




# CV-19 Impact on rural communities

DEFRA RISF 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020

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# Summary

- Some practical issues not recently discussed by RISF
- Lessons from CV-19 that could assist with action on Net-Zero
- Young people – the oft-forgotten part of the rural community
- Ways forward working with rural civil society
- *(No mention of Village Halls on this occasion!)*

A stylized white icon on a blue background depicting three human figures of varying sizes, representing a family or community.

## Practical issues highlighted by CV-19

- Health and social care workforce
- Vulnerability of 'anchor' citizens, - may be a longer-term issue than it appears
- Value of local and community owned services, but dominance of national supply chains
- Rural food poverty and access
- Digital connectivity - opportunities and shortcomings
- School transport – yet to be worked through
- Very local fundraising, discretionary LA funding and major event fundraising badly affected

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## The link to action on net-zero

- Opportunities highlighted by CV-19
  - Local economies, supply chains and positive community engagement
  - Voluntary action focused on place – distinct nature of rural civil society
  - Remote working / reduced travel
  - Wellbeing vs. consumption
- Issues arising
  - Escape to the country – affordable housing
  - Distancing on public transport
  - Community 'public goods' excluded from agri-environment / ELMS policy focus
  - LEADER / CLLD post-EU

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## Young people

- Key life transition points – rural young people have more and these have been disrupted
- Loneliness and absence / loss of non-family trusted adult contact
- Education further set back by limited connectivity for some rural areas
- Longer term wellbeing / mental health consequences
- Long term impacts amongst several cohorts may need research

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## Ways forward working with rural civil society

1. Central command-and-control does not address the fine grain of rural areas,
2. Strong, informal rural civil society can deliver multiple long-term benefits, from achieving net-zero to supporting social care,
3. Rural areas need a next generation of young people and the next generation need life opportunities,
4. Communities require support and back-up between crises to enable them to have capacity when the next crisis comes.



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