheds. It means that conservation projects can be completed using the numerous skills of people in the community. Projects which would probably never been attempted. It is a huge benefit for a rural community. The village agent is the lynch pin of the Northern Fells.
- Men socialising and doing good for the community
- Monthly coffee mornings
- My friends
- My village agent is most helpful and very special
- Necessary
- Offer new skills
- Oil syndicate
- On phone always available
- Opportunity to share practical skills; social
- Part of the glue which makes this community special
- Philippa is cheerful and approachable and replies promptly to my requests
- Positive and helpful
- Problem solving with all aspects of repair/projects with likeminded shedders
- Providing services in villages where nothing else exists
- Range of services and groups available. Willingness of village agents to listen and respond to our needs.
- She is amazing (Gillian S) - helpful and knowledgeable
- Social access
- Social connexion for men. We can get things fixed.
- Social contact, being more artistic, I get a lift
- Social, purposeful activity, inclusive and friendly
- Someone caring about our welfare
- Standard of cakes!
- support when not available elsewhere
- Support/point of contact/ familiar face
- Supportive friendship
- Takes hassle out of buying oil and emptying the septic tank
- That the community is their priority.
- That there are all these services available locally
- The ability to get things sorted locally
- The activities they organise, their help and making everyone feel welcome
- The availability of advice
- The cheerfulness of the volunteers. Wonderful service. Nothing is too much bother for them
- The confidence it gives knowing there is someone there to help if needed and always something going on which you can join in with.
- The fact it exists.
- The help from the Village Agent in sorting out my mobility problems has been great and it is reassuring to know there is someone who can contact for advice and help

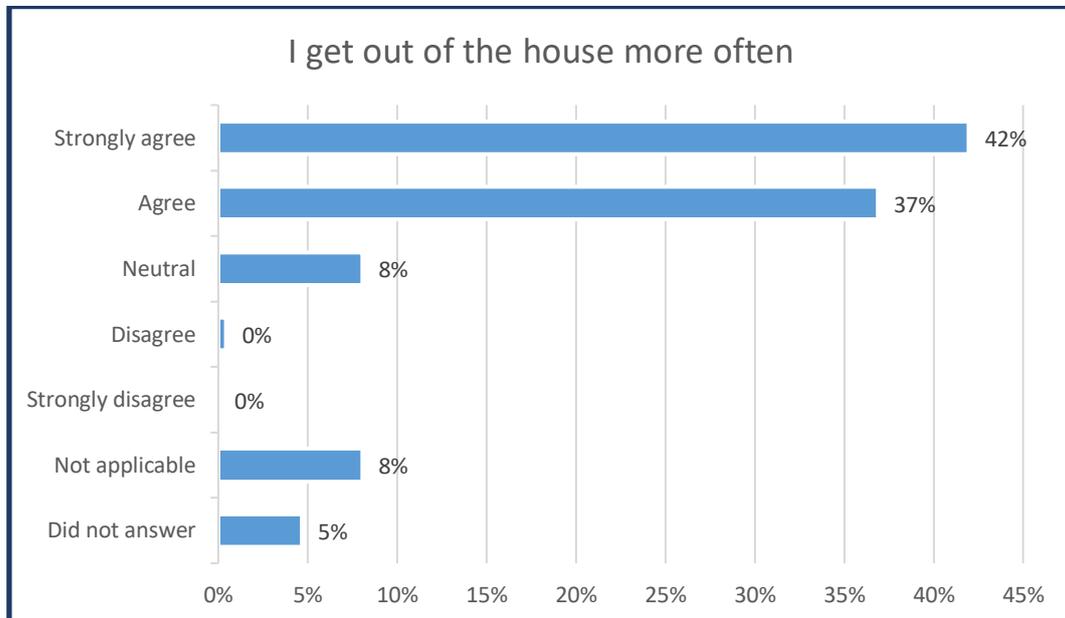
## Evaluation of NFG Village Action Project

- The range of activities they offer and the support
- The village agent is a named person so you know who to contact for assistance.
- The village agents are fantastic. Always there to help with anything they can.
- The work they do
- Their approachability, kindness and unfailing efforts at keeping the community in touch with what is going on and what's available. If they do not know, they have a network of folk that they can contact and put you in touch with whoever you need. Their willingness to know what else may be needed in our community,
- Their availability and helpfulness
- Their availability, cheerfulness and help
- Their commitment to helping everyone enjoy their community.
- Their commitment to making life easier and more inclusive for the community.
- Their helpfulness
- Their knowledge of the community
- Their positive response
- Their support
- There is always someone on hand to ask for help or information and the social aspect is brilliant.
- There is always someone to consult who cares
- There is someone to contact if in need – Agents
- They are a wonderfully re-assuring presence whom we feel confident in asking for help and provide exactly the kind of projects we need.
- They are all very helpful
- They are always at the end of the phone when you need them
- They are approachable and friendly
- They are both very helpful
- They are extremely obliging and will try to help with anything. Men in Sheds helped us by restoring an old chicken run and a signboard that had been broken by sheep.
- They are run by local people aware of the community needs
- They are so knowledgeable and friendly
- They are the glue in the community
- They are there if I want them
- They are very helpful
- They bring people together
- They bring the community together
- They bring the community together
- They help in whatever where possible
- They're there if you need them
- They're very accessible, always respond promptly, easy to talk to / engage with, they listen, they're open to new ideas
- To have a named person to approach with a question
- To me the best things it provides encouragement to people who visit/repair things. But also for people who need a hand
- Transport for my partner to go to a weekly care facility - good for him and a relief for me

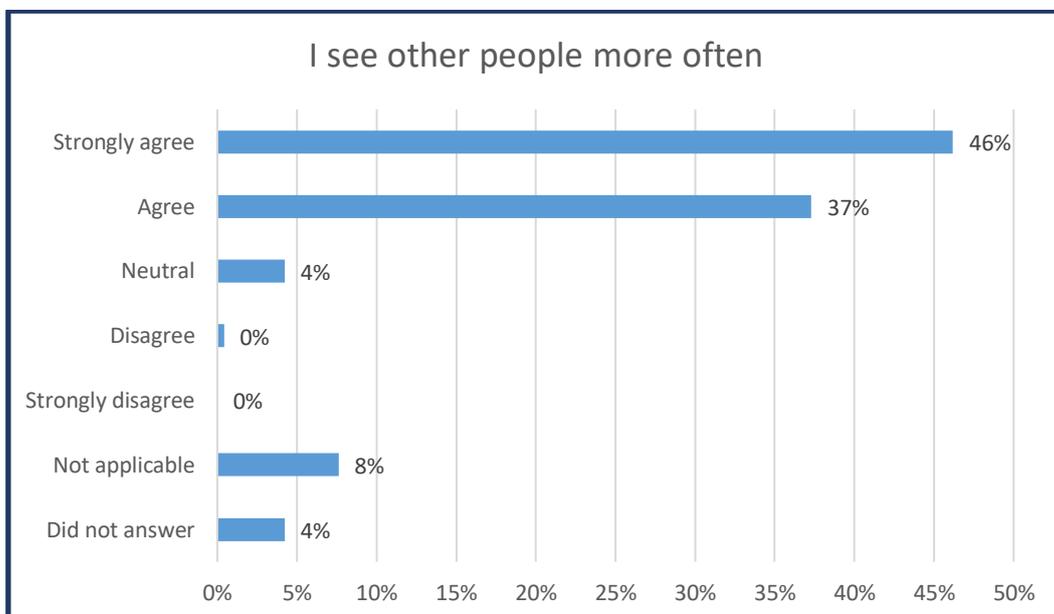
- Valuable assistance and consistent support
- Very approachable
- Very approachable
- Very approachable and they work hard on behalf of us all in the area.
- Very committed people who work exceptionally hard for the benefit of others
- Very friendly
- Very friendly and helpful
- Very friendly and knowledgeable
- Very friendly and welcoming at all times
- Very helpful
- Very helpful and men in sheds pop in too chat and very welcoming
- Very professional and extremely helpful
- Very sociable, kind, caring, helpful – always has time for support and help and has great ideas
- Very welcoming and helpful
- Village agent very helpful with problems always a sympathetic approach
- Village agents
- Village Agents – planning and organising the events/activities . (Men in Sheds and cooking) meeting people, camaraderie, learning new things and creativity
- Village Agents are always available to help, we call them the Village Angels
- Village agents can direct me to the appropriate person or provider.  
Men in sheds is good because there are fewer opportunities for men to meet compared with opportunities for women, and this is an important one.
- Village Agents filling in forms (Blue Badge)
- Village agents provide an invaluable source of information and are a conduit it to my integration into the local community.
- We feel greatly privileged because we know that they are available to assist and advise
- We have got them
- Working in the community for the local community ....
- You know there is someone to turn to when support is needed. Our agent works hard and frequently goes the extra mile. she brings the community together
- You know where to find Help, advice , and company

## Appendix C: Impact of Project on Clients

In our survey of clients, we asked people to tell us the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements about the impact of the project on them. The results are shown in the figures below.

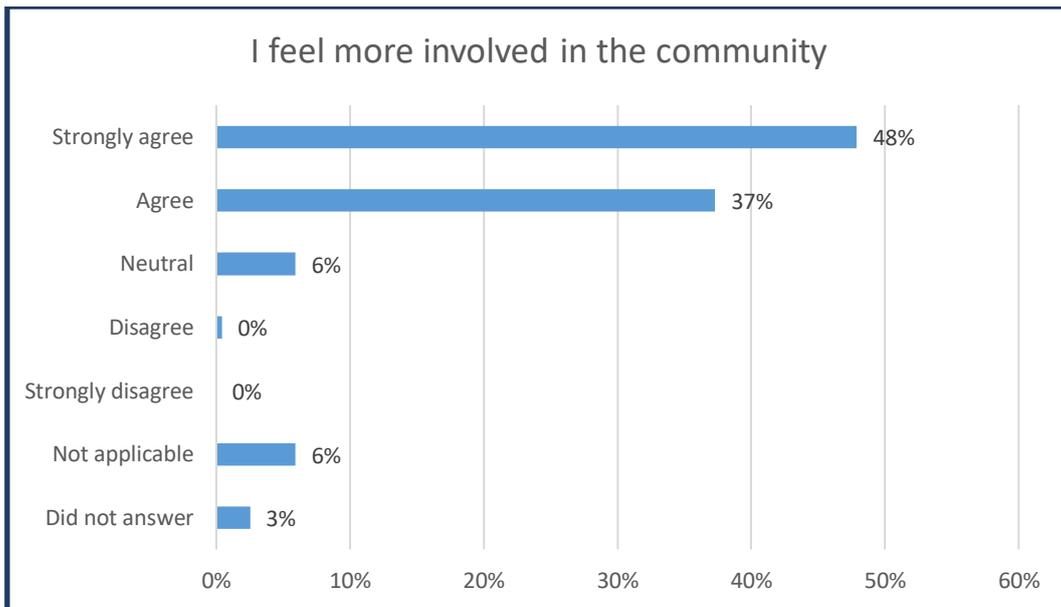


The figure above shows that nearly 80% of respondents agree or agree strongly that they get out of the house more often as a result of the project.

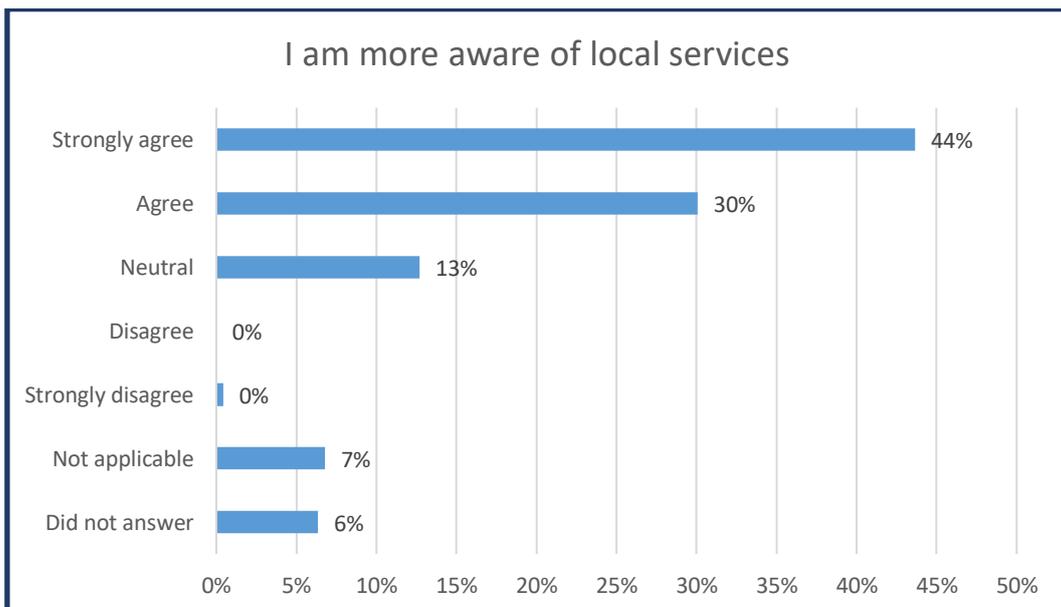


The figure above shows that over 80% of respondents agree or agree strongly that they see other people more often as a result of the project.

## Evaluation of NFG Village Action Project

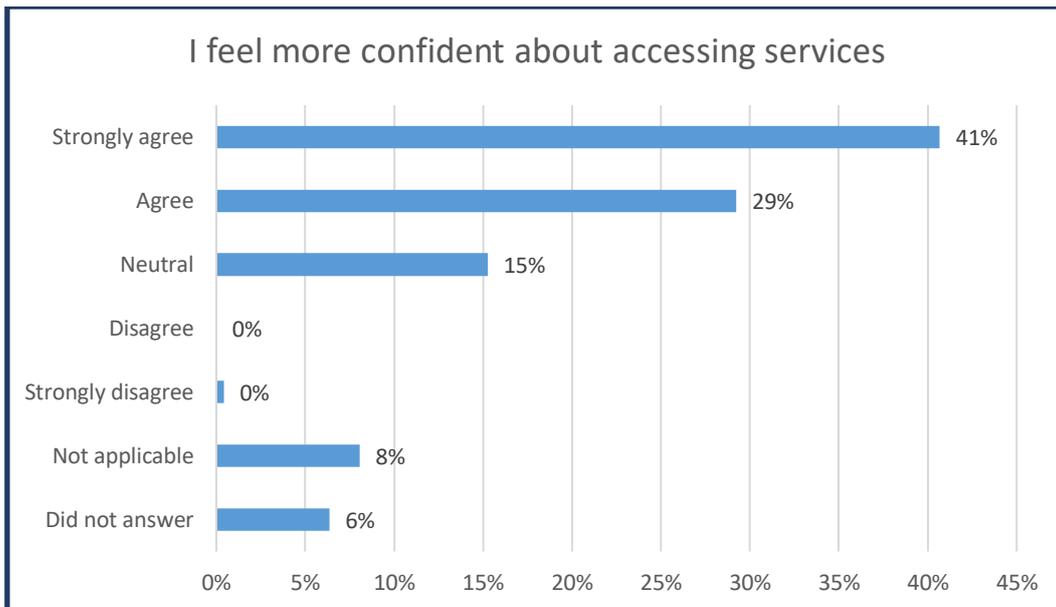


The figure above shows that 85% of respondents agree or agree strongly that they feel more involved in the local community as a result of the project.

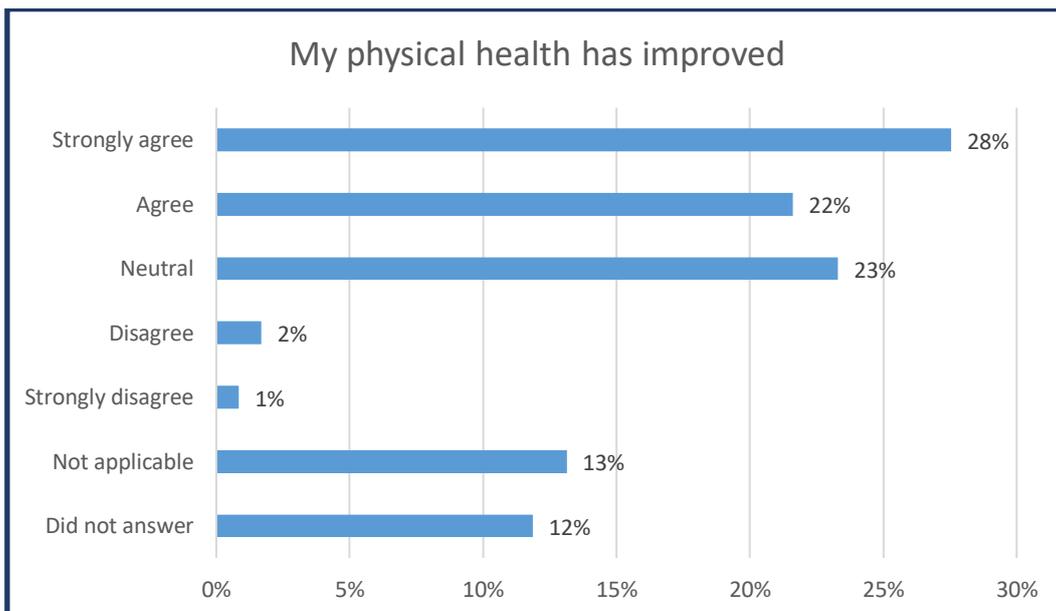


The figure above shows that about three quarters of respondents agree or agree strongly that they are more aware of services available to them as a result of the project.

## Evaluation of NFG Village Action Project

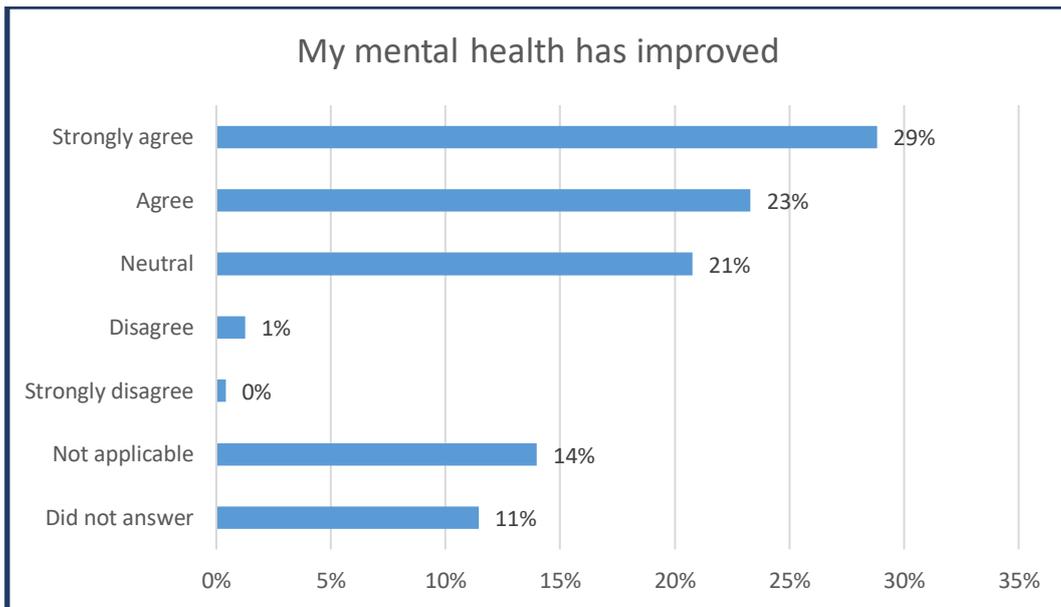


The figure above shows that 70% of respondents agree or agree strongly that they feel more confident about accessing services when they need them as a result of the project.

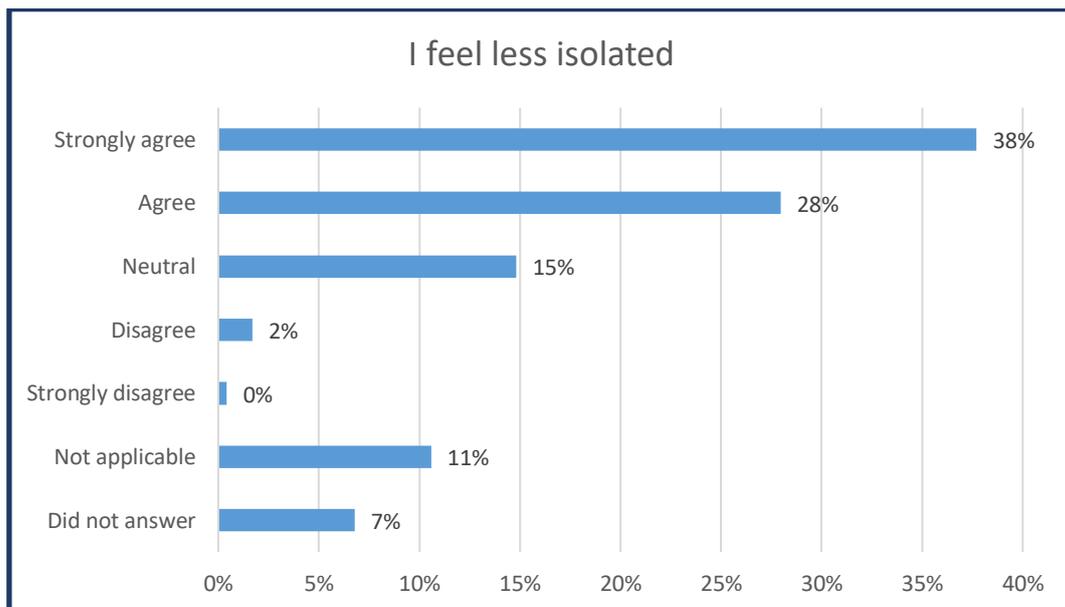


The figure above shows that nearly 50% of respondents agree or agree strongly that their physical health has improved as a result of the project.

## Evaluation of NFG Village Action Project

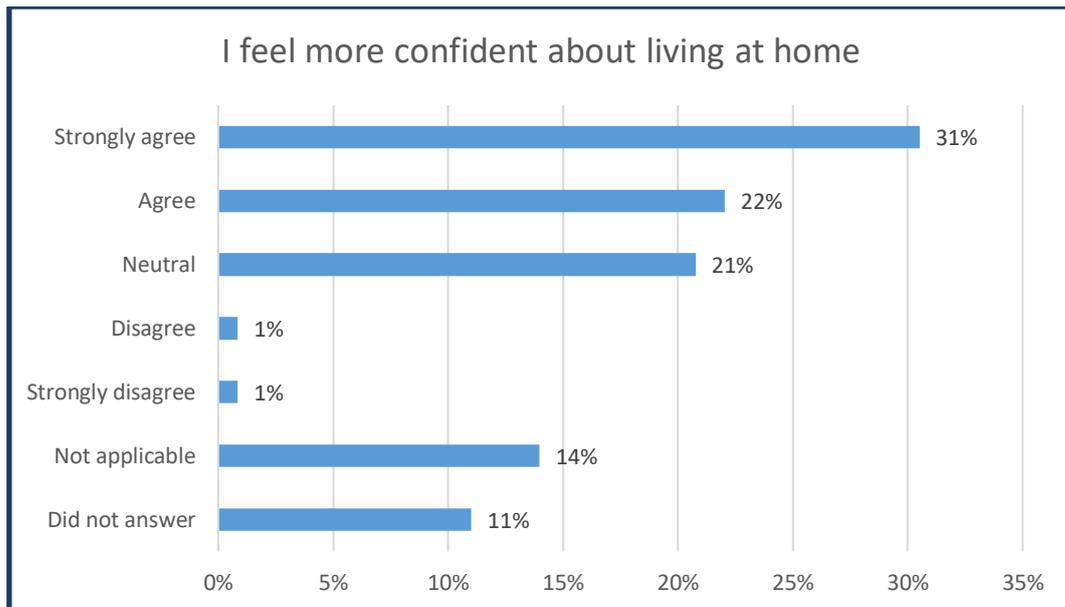


The figure above shows that over 50% of respondents agree or agree strongly that their mental health has improved as a result of the project.

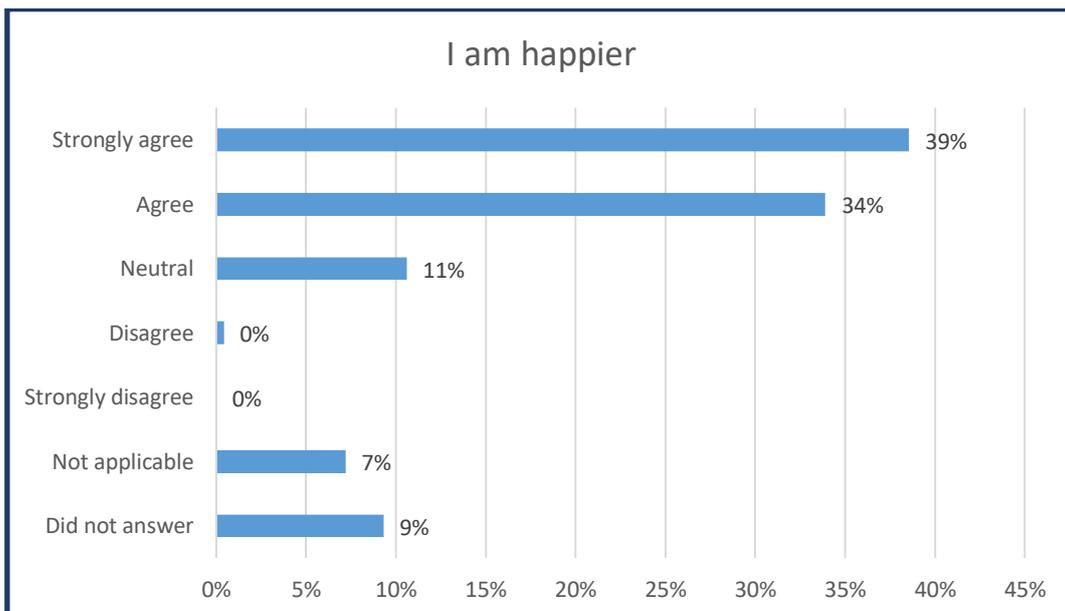


The figure above shows that about two thirds of respondents agree or agree strongly that they feel less isolated as a result of the project.

## Evaluation of NFG Village Action Project



The figure above shows that more than 50% of respondents agree or agree strongly that they feel more confident in their ability to continue living at home as a result of the project.



The figure above shows that nearly three quarters of respondents agree or agree strongly that they are happier as a result of the project.

## Appendix D: Other Comments (Client Responses)

Towards the end of our client survey, we asked people if they had any other comments on the Village Action project. A complete list of their verbatim responses is provided below.

- A fantastic service which is invaluable in providing cohesion and a spirit of community in such a rural area.
- A huge thank you for the amazing work they do.
- A very willing group of people
- A wonderful asset for the area
- A wonderful facility
- All are highly commendable and add the quality of local life
- All brilliant
- All good
- All seems excellent and very gratefully received! With almost total lack of public transport, people without transport are enabled to live in what has become an isolated area.
- Approachable friendly people who help keep the community feel in rural life
- As the usual meeting places for locals have closed down in many villages i.e Post offices pubs banks etc - it is becoming more essential to keep events and activities for the community going
- Both are very useful and keep the community spirit alive.
- Both are well advertised and has a very good newsletter everybody is very welcoming
- Both excellent projects fostering a sense of community and combatting rural isolation with many positive spin-offs
- Brilliant
- Brilliant - should be more of them I travel 20 miles to come here
- Brilliant - we are VERY grateful to these local people who give so much time and effort
- Can't imagine life without them
- Can't imagine life without them!
- Do a very good job
- Eternally grateful for their time and concern.
- Everyone works really hard to ensure people are looked after and taken care of.
- Excellence service for our community
- Excellence service for our community
- Excellent activity
- Extremely dedicated and caring staff
- Extremely helpful to the village community
- Fantastic group of friends
- Fantastic services and eye opening to possibilities
- Friendly and very helpful
- Good
- GREAT
- Great groups

- Great service to the community. helpful. Someone to turn to
- Had a warm welcome
- Helping people in the local community - its good
- I am happy we have such an amazing service
- I believe the Village Agent is a very valuable community resource
- I could not manage as well without my Village Agent
- I enjoy linoprint workshop
- I feel I can add something to the community
- I feel more secure knowing there is someone nearby I can contact quickly if needed and the loan of a walking frame and wheelchair has been much appreciated. Their help is invaluable
- I feel we are soo lucky to have people who are prepared to be so cheerful and enthusiastic
- I have loved the art and craft sessions. It has brought the community together. I have met people who have been supportive of me. Also walking group
- I see the positive impact on so many. They are, in some cases, life savers and life enrichers
- I think Philippa Groves should be nominated for an award.
- I think the agents do a very good job.
- I think they all do a splendid job. They are so very helpful and caring and good fun
- I would like to thank them for their creative, collaborative approaches to offering opportunities for people to meet locally
- It is a shame that, at least in my village that more people do not attend NFG events
- It's a fantastic service that helps and supports
- It's a lovely opportunity to get out and meet new people, while also providing the opportunity to get involved in creative projects and learn new skills.
- It's a very good service
- Just to keep doing the same, excellent job. You provide an essential lifeline for the community and I just wish my mum had the same where she lives!
- Keep going!
- Ken Is perfect as shed master
- Life in this area would be a great deal more isolated, boring and confusing without the Village Agent. She provides support, information and encouragement and increasingly provides new support and challenges - always interesting and fun - without fuss. I have gained so much from Northern Fells.
- Lonely people - very helpful Gives pleasure to those who do jobs @ M in S and those who need a repair - means it is not thrown away
- Long may these caring people be there
- Lucky to have them
- M in S is a life saver
- Made a big difference in the area
- Men in Sheds - somewhere to go - not to feel lonely
- Men in Sheds mending a sack barrow for us at the moment. Bought a bike off them and they say they did repairs
- Men in sheds, really useful. The idea could be expanded

## Evaluation of NFG Village Action Project

- My agent is brilliant and men in sheds very informative
- My husband was greatly helped by Men in Sheds and the lend a hand group for escorting him on walks etc which helped me too. It gave me some freedom when I was not able to leave him alone.
- My village agent is always at the end of the phone or available at events to chat to and is very approachable and friendly, she is a gem.
- Northern Fells Group is unique and we are lucky to have them
- Other than being excellent at their allotted tasks, they are also cheerful and friendly
- Our agent is a vital support to our community - please continue for many years
- Our agent Philippa is amazing, nothing is too much trouble and she puts so much of her time into the community over and above her designated hours
- Please keep up the good work
- Shed is wonderful, very friendly and do good things for people
- Since they have been active the range of activities and ways of meeting up and socialising has steadily expanded in ways that are of great benefit to the local population, especially for older people who might otherwise become quite isolated. It would be a great loss in many ways if their work ceased
- So glad they are part of our community. They'd be missed a great deal if they disappeared.
- Sorry! I haven't been very helpful with this survey - but I can say that our village agent does a superb job – above and beyond the norm!
- Thank goodness for the agents. Have not used men in sheds
- Thank you
- Thank you
- The minibus service to physical exercise classes and local activity clubs has been invaluable
- The projects that they do are great.
- Their efforts and kindness are hugely appreciated.
- They are a force for good in the community.
- They are a Good Thing and keep people in contact with one another and offer a great range of activities and services.
- They are a great help as it is. So reassuring to know that you can get help when you live in a remote area.
- They are a wonderful community asset in a remote scattered population largely without any form of public transport
- They are all absolutely brilliant. The number of hours they work is way more than their contact. They should get a pay rise
- they are amazing
- They are doing excellent work.
- They are very hard working and dedicated people
- they are worth their weight in gold
- They do a fantastic job
- They do a fantastic job
- They do a great job- don't know how the community managed without them!
- They do a great job for the community and are there when you need them

## Evaluation of NFG Village Action Project

- They do a valuable service and very pleasant with it
- They help sustain the community spirit on our tiny villages. They're the first port of call if you need to know anything. The communities would be very different without them
- They work very hard to provide the things they do.
- They're great!
- This is a brilliant project which has a positive effect on the area .Thank you.
- valuable aid
- Valuable resource/project for community
- Very good
- Very hard, if not impossible, to improve
- Very helpful
- Very helpful and helpful
- Very helpful service and we are very lucky to have such a service in our area
- Very impressed by services offered
- very pleased and happy with what is available
- Vital that they continue
- We are blessed to have them in this amazing community
- We are new to the area and am seeking to get involved. Pleased to have found such an amazing, thriving community
- We could not live as well without them
- Whilst as a still working person, I recognise the immense value of these projects on both mental and physical wellbeing of older residents alongside essential practical support and community building.
- Will hope to learn/hear of events and to take part
- Wonderful people who give up their time free to help others. Long may it continue .
- Worth their weight in gold
- Yes. The Village Agents are very pro-active and have made a huge difference in bringing people together in a rural area

## Appendix E: Performance against Quantitative Targets

This assessment draws on a combination of data of obtained from the project database and our own survey data which lead us to make the following estimates (see Section 3.2 for calculations).

Demographic group	Total number engaged	
	Since project began	Each year
All clients	530	257
Elderly or disabled people	445	216

### Outcome 1

Project outcome 1 states:

**Elderly and disabled people will be less isolated through having better awareness of and access to information and services.**

The tables below show the three indicators for this outcome, the target for each indicator and what has been delivered to-date in relation to each one.

<b>Indicator 1(a)</b>	Rurally isolated people will report feeling less isolated and more aware of what other services can offer them
<b>Target 1(a)</b>	200 people each year
<b>Delivery of 1(a)</b>	
<u>Estimate</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project engages with 216 elderly and disabled people each year</li> </ul>	
<u>Feeling less isolated</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>66% of the clients who took part in our survey said they agreed or agreed strongly that they feel less isolated as a result of the project</li> <li>This suggests that around 143 (66% of 216) people per year feel less isolated as a result of the project</li> </ul>	
<u>Awareness of other services</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>74% of the clients who took part in our survey said they agreed or agreed strongly that they are more aware of services available to them as a result of the project</li> <li>This suggests that around 160 (74% of 216) people per year feel less isolated as a result of the project</li> </ul>	
<u>Conclusion</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The target for this indicator has not been achieved, with the shortfall being about 25%</li> </ul>	

<b>Indicator 1(b)</b>	Rurally isolated people will report an increased understanding about the challenges they face and demonstrate more self confidence in resolving these
<b>Target 1(b)</b>	100 people each year
<b>Delivery of 1(b)</b>	
<u>Estimate</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project engages with 216 elderly and disabled people each year</li> </ul>	
<u>Self-confidence in accessing services</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>70% of the clients who took part in our survey said they agreed or agreed strongly that they feel more confident about accessing services when they need to as a result of the project</li> <li>This suggests that around 151 (70% of 216) elderly and disabled people per year feel more self-confident about accessing services</li> </ul>	
<u>Self-confidence in living independently</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>53% of the clients who took part in our survey said they agreed or agreed strongly that they feel more confident about their ability to continue living at home as a result of the project</li> <li>This suggests that around 114 (53% of 216) elderly and disabled people per year feel more self-confident about accessing services</li> </ul>	
<u>Conclusion</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The target for this indicator has been exceeded (by more than 10%)</li> </ul>	

<b>Indicator 1(c)</b>	Rurally isolated people will report that they have access to services and information leading to an improvement to their social wellbeing and quality of life
<b>Target 1(c)</b>	1,000 by the end of the project
<b>Delivery of 1(c)</b>	
<u>Estimate</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project has engaged with around 445 different elderly and disabled people to-date</li> </ul>	
<u>Access to services</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>70% of the clients who took part in our survey said they agreed or agreed strongly that they feel more confident about accessing services when they need to as a result of the project</li> <li>This suggests that around 312 (70% of 445) elderly and disabled people have access to services and information leading to an improvement to their social wellbeing and quality of life</li> </ul>	
<u>Conclusion</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The target for this indicator has not been achieved</li> </ul>	

## **Outcome 2**

Project outcome 2 states:

**Elderly and disabled people will have improved self-confidence to attend services resulting in greater independent living.**

The tables below show the three indicators for this outcome, the target for each indicator and what has been delivered to-date in relation to each one.

<b>Indicator 2(a)</b>	Elderly and disabled people will report having more self-confidence and esteem by attending events resulting in greater independent living
<b>Target 2(a)</b>	100 people each year
<b>Delivery of 2(a)</b>	
<u>Estimate</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project engages with something like 216 elderly and disabled people each year</li> </ul>	
<u>Independent living</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 53% of the clients who took part in our survey said they agreed or agreed strongly that they feel more confident about their ability to continue living at home as a result of the project</li> <li>• This suggest that around 114 (53% of 216) elderly and disabled people per year feel more self-confident about independent living</li> </ul>	
<u>Conclusion</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The target for this indicator has been exceeded (by more than 10%)</li> </ul>	

<b>Indicator 2(b)</b>	Rurally isolated people will report that they have improved their health and wellbeing by attending social/community activities and improve their skills
<b>Target 2(b)</b>	100 people each year
<b>Delivery of 2(b)</b>	
<u>Estimate</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project engages with something like 216 elderly and disabled people each year</li> </ul>	
<u>Physical health</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 49% of the clients who took part in our survey said they agreed or agreed strongly that their physical health had improved as a result of the project</li> <li>• This suggests that around 106 (49% of 216) elderly and disabled people per year feel their physical health has improved</li> </ul>	
<u>Mental health</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 52% of the clients who took part in our survey said they agreed or agreed strongly that their mental health had improved as a result of the project</li> <li>• This means that around 112 (52% of 216) elderly and disabled people per year feel their mental health has improved</li> </ul>	
<u>Conclusion</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The target for this indicator has been exceeded (by more than 10%)</li> </ul>	

<b>Indicator 2(c)</b>	Elderly and disabled people will report that they are more confident about independent living having access to other support services
<b>Target 2(c)</b>	1,000 by the end of the project
<b>Delivery of 2(c)</b>	
<u>Estimate</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project has engaged with around 445 different elderly and disabled people to-date</li> </ul>	
<u>Access to services</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>70% of the clients who took part in our survey said they agreed or agreed strongly that they feel more confident about their ability to continue living at home as a result of the project</li> <li>This suggests that around 312 (70% of 417) elderly and disabled people to-date feel more self-confident about independent living</li> </ul>	
<u>Conclusion</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The target for this indicator has not been achieved</li> </ul>	

### **Outcome 3**

Project outcome 3 states:

**Residents will have improved health and wellbeing through their participation in social events /activities.**

The tables below show the three indicators for this outcome, the target for each indicator and what has been delivered to-date in relation to each one.

<b>Indicator 3(a)</b>	All residents will be engaged more with their local community by accessing new activities and groups
<b>Target 3(a)</b>	12 new activities/groups by end of year 3
<b>Delivery of 3(a)</b>	
<u>New activities/groups</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The VAs have introduced 22 new activities/groups to-date and the Shedmaster has introduced a further two new activities/groups (see Appendix H for a complete list.)</li> </ul>	
<u>Conclusion</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It's not clear how many of the new activities/groups were introduced by the end of year 3 (30 September 2018), but it seems likely that the target of 12 new activities/groups by that date was met – and it has been exceeded to a considerable degree since then</li> </ul>	

<b>Indicator 3(b)</b>	All residents will feel that they are more involved in their community and understand better the challenges facing their community
<b>Target 3(b)</b>	150 people each year
<b>Delivery of 3(b)</b>	
<u>Estimate</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project engages with something like 257 people (all demographic groups) each year</li> </ul>	
<u>Community involvement</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>85% of the clients who took part in our survey said they agreed or agreed strongly that they feel more involved in the local community as a result of the project as a result of the project</li> <li>This means that around 218 (85% of 257) people per year feel more involved in the community</li> </ul>	
<u>Conclusion</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The target for this indicator has been exceeded (by nearly 50%)</li> </ul>	

<b>Indicator 3(c)</b>	All residents will have increased health and wellbeing and a greater sense of citizenship having participated in activities and events
<b>Target 3(c)</b>	1,000 people by the end of the project
<b>Delivery of 3(c)</b>	
<u>Estimate</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project has engaged with around 530 different people to-date</li> </ul>	
<u>Physical health</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>49% of the clients who took part in our survey said they agreed or agreed strongly that their physical health had improved as a result of the project</li> <li>This suggests that 260 (49% of 530) people's physical health has improved to-date</li> </ul>	
<u>Mental health</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>52% of the clients who took part in our survey said they agreed or agreed strongly that their mental health had improved as a result of the project</li> <li>This suggests that 276 (52% of 530) people's mental health has improved to-date</li> </ul>	
<u>Happiness</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>72% of the clients who took part in our survey said they agreed or agreed strongly that their mental health had improved as a result of the project</li> <li>This suggests that 382 (72% of 530) people are happier to-date</li> </ul>	
<u>Conclusion</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This target has not yet been achieved and does not appear likely to be met by the end of the project</li> </ul>	

## Appendix F: Suggestions for Improving Services (Client Responses)

In our client survey, we asked people: Are there any ways in which the Northern Fells Group could improve the services it already delivers? A complete list of their verbatim responses is provided below.

- Access to Millhouse village hall carpet in entrance is unsuitable for wheel chair users (coir matting)
- Alter days and times occasionally for people who work
- Ballroom dancing classes
- Be less cliquey
- Better Web site
- Dementia awareness. Extending benefits advice
- Enhance the LAH scheme - so important for carers - to enable them to go out.
- Equip the agents with new cars - this is a rural community – transport is essential
- Have open sessions perhaps to show what happens, without feeling you are making a commitment to be a regular member of a group.
- If a mileage charge were charged to those with funds there would be more money available to improve services - good people of value to the community!
- Liven up the AGM and formal meetings. Perhaps combine with a fund-raising cheese and wine evening for example.
- make people more aware of their services
- More cultural activities offered.
- More of them!
- More outings
- More social time
- NFG offer an excellent service and cover so many different aspects from drop-ins to walks to lend-a-hand. What is needed most are more volunteers as demands for their services are only increasing as people are more aware of the services.
- Not sure. Eyesight problems mean I am just beginning to explore what NFG help might be available,
- Only to make new people aware of the organization.
- Other areas could learn from there organised ways, support and services
- Probably, given more funding.
- Produce a newsletter of what's going on, other than N. Fells activities. (Combine with parish newsletter???)
- secure more funding for Men-in-Sheds to buy needed equipment
- Sometimes the system feels more centred on Caldbeck than in other areas. Also the Lend a Hand Group could do with more 'team spirit'. Most tasks require just a single volunteer and I wonder if people would feel better motivated if they felt more part of a team.
- The agents could work more hours and then offer more events.
- The arts and craft sessions are excellent and more of them would be very good

## Appendix G: Suggestions for New Services (Client Responses)

In our client survey, we asked people: Are there any new services you think the Northern Fells Group should deliver (that it does not already deliver)? A complete list of their verbatim responses is provided below.

- A few more evening keep fit sessions for the more able perhaps.
- Alternative technology workshops, phone co-op
- Babysitting for young couples who have no family living near!
- Ballroom dancing classes
- Cinema trips?
- Community arts project - maybe in liaison with primary schools?
- Flexible use of the minibus? If booked for hospital visit, to take a.m. and collect p.m., could it also take someone to the Archives Office for some hours?? Or tie in with other a.m./p.m. bookings? Senior cinema? Flexible, in that if not booked, secondary use would not happen.
- If there is cookery for men why not DIY skills for women?
- Internet and phone services need further improvement in this area
- Knit and Natter group
- Litter picking walks.
- More activities for middle aged rather than the elderly
- More singing for fun in the afternoons
- Not that I can think of at present, unless they can magic up a regular bus service in the area
- Perhaps some more active exercise groups to encourage a younger clientele.
- Pilates
- Singing for pleasure for those less confident
- Taxi service, not minibus more flexible
- Teenagers - clubs, events
- The current range is very good and there must be questions about sustainability if NFG tried to expand further. But if there was scope it might be good to support a book-reading group in the Caldbeck-Hesket area (the only one I know of is based around Rosley)
- Wheel chair use and driver
- Work with schools and older folk to promote memories and time past and now

## Appendix H: New Groups/Activities up to December 2019

### Village Agents Project

- Art and crafts group<sup>22</sup>
- Arts for all group
- Book Lovers Club
- Bulk septic tank emptying consortium
- C.R.A.F.T. Club (Can't Remember A Flipping Thing)<sup>23</sup>
- Caldbeck memory group
- Falls prevention clinics
- Gentle exercise classes (2 new classes at 2 new venues)
- Guitar class
- Hearing Aid checks<sup>24</sup>
- IT and iPad training for older people
- Italian wine tasting and cookery session
- Language conversation groups (French, Spanish and Italian)
- Line dancing
- Lino and Gelli printing
- Making Memories Workshop<sup>25</sup>
- New drop-in
- Phone a Friend Scheme<sup>26</sup>
- Spinning group
- Strength and Balance Taster Sessions (now developed in to a 16-week course)
- Theatre by the Lake trips
- Ukulele group

### Men-in-Sheds Project

- Men-in-the-pub
- Men-on-trips

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<sup>22</sup> Following on from a workshop funded by the Wordsworth Trust.

<sup>23</sup> Memory group for people with dementia and their carers, but open to all.

<sup>24</sup> These were previously run by Caritas Care (one of NFG's main partners). Caritas had to cancel the service due to a lack of funding. NFG has fundraised to pay for the continuation of the service.

<sup>25</sup> 4 sessions with Sue Allan from the Wordsworth Trust. The group is now engaged in producing a major exhibition which will be showcased in venues across the area and Cumbria, including The Wordsworth Centre in Ambleside.

<sup>26</sup> Initiative set up in response to "The Beast from the East" where in bad weather vulnerable residents are contacted at least once a day to ensure their well-being.