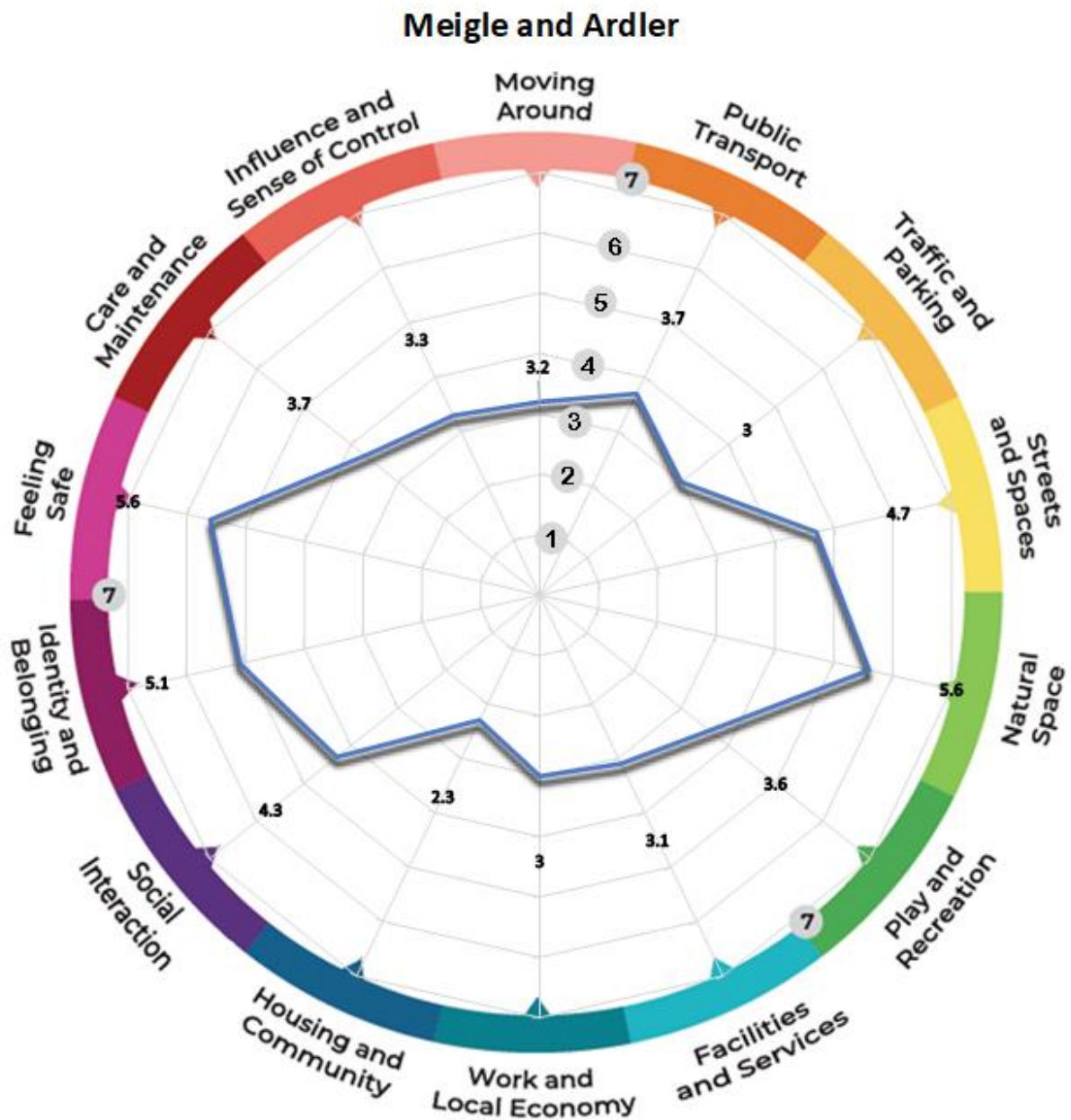


Community Council: Meigle and Ardler

The Meigle and Ardler Community Council area is situated in eastern Perthshire along the border with Angus Council. It is centred around the settlements Meigle and Ardler, which are located between Forfar and Coupar Angus. These are the only designated settlements in the Local Development Plan in this area. There were 25 respondents from the Meigle and Ardler during the Big Place Conversation, with 21 participating in scoring the Place Standard topics shown below. The summary feedback should be read alongside the [Meigle and Ardler Community Action Plan \(2021-2026\)](#) for further context.



Moving Around

Most respondents agree that active travel is not a feasible mode of transport across the rural area given the distance between settlements. It is important for recreation and the health benefits gained, but the quality and safety of routes are key concerns.

Active travel feels dangerous due to speeding vehicle and the consistent presence of large industrial vehicles. This is the case on main roads to key destinations such as Coupar Angus (A94) and Alyth (B954), as well as on back roads such as the route connecting Meigle and Ardler.

Moving around in villages is also reportedly difficult, particularly for the elderly which account for a large portion of the population. This demographic experiences more difficulty walking due to mobility issues and common issues such as narrow pavements and high kerbs create barriers to moving around easily. More outdoor seating to provide resting places was suggested, but it is noted that gaining permission to install street furniture can be difficult and prohibitive.

Residents recommend expanding both 20mph and 40mph zones, as well as installation of cycle-friendly signage, to encourage more active travel. It was also suggested that core paths could be better utilised by enhancing to create a good quality off-road active travel network.

Public Transport

Positive feedback was limited and focused on the benefit of having good access to train services in Dundee, which are well-used used for travel outside Perth and Kinross.

Overall, respondents agree bus services in the area are poor. Bus stops can be difficult to access, there are long journey times to key destinations, evening services are limited, and timetables do not accommodate commuters.

Some residents are required to walk over a mile to access the nearest bus stop. Furthermore, paths can be poorly lit and in poor condition, causing safety concerns that discourage people from using buses at night.

The spread of rural settlements requires buses to take long, in-direct routes to key locations. It reportedly takes 1.5 hours on bus to Perth from Meigle, but less than half the time to drive directly.

These issues make it difficult to access essential services by public transport provision, particularly healthcare services located in Alyth and Blairgowrie. Respondents suggest better co-ordination between public transport and healthcare providers is required if there is to be growth in the area. In general, connectivity to key facilities and services needs improved, with Coupar Angus and Forfar among the areas mentioned.

Traffic & Parking

Parking was identified as a key issue in the area, particularly in Meigle. This is largely due a lack of formal parking spaces at key locations, such as near bus stop used for accessing the main services (e.g. at the square). This leads to on-street parking which causes congestion and can restrict access for some larger vehicles. This is also an issue with coaches, as there are no dedicated parking spaces for coaches at tourist attractions in the area.

Suggestions to improve parking include better signposting to existing carpark, developing new car parks and parking spaces, as well as adopting the private road around the square so formal parking spaces can be instated.

Traffic is an issue in the area mainly due to speeding and the consistent presence of large industrial vehicles on the small country roads. There is significant concern that the Cross Tay Link Road will increase pressure on the existing road network and make these issues worse. It was suggested that if further growth is expected that a bypass around Meigle should be considered. In the short term, more traffic calming measures and enforcement was also recommended.

Streets, Squares & Buildings

Most streets and buildings are considered to look good, although some may be old and require maintenance. There are several buildings and spaces in the area which are important to its character, such as the Village Hall and Church.

The issue of vacant and derelict sites in the area was raised, with suggestions to see these regenerated and brought back into use. Belmont House was the main site raised. It was noted that the site is owned by Dundee City Council and respondents suggest the two local authorities should collaborate to find a solution.

Natural Spaces

The area benefits from having good access to natural spaces. This is due to the rural location in the countryside, as well as some good urban greenspaces in Meigle. There are several parks that provide a range of activities, from sport to gardening. It was noted that local volunteers are integral to maintaining these sites.

Some sites, such as the Belmont Woods, could be improved to make them more accessible and increase their use. Suggestions include upgrading walking routes and provision of outdoor furniture. It was noted that the balance between greenspaces for nature and people needs to be carefully considered in their design so there are benefits for both biodiversity and local communities.

Play & Recreation

Most respondents agree that the provision of play and recreation opportunities is inadequate, particularly for young people. Feedback suggests there are no opportunities for kids older than eight and that the area would benefit greatly from a better-quality play park that included a multi-use games area or skatepark.

There are some sport opportunities, but since the football team has folded the only formal opportunity is cricket which is limited in appeal. It was suggested that goal posts should be installed at the park to provide a better-quality space to play football.

There are little to no indoor play and recreation opportunities. If a new, modernised recreation centre or youth hub is not feasible, then it was suggested that the Village Hall should be upgraded and utilised for this purpose.

There are some opportunities for adults, including music and exercise classes, but these are not well publicised. A community noticeboard or online resource should be developed to help advertise opportunities.

Facilities & Services

Given the rural nature of the area, access to facilities and services is limited and requires travelling outside the local area. The main destinations travelled to for these are Forfar, Dundee

and Blairgowrie. As previously discussed, public transport issues create additional barriers to accessing services.

Residents feel there are enough facilities in Meigle to service a small village but have express concerns regarding the ability of these to cope with more growth. Some respondents welcome some new development to attract new facilities and services, as long as this does not diminish the rural village character.

Healthcare provision is a key issue, with no access to GPs or pharmacies in the immediate area. Given the ageing population, it was suggested that further research into medical and welfare needs should be undertaken.

In the short-term, the community would like to see more mobile services coming into the area, such as banking or pharmacy. It is important that the scheduling and routes are well-planned, so more can utilise them.

Work & Local Economy

There are limited work and volunteering opportunities in the area, with only a few small-scale businesses in Meigle and some agricultural or trades work. Most people in the community are either retired or commute to Dundee, Perth or Forfar for work. The lack of opportunities is a leading cause of young people moving out of the area.

Besides public transport, access to wrap-around childcare is another key barrier to employment in the area. Blairgowrie and Alyth are the closest options for these.

Housing & Community

There is a mixed response to whether housing provision meets the community's needs. Several residents feel that housing meets the needs of the community. However, issues have been raised around housing mix and affordability.

There is reportedly a poor mix of housing when it comes to both affordability, size and tenure. Most properties are privately owned and rental opportunities are limited. There is a shortage of flats and bungalows, which affects both young people looking to move independently as well as elderly looking to downsize.

Housing prices are expensive in the area and there are concerns that people moving here to retire are pricing out locals, especially young people, from buying property. There is limited social housing and this is reportedly prioritised for people from outside the area.

It is important that these issues are addressed without creating unsustainable growth and losing the rural village feel that is essential to the character of the area. There are mixed views in the community around whether more development should be encouraged. Some believe this could kickstart housing prices and attract new services, while many residents challenge housing proposals to prevent unsustainable growth. It was suggested that a more cohesive, collaborative approach to planning development is needed.

Social Interaction

The consensus is that there are adequate opportunities for socialising in the area. This is thanks to local cafes and pubs, as well as community groups who organise clubs and events. These help with the integration of newcomers and to create a cohesive community feeling.

It was noted that the area lacks a community hub or indoor drop-in that provide free opportunities. It was suggested existing spaces, such as the Village Hall, could be better utilised for this.

Identity & Belonging

Respondents generally feel proud to live in Meigle, largely due to local heritage and community spirit. While most agree the community is friendly and welcoming, some feedback suggests community cohesiveness could be improved between long-standing residents and newcomers. There is also noted to be a perceivable lack of intergenerational mixing. There are community groups actively working to create events and other opportunities that help create a cohesive community.

Feeling Safe

Residents generally feel safe in the area, with traffic being the main safety concern. There are several comments regarding the welfare of elderly residents living alone, however no incidents of crime reported.

There is some concern regarding people moving to the area under housing association schemes, with comments indicating the social housing estate in Meigle is an anti-social behaviour hotspot.

Isolation in emergency situations, such as floodings or power disruptions, was also raised due to the rural location. It was suggested that community resilience could be improved by having a Resilience Plan and Rapid Response Team. The area is prone to flooding and although there are early flood warning systems and sandbags available to residents, more could be done to prepare the community for future flood events.

Care & Maintenance

Care and maintenance could be improved in the area. The primary concern is for pavements and core paths, as issues such as uneven or broken pavement commonly create barriers to moving around. Similarly, potholes in the road are another common concern and are being attributed to the presence of HGVs.

Several comments suggest PKC need to improve the standard of maintenance of public spaces in the area, particularly with grass cutting, litter picking, street cleaning and pothole repairs. If PKC is unable to maintain to a better standard, they should work to support local community groups to do so.

Influence & Sense of Control

There is an active Community Council and Community Development Trust in the area that provide opportunities for residents to get involved and have their say in the future of the community. Some respondents have expressed concerns around whether these groups are democratically elected and if they represent the interests of the entire community, or just a select few.

Responses criticise PKC for poor communication and accountability. The feedback suggests that the community feels PKC has a city-centric focus on Perth and that the development of rural Perth and Kinross needs to be planned cohesively to prevent sporadic development.