

Notes of RSN AGM Meeting

21 November 2016

Title: RSN AGM

Date: 21 November 2016

Venue: City of Westminster Archives Centre, London

AGM membership of the Rural Services Network

1. Apologies for absence

Members noted apologies. Graham thanked attendees and welcomed speakers.

2. Minutes

The minutes from the previous AGM meetings were noted and approved.

3. Appointment of Chair for the forthcoming year

Members agreed that the Chairman should continue for the forthcoming year.

4. Vice Chair for ensuing year

Members noted the list of current vice-Chairs, and agreed that those currently in the roles should continue.

5. Election of First vice-Chair

Members agreed that Cllr Robert Heseltine should continue in his current role.

6. Rural Assembly Sub SIG

Members agreed that the Sub SIG chairmanship should remain as it is currently with the Chairman leading both Sparse Rural and the Rural Assembly.

7. Future Directions

Members noted the report of the RSN executive which gave an overview of challenges over the next 5 years, looking at issues around representing rural areas and sustaining the organisation. Members discussed current contributions, a new cycle of meetings and new future services.

The group discussed possible outcomes further to Brexit and agreed that rural areas would need to be joined up in their thinking if they were to have a strong voice to Government. The range of work required of the RSN would not reach its full potential without an increase in the subscription and all rural areas being involved in the Group. In future, the Group would levy a charge – as an investment in rural areas - instead of asking for a subscription. The revised charge was agreed to be implemented in April 2017 rather than 2018 as stated in the report.

Additionally members decided as follows:-

(a) **Public Sector Finances**

To seek to cover (through Sparse Rural) all public sector financial matters – comparing rural and urban settlements. Detailed work on seeking to improve settlement could, however, only be done on the Local Government settlement. If representation on other settlements were to be attempted, additional resource to fund that work would have to be achieved.

(b) **Parliamentary Activity**

As well as continuing The Rural Fair Share Group, the RSN would seek to establish a campaigning group in relation to other rural issues such as vulnerability. They might also seek to establish an APPG on Brexit activity. The possibility of seeking to establish a rural group in The Lords would also be investigated.

(c) **Comparison Work**

This would be a new service. Attempts would be made to highlight the treatment of urban and rural areas.

(d) **Rural Vulnerability**

One in four people in rural areas was over the age of 65. Within the coming decade this would increase to one in three. The number of people over the age of 80 was also increasing very sharply and by 2039 one in eight people in rural areas would be of that age. The meeting discussed the social problems that would arise and the need to establish protective networks. The meeting decided it would seek to undertake significant work in this area (Rural Assembly meetings).

(e) **Brexit**

Members noted recommendations to develop a position statement to fulfil full economic and social expectations for all rural areas, particularly after Brexit. They confirmed the need to engage with CCN and DCN and agreed the importance to have elected representation from rural areas working on the same page and to avoid fragmentation in taking forward issues of importance to rural areas. It was suggested a group be created to gather all info and statistics on the amount of issues faced by those living in rural areas.

(f) **A Biennial Rural Meeting**

It was felt that too often rural areas failed to achieve a collective rural view. The concept of trying to achieve a cross representational meeting once every two years was agreed. Detailed discussion with the University of Gloucestershire and with other rural organisations was agreed.

Members noted and agreed to all further recommendations within the report. The Chair thanked them for their valuable contributions to the discussed and to David Inman for all his input and hard work.

8. Next meeting

Members noted the date of the next meeting of the AGM - 20 November 2017.

9. Rural Services Network Statement about the Modern Slavery Act

Members agreed the report as a policy situation in relation to the Group (including the RSP).

10. Minutes of the last Executive Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

11. Membership

The annual report on membership was noted.

12. Budget

Members noted the budget report as it stood. The figures for 17/18 needed amending to include a communication strategy, Brexit work and the new charges just agreed. This would be revisited at future meetings.

13. RSN Submission to the Chancellor re the Autumn Statement

Members noted the position of the Group as detailed by Graham Biggs. Local Authorities had also to comment directly as the position would vary from Authority to Authority. The LGA's First magazine will have an article on implications on rural areas by RSN.

14. State of the Rural Services Report

Brian Wilson had sent apologies. The launch was delayed until January 2018 and the group noted a summary of current findings from Rural England. Members agreed that the findings were useful and looked forward to receiving more information at coming meetings.

15. Update on the Health Scrutiny Project

Members noted the presentation from Kerry Booth and discussed key issues, including transport, access to health specialists, recruitment and other limitations in rural areas. The Chair thanked the speaker for her work and noted that LG First Magazine had shown interest in an article about this subject for the Spring edition. Members discussed their own experiences.

16. Rural Conference 2016

Members received a presentation about this year's conference and discussed the outcomes. It was agreed that it had been a very successful event and it had been a great platform for networking and sharing information.

17. Rural Conference 2017

This would again take place in Cheltenham on the 5th and 6th September. Members were encouraged to attend and agreed the benefits. They noted difficulties in getting Ministerial attendance due to the time of year – however, they would attempt to get a Minister to attend a future Rural Assembly meeting.

18. Meeting dates for 2017

Members noted the list of meeting dates for the forthcoming year.

19. Any other business

Graham Biggs notified members that the Rural Health Conference would be held on 28 February in London.

Members noted outcomes of recent consultations and agreed the need to ensure that common messages are consistent between DCN, CCN and LGA.

There was no other business and the meeting was closed.

Note: All presentations are available on the RSN website.

Attendees

Cecilia Motley	Chair, RSN	
Graham Biggs	Chief Executive, RSN	
David Inman	Corporate Director, RSN	
Kerry Booth	Assistant Chief Executive, RSN	
Cllr Philip Sanders	West Devon BC	
Cllr Owen Bierley	West Lindsey DC	
Cllr Janet Duncton	West Sussex CC	
Cllr Cameron Clark	Sevenoaks DC	
Paul Masters	Cornwall Council	
Ian Knowles	West Lindsey DC	
Cllr Ian Threlfall	Richmondshire DC	
Cllr David Ireton	Craven DC	
Cllr Rupert Reichhold	East Northamptonshire Council	
Cllr Gwilyn Butler	Shropshire Council	
Cllr Michael Hicks	South Hams DC	
Leigh Higgins	Melton BC	
Cllr Glynn Gilfoyle	Nottinghamshire Council	
Cllr Robert Heseltine	East Northamptonshire Council	
Keriesha Williams	UK Youth	
Milly Price	UK Youth	
Cllr Gordon Nicolson	Eden DC	
Cllr Peter Stevens		
Cllr Lindsey Cawson		
Dan Reynolds	RSN	
Martin Reohorn	Hereford & Worcester FA	
Malcolm Leeding	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils	
W J Clarke	GBC	
Cllr Neil Butters	Bath & NE Somerset	
Fatima de Abreu	Local Government Association	

Apologies

John Birtwistle	First Group plc
Jim Graham	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Anthony Alford	West Dorset District Council
Cllr Richard Sherras	Ribble Valley Borough Council
Cllr David Godfrey	Shepway District Council
Cllr Stephen Lydon	Stroud District Council
Cllr Louise Gittins	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Cllr Adam Paynter	Cornwall Council
Jenny Poole	Cotswold District Council
Dave Heywood	South Staffordshire Council
Sue Joyce	Purbeck District Council
Cllr Samantha Dixon	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Cllr Sue Sanderson	Cumbria County Council
Jill Penn	Broadland District Council
Cllr Elizabeth Sneath	South Holland District Council
Cllr Wendy Bowkett	East Lindsey District Council
Cllr Lewis Strange	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Malcolm Pate	Shropshire Council
Cllr Paul Diviani	East Devon District Council
Stewart Horne	Business Information Point
Cllr Andre Gonzalez de Savage	Northamptonshire County Council
Peter Shipp	EYMS Group Ltd
Cllr Roy Miller	Barnsley MBC
Cllr Kath Hemmings	Solihull MBC
Cllr Peter Martin	Surrey County Council
David Henley	Principal, Easton & Otley College
Suzanne Clear	Senior Advisor, NFU
Cllr Gary Sumner	Swindon Borough Council
Ian Richardson	Shropshire & Rural Housing Association
Ian Richardson	Shropshire Council
Cllr Kevin Barker	Wakefield Council
Cllr Martin Gannon	Gateshead Council
Cllr Wendy Bowkett	East Lindsey District Council
Cllr Malcolm Pate	Shropshire Council
Christopher Graffius	British Association for Shooting & Conservation
Cllr Mrs Geraldine Carter	Calderdale MBC
David Ashworth	Norfolk Fire & Rescue Group
Cllr Pam Posnett	Melton Borough Council
Ann Turner	Myerscough College
Katherine Steel	Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils
Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick	North Norfolk District Council
Lisa Creaye-Griffin	Surrey County Council
David Greenwood	Surrey County Council

Cllr Jane March	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Richard Quallington	ACRE
Cllr Heather Bainbridge	Mid Devon District Council
Cllr R Phillips	Herefordshire Council
Cllr Ian Dobson	Maldon District Council
Cllr Jeremy Savage	South Norfolk District Council
Catherine Tytherleigh	Berkshire College of Agriculture