



RSN working with **nalc** in support of Rural Market Towns

## Minutes of the RMTG meeting

Online via Zoom

16:30–18:00, Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023

- Welcome from Graham Biggs MBE, Chief Executive and David Inman, Corporate Director.**  
Graham introduced Kerry Booth to the group, she will be taking on the role of Chief Executive of the RSN from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 when Graham stands aside from the role.
- [Notes from the previous RMTG meeting.](#)**  
Held on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022.
- Updating our Services for RMTG in 2023.**  
David Inman provided an update to the RMTG services for 2023 which included links from the RSN website to individual town websites. A full list of services provided to the RMTG is available at this link. <https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/rural-market-towns-group/rmtg-service-agreement.pdf>
- Fair Funding and Local Government Finance Settlement**  
Fair Funding presentation by Kerry Booth, Chief Executive Designate RSN and verbal report on the Local Government Finance Settlement by Graham Biggs.  
The slides are available at this link:  
<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/images/meetings/RMTG/2023/27.03.23/RMTG-Fair-Funding.pdf>

The presentation highlighted the wider work of the Rural Services Network and its campaign for fair funding for rural areas. It included key figures such as:

- Urban areas get 38% more in Government Funded Spending Power than rural areas
- Rural Residents pay on average £110 per head more in Council Tax than their urban counterparts

The presentation detailed the impact of that unfair funding on the availability of Councils to provide discretionary services, from smaller budgets, and the ultimate negative impact on rural communities.

Graham updated the group on the Local Government Finance Settlement, the provisional settlement was released in December, and after some key campaigning from rural MP's, aided by information and analysis provided by the RSN, the Final Settlement published in February included an additional £10Million pounds for the Rural Services Delivery Grant

### Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

Rural Services Network

PO Box 101, Craven Arms, SY7 7AL

Tel: 01822 851370

[www.rsnonline.org.uk](http://www.rsnonline.org.uk) email: [events@sparse.gov.uk](mailto:events@sparse.gov.uk) twitter: [@rsnonline](https://twitter.com/rsnonline)

taking its total to £95Million for 2023-2024 which is allocated to the most sparsely populated Principal Councils.

There followed a discussion with delegates about the fair funding campaign, and the impact on rural towns and town councils as the Principal local authorities cut back even further on the delivery of certain discretionary services.

**5. Vulnerability Sounding Boards – Young People Survey**

There are two Sounding Boards for the RMTG members to join, one focusing on Young People and one on Older People. Councils can nominate a Member to be on either or both the Sounding Boards and they will be used for surveys and feedback on the key issues facing these particular groups.

The first survey has been sent to representatives on the Young People Sounding Board for completion.

**6. Cost of Living Survey**

The RSN is jointly running a cost-of-living survey with the Rural Issues Group of the Citizens Advice Service. The survey has over 6000 responses so far and closes on 31<sup>st</sup> March. Thank you to all that have shared the survey with their communities to respond. <https://www.rsonline.org.uk/final-push-to-share-your-views-on-cost-of-living>

**7. Rural Services “Manifesto”**

The RSN is currently developing a document which sets out its ‘asks’ of Government, ahead of the likely general election. This is based on our Revitalising Rural Campaign but will be updated and target the main political parties encouraging them to add policies that will support rural areas in their own election manifestos.

**8. Rural England CIC Survey**

Rural England CIC is an independent research organisation and they are doing work exploring how the cost of living crisis has impacted the trading position of market towns. In due course, there may be specific research as part of this project that the RMTG can influence and participate in, and information will be shared with the group when ready.

**9. Rural Homelessness Final Report**

The RSN was part of a coalition that commissioned research into rural homelessness and the report was recently published, featuring on the BBC and also Sky News. You can read more at this link:

<https://www.rsonline.org.uk/chronic-increase-of-hidden-homelessness-in-the-countryside-fuelled-by-cost-of-living-crisis-ground-breaking-report-shows>

**RMTG Meeting Schedule 2023**

Friday, 17 February 2023	14.00-15.00	RMTG Officer Steering Group meeting
Friday, 17 March 2023	10.30-12.00	RMTG Clerks Advisory Panel meeting
Monday, 27 March 2023	16.30-18.00	RMTG meeting
Tuesday, 1 August 2023	16.00-17.00	RMTG - Older People Sounding Board meeting
Thursday, 3 August 2023	16.00-17.00	RMTG - Young People Sounding Board meeting
Thursday, 28 Sept 2023	14.00-15.00	RMTG Officer Steering Group meeting
Tuesday, 10 Oct 2023	16.30-18.00	RMTG meeting

**Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers**

**Rural Services Network**

PO Box 101, Craven Arms, SY7 7AL

Tel: 01822 851370

[www.rsonline.org.uk](http://www.rsonline.org.uk) email: [events@sparse.gov.uk](mailto:events@sparse.gov.uk) twitter: [@rsonline](https://twitter.com/rsonline)