



**Minutes for the Rural Services Partnership
Vulnerability Group Online via Zoom
Tuesday 7th December 2022
11am-12:30pm**

Present:

Kerry Booth (Chief Executive Designate, Rural Services Network) (KB)
Rhianon Deamer (VCMA Project Administrator, Wales & West Utilities)(RD)
Nik Harwood (Chief Executive, Young Somerset & Chair/Director RSP) (NH)
David Inman (Corporate Director of Rural Services Network & Director RSP) (DI)
Sarah Lewis (Project Manager, UK Youth) (SL)
Amanda Phillips (Priority Services Partnership & Engagement Lead, United Utilities) (AP)
Sophie Shorney (Vulnerability & CO Allowance Manager (Wales & West Utilities) (SS)
Nadine Trout (Assistant Chief Executive, Rural Services Network) (NT)
Sydney Whiteside (Grants Officer, UK Youth) (SW)

Bethan Aldridge (minute-taker) (BA)

Speakers:

Graham Biggs MBE (Chief Executive, Rural Services Network & Company Secretary RSP) (GB)
Nick Hubbard (RIG Research Lead, CA Sedgemoor) (NHu)

The Chair, Nik Harwood, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

John Birtwistle (RSP Director, representing First Group)
Charlotte Clifford (Project Officer, UK Youth)
Holly Hendrie (Project Officer, UK Youth)
Beth Kennedy (CS Partnership Manager, Anglian Water)
Sarah Hulme (Methodist Church)
Gavin Jones (Head of Communications & External Affairs, Hastoe Housing Association)
Jane Mordue (Chair, Citizens Advice Rural Issues Group)
David Roe, Partnership & Delivery Manager, CSW Group)
Jessica Sansom (Project Officer, UK Youth)
Kara Webster (Project Officer, UK Youth)

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (See [link to Minutes and Papers](#))

Minutes of the previous meeting 25.04.22 were accepted as a true record.

3. Matters arising were as follows:

None were raised.

4. Rural Cost of Living Crisis ([Link to Presentation](#))

Presentation given by Graham Biggs MBE (Chief Executive, Rural Services Network & Company Secretary RSP)

5. Update from the Rural Issues Group, Citizens Advice ([Link to notes](#))

Update given by Nick Hubbard, Research & Campaigns

6. General Discussion

KB started off the discussion noting that Rural Services Network was very happy to promote Partner projects.

SS commented that Wales & West Utilities has funding for projects to support communities in the areas they cover through their Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA). To find out more please click on the link: [Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance \(www.utilities.co.uk\)](http://www.utilities.co.uk)

KB informed the meeting that the RSN Revitalising Campaign has evolved so that the priority areas focus on key areas for RSN members. This will enable a more concise number of calls on Government with the main focus being Fair Funding for Rural Areas, with priority areas of Rural Affordable Housing, Rural Economy, Rural Transport, and Rural Health & Care. Cross cutting themes of Rural Net Zero, Rural Connectivity and Rural Planning underpin these areas.

SL noted that UK Youth works with 99 different organisations across the UK and they are worried about the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis on the funding for these organisations and their ability to continue providing support to young people in rural areas. SL hoped that through partnership working/discussion with the RSP may be able to help create awareness on/explore how to support these organisations. GB agreed that it was important to get the message back to policy makers to reflect on the impact of funding/decisions and how important to the fabric of rural communities these youth organisations are.

7. Any Other Business

No items were brought forward.

8. Close

NH thanked everyone for attending the meeting today which closed at 12:10pm.