

## **RSP & RSN AGM MEETING - 2 December 2024**

**Chair: Councillor Roger Phillips, Rural Services Network**

**Hosted: Online via Zoom**

**Date: Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024**

**Time: 11.00-12.00**

### **Attendance:**

Cllr Roger Phillips	Rural Services Network
Nik Harwood	Young Somerset
Kerry Booth	Rural Services Network
Cllr Gale Waller	Rutland County Council
Cllr Glen Sanderson	Northumberland County Council
Cllr John Shuttleworth	Durham County Council
Cllr Julia Huffer	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Mark Whittington	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Peter Thornton	Westmorland and Furness Council
Ian Cass	The Forum of Private Business
Lois Dale	Shropshire Council
Nora Corkery	Community Council of Devon (Devon Communities Together)
Stacey Otter	Anglian Water
Tim Parry	Connecting Communities in Berkshire (CCB)
Tracey Parry	Braintree District Council
Andrea Adams	Essex County Fire & Rescue Service
Rev. Richard Kirlew	Agricultural Chaplains Association
Nadine Trout	Rural Services Network
Natalie Birch	Rural Services Network

### **1. Welcome to the Joint AGM by Cllr Roger Phillips, Chair of RSN**

### **2. Apologies**

Cllr Rob Waltham	North Lincolnshire Council
Fatima De Abreu	Local Government Association
Kayleigh Wainwright	UK Youth
Cllr Philip Atkins	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Sarah Pugh	West Suffolk Council
Rob Weaver	Cotswold District Council
Gary Powell	Teignbridge District Council
Cllr James Moriarty	Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council
Cllr John Teye	North Norfolk District Council
Cllr Robert Heseltine	North Yorkshire Council
Amanda Wragg	Gloucestershire Rural Community Council
Cllr Gordon Czapiewski	Mid Devon District Council
Cllr Michael Gorman	Cheshire East Council
Cllr Owen Bierley	West Lindsey District Council
Cllr Susan Prochak	Rother District Council
Rita Lawson	Tees Valley Rural Action

### 3. Rural Services Partnership AGM by Nik Harwood, Chair of RSP

- a) **Members received the minutes of the AGM held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 [Attachment 1](#)**

**Decision**

Members agreed the minutes of the previous meeting.

- b) Nik Harwood RSP Chair advised at their meeting of 16 October 2024, the directors of the RSP approved the accounts for 2023/24 and agreed the reappointment of Tax Assist Ludlow as the Company's Tax Accountants.

- c) **To note the Company Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 [Attachment 2](#)**

**Decision**

Members received the Company Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024.

- d) **Re-appointment TaxAssist of Ludlow as the Company's Tax Accountants.**

**Decision**

Members noted the reappointment by RSP Directors of TaxAssist of Ludlow as the Company's Tax Accountants.

- e) **Appointment of Directors:**

Kerry Booth stated that there had been no nominations or notices of resignations received. Given this she asked colleagues to consider re-appointment of all existing Directors until the next AGM, as follows

**Existing Directors are:**

Kerry Booth (ex officio Director as Chief Executive - see Article 36(b))

Cllr Roger Phillips (RSN Chair)

Martin Collett (Housing)

Nik Harwood (Youth)

Members were invited to submit any interest in the vacant positions to the Chief Executive Kerry Booth.

**Decision:**

It was agreed that all the existing Directors be re-appointed and Cllr Roger Phillips continue as Chair

- f) **Small Break during which RSP Directors will appoint the Chair**

Mr Harwood temporarily left the meeting so that members could consider the Chairmanship of the RSP.

Nominations were invited. Kerry Booth nominated Mr Harwood to be re-appointed as Chair. This nomination was seconded by Cllr Roger Phillips.

**Decision:**

Nik Harwood to be re-appointed as Chair of the Rural Services Partnership.

### 4. Rural Services Network AGM Chaired by Kerry Booth, Chief Executive RSN

- a) **Appointment of Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Members of the Executive.**

<b>RSN Executive Role</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Chair	Cllr	Roger	Phillips	Herefordshire County
Deputy Chair	Cllr	Peter	Thornton	Westmorland and Furness Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr	Robert	Heseltine	North Yorkshire County Council
Vice Chair	Cllr	Robert	Waltham MBE	North Lincolnshire Council
Vice Chair	Cllr	Philip	Atkins OBE	Staffordshire County Council
Vice Chair	Cllr	Cecilia	Motley	Shropshire Council
Vice Chair	Cllr	Trevor	Thorne	Northumberland County Council
Vice Chair	Cllr	Adam	Paynter	Cornwall Council
Vice Chair	Cllr	Sarah	Pugh	West Suffolk Council
Vice Chair	Cllr	Gale	Waller	Rutland Council
Vice Chair	Cllr	Mark	Whittington	Lincolnshire County Council South Kesteven District Council

In addition, there are also other members of the Executive that represent the Rural Services Partnership (See Item 3e)

#### **Decision**

- Members agreed the Executive be nominated en-block.
- Cllr John Shuttleworth proposed that Cllr Phillips continue as Chair of the Executive. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Julia Huffer and agreed.

#### **b) Report of the RSN Executive:**

- (1) 2024/25 Budget Report [Attachment 3](#)
- (2) 2024/25 Estimates [Attachment 4](#)

#### **Decision**

The following recommendations were agreed:

- That the Revised 2024/25 budget report be noted.
- That SPARSE and Rural Assembly membership fees and all Rural Services Partnership Groups membership fees should increase by 5% for 2025/26.
- That the Draft Estimates/Budget for 2025/26 be approved.
- That in accordance with current practice the RSN Executive be authorised to approve in year variations to the Budgets.

#### **c) Amendments to the Constitution [Attachment 5](#)**

#### **Decision**

Members approved the amendments to the Constitution.

#### **Joint AGM Items:**

#### **1. Future on-line meeting dates and seminars 2024/25 [Attachment 6](#)**

#### **Decision**

Members approved the online meeting dates and seminars for 2024/25

#### **2. Annual Review of RSN Work including RSP, RMTG and RVSG, and RHCA work**

#### **[Attachment 7](#)**

To support the report Kerry Booth made a presentation sharing key highlights for 2024, the presentation can be accessed [here](#). Useful links referred to in the presentation are as follows:

**Rural Services Network Fair Funding Campaign**  
<https://www.rsonline.org.uk/page/rural-fair-funding>

**RSN Membership**  
<https://www.rsonline.org.uk/page/rsn-membership>

**RSN Delivering for Rural Campaign**  
<https://www.rsonline.org.uk/winning-the-rural-vote>

**Rural Services APPG**  
<https://www.rsonline.org.uk/inaugural-meeting-of-the-appg-for-rural-services-a-promising-start-for-rural-communities>

**Reigniting Rural Futures Report – Rural Economy: A sleeping giant worth £19bn**  
<https://www.rsonline.org.uk/rural-economy-a-sleeping-giant-worth-19-billion>

**RSN Rural Lens Reviews**  
<https://www.rsonline.org.uk/tag/rural-lens>

### **Decision**

Members noted the report.

### **3. Discussion with Member organisations about Key Challenges Facing Rural Services Delivery in 2024/25**

Kerry Booth made a presentation on the 2025/26 Local Government Finance Policy Statement. The presentation can be accessed [here](#). Useful links referred to in the presentation are as follows:

Rural Services Network Fair Funding Campaign  
<https://www.rsonline.org.uk/page/rural-fair-funding>

Local government finance policy statement 2025 to 2026  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-finance-policy-statement-2025-to-2026/local-government-finance-policy-statement-2025-to-2026>

RSN Initial response to Government Finance Statement  
<https://rsonline.org.uk/response-to-local-government-finance-statement>

RSN Letter to Rt Hon Jim McMahon MP  
<https://rsonline.org.uk/rural-local-authorities-unite-to-demand-fair-funding-in-upcoming-local-government-finance-settlement>

### **4. Any Other Business**

Cllr Julia Huffer introduced her concerns over the development of solar farms in the countryside, and the impact on agricultural land. She also raised concerns over the lack of benefit for local residents from these solar farms. Richard Kirlew echoed some of her points.

Richard Kirlew also highlighted some work done by the Church of England into deprivation in rural communities.

Cllr Thornton raised the issue of the RSN being a cross party group and the need to convince political leaders of the current situation in rural communities and their needs.

Cllr Whittington shared concerns regarding rural deprivation providing examples from his local

authority area.

The meeting closed at 12:15pm