



Notice of Meeting

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the membership of THE RURAL SERVICES PARTNERSHIP LIMITED is to be held on WEDNESDAY 7th DECEMBER 2022 at 2pm online via Zoom, when the following business is to be transacted.

To book your attendance click [here](#)

Dated: 19th October 2022

**Graham Biggs,
Chief Executive and Company Secretary**

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

Graham Biggs MBE, FCIS, FRSA, Chief Executive PO Box 101, Craven Arms, SY7 7AL
Tel: 01588 674922 www.rsonline.org.uk email: graham.biggs@sparse.gov.uk twitter: @rsonline
Company Registration No. 6960646 VAT Registration No. 900 3612 76

AGM AGENDA

NB. ATTACHED IS THE REQUIRED FORM OF PROXY NOTICE – BOTH GENERAL AND SPECIFIC - (TO BE SENT TO THE COMPANY SECRETARY TO ARRIVE AT LEAST 24 HOURS BEFORE THE TIME OF THE MEETING) FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A PROXY (WHICH MAY BE THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMPANY)

1. **To receive and consider** the Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 5th September 2022 ([Attachment 1](#))
2. **To receive and consider** the Minutes of the AGM held on 6th December 2021 ([Attachment 2](#))
3. **To approve the Company Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2022** (See [Attachment 3](#))
4. **To consider** re-appointing TaxAssist of Ludlow as the Company's Tax Accountants
5. **Appointment of Directors:**
The Articles of Association provide that the Maximum number of Directors shall be 12 and the minimum 2. The appointment of directors is to be broadly representative of the major service sectors comprising the Company (Article 5(b) (1) and 31(a))

Nominations for the appointment of directors may be made in writing to the Company secretary prior to the AGM or may be proposed at the AGM by voting members present.

If no such nominations are received existing Directors (if willing) remain as Directors for a further year until the next AGM.

Existing directors are:

Graham Biggs (ex officio Director as Chief Executive - see Article 36(b))
David Inman
Cllr Cecilia Motley
John Birtwistle (Transport)
Martin Collett (Housing)
Nik Harwood (Youth)
Anna Price (Small Businesses)

VACANCIES FOR Economy, Fire & Rescue and Health

6. **Small Break during which RSP Directors will appoint Chair**
7. **To receive and consider** the Minutes of the Partner Group meeting held on 25th April 2022 ([Attachment 4](#))

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

- 8. RSP Achievements for the year to date**
Presentation by Nadine Trout, Assistant Chief Executive (RSN)
- 9. RSP Plans for the year ahead**
Presentation by Chair of RSP
- 10. Future on-line meeting dates and seminars 2023**
[2023 events page on RSN website will be available soon](#)
- 11. Any Other Business**

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers



FORM OF GENERAL PROXY

The Rural Services Partnership Limited”

I/Weof

in the County of

being a member/members of the above named Company, hereby appoint:

.....of

or failing him of

as my/our proxy to vote for me/us on my/our behalf at the Annual Meeting of the Company to be held on the 7th day of December 2022 and at any adjournment thereof.

Signed this day of..... 2022

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers



FORM OF SPECIFIC PROXY

“The Rural Services Partnership Limited”

I/We of

in the County of

being a member/members of the above named Company, hereby appoint:

.....of

or failing him.....of

as my/our proxy to vote for me/us on my/our behalf at the Annual Meeting of the Company to be held on the 7th day of December 2022 and at any adjournment thereof.

Signed this day of..... 2022

This form is to be used *in favour of/ *against the resolution reflected in addenda item number []

Unless otherwise instructed, the proxy will vote as he thinks fit.

* Strike out whichever is not desired”.

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers



EXTRACT of MINUTES
SPARSE RURAL AND RURAL SERVICES NETWORK EXECUTIVE
AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE RURAL SERVICES
PARTNERSHIP LTD MEETING

Incorporating SPARSE Rural members, Rural Assembly & Rural Services Partnership members.
All nominated members & officers of RSN are invited to attend this meeting.

Hosted: Online via Zoom
Date: Monday, 5th September 2022
Time: 11:15am – 2:30pm

1. Attendance & Apologies of RSP Ltd Directors

Attendance:

Cllr Cecilia Motley (Chair)	Shropshire Council / Rural Services Network
Graham Biggs MBE	Rural Services Network
John Birtwistle	FirstGroup plc UK Bus
Martin Collett	English Rural Housing Association
Nik Harwood	Young Somerset
David Inman	Rural Services Network

Apologies:

Anna Price	Rural Business Group
------------	----------------------

The Rural Services Partnership Ltd Full Accounts 31.03.2022.

Item for formal attention of RSP Directors only.

RSP Directors to consider approving the 2021/22 Accounts and the re-appointment of TaxAssist Ludlow as the Company's Tax Accountants.

Nik Harwood proposed approving the accounts and reappointment of Tax Assist Ludlow as the Company's Tax Accountants.

The accounts were accepted, and Tax Assist appointed.

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

Rural Services Network

Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0BZ

Tel: 01822 851370

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



Minutes for the Rural Services Partnership AGM

Online via Zoom

Monday 6th December 2021

2pm-3pm

Present:

Tracy Baker (Trustee, National Federation of Women's Institutes) (TB)
 Dr Mark Betson (National Rural Officer, Church of England, Arthur Rank Centre) (MB)
 Graham Biggs MBE (Chief Executive, Rural Services Network & Company Secretary RSP) (GB)
 Hayden Bird (TED East Lindsey Learning and Evaluation Officer, YMCA Lincs) (HB)
 Kerry Booth (Assistant Chief Executive, Rural Services Network) (KB)
 Ruth Buckley-Salmon (Public Affairs Manager, NFSP) (RBS)
 Ian Cass (Managing Director, The Forum of Private Business) (IC)
 Martin Collett (Chief Executive, English Rural Housing Association & Director of RSP) (MC)
 Nora Corkery (CEO, Devon Communities Together) (NC)
 Anita Cornelius (Director – West ICA, CFT) (AC)
 Mark Cotton (Asst Director of Communications & Engagement, NE Ambulance Service) (MC)
 Jo Giles (Customer Safeguarding Senior Manager, Cadent Ltd) (JG)
 Nik Harwood (Chief Executive, Young Somerset & Director RSP) (NH)
 David Inman (Corporate Director of Rural Services Network & Director RSP) (DI)
 Gavin Iredale (Partnership Manager, Reed in Partnership) (GI)
 Beth Kennedy (Customer Services Partnership Manager, Anglian Water) (BK)
 Rev Richard Kirlew (Agricultural Chaplains Association) (RK)
 Malcolm Leeding MBE (President, Oxfordshire Assoc of Local Councils) (ML)
 John Longden (Chief Executive, Pub is The Hub) (JL)
 Julie Milburn (Sparsholt College Group) (JM)
 Alex Phillimore (Marketing & Communications Manager, Farming Community Network) (AP)
 Anna Price (Director of RSP and Director of Anna Price Strategic Marketing) (AP)
 Simon Thompson (Director of Development, Wrekin Housing Group) (ST)
 Nadine Trout (Member Development & Support Manager, Rural Services Network) (NT)
 Ian Whittle (Partnership Manager-South Coast, Reed in Partnership) (IW)

Bethan Aldridge (minute-taker) (BA)

Apologies for Absence:

Amy Barker (Green Energy UK), John Birtwistle (Head of Policy, First Group & Director RSP), Stuart Emmerson, Director of Public Affairs & Communications, Hartpury College/Uni), Chris Hincliffe (CPRE), Jim Hume (Support in Mind Scotland), Dr Tom Lawrence (Public Policy Consultant, TRL Insight), Elizabeth Lodge (Head of Community Wellbeing Services, Care Plus), Cllr Cecilia Motley (Chair of RSN, Director of RSP & Councillor for Shropshire Council), Lydia Perris (Social Justice & Creation Care Officer, Diocese of Exeter), Martin Rich (Community Projects Advisor (Devon Communities Together), Nicola Simmons (Head of Supply Chain Development, Reed in Partnership), Chris Strickland (CFO, Cambs F&R Service), Matthew Warren (DCE, Cambs F&R Service)

The Chair, Nik Harwood, welcomed everyone to the meeting and formally handed the AGM procedures to GB, in his role as Company Secretary.

1. To receive and consider the Minutes of Directors Meeting held on 27th September 2021
([Attachment 1](#))

Noted

2. To receive and consider the Minutes of the AGM held on 23rd November 2020
([Attachment 2](#))

Approved and agreed as a true record.

3. To approve the Company Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2021
([Attachment 3](#))

NH proposed that the accounts be approved as they were and MC seconded the motion.

Action: These were approved and adopted with no opposition.

4. To consider re-appointing TaxAssist of Ludlow as the Company's Tax Accountants

NH proposed that TaxAssist, Ludlow be re-appointed and MC seconded the motion.

Action: This was approved and adopted with no opposition.

5. Appointment of Directors

GB noted that he had not received any nominations. If anyone would like to stand as a Director, please contact GB for a further discussion.

Action: The remaining Directors were re-appointed without opposition.

6. RSP Directors to appoint Chair
(NB: Item discussed after the Partner Group meeting)

MC nominated NH, AP seconded the motion and NH was re-appointed as Chair

7. To receive and consider the Minutes of the Partner Group meeting held on 23rd November 2020 ([Attachment 4](#))

Approved and agreed as a true record.

8. RSP Achievements for the year to date (Link to the presentation [here](#))

Presentation by Nadine Trout, Member Development and Support Manager (RSN)

NT gave an overview of the achievements for RSP throughout the year and there are a number of links/videos within the presentation itself. Some of those achievements include launching the high profile Revitalising Rural campaign and its key policy asks of Government, the wide-ranging Seminar Programme which over 600 delegates attended and the National Rural Conference with over 425 delegates held over 5 days. Also, the RSP membership now stands at over 200 organisation and is part of a much wider network of over 500 plus. The Rural Lens Reviews of key Government documents helps to keep members informed in a simple, easy to digest format and to understand the potential impacts of these on rural communities/services/economies etc. The RSP has also been involved in bespoke, independent research and numerous Government Consultations on behalf of its members and provides the Secretariat support to the APPG for Rural Services.

9. RSP Plans for the year ahead (Link to the presentation [here](#))

Presentation by Chair of RSP – Nik Harwood

NH outlined plans for the coming year which included continuing with items that are seen as valued by the membership eg Funding digest, weekly news bulletin , quarterly Spotlight editions highlighting RSP members best practice etc. NH confirmed that the Rural Lens documents would continue as they provided a great translation of the high level policy issues and the Seminar programme and National Rural Conference. There will be discussion on how we may be able to blend virtual and physical seminars/Conference etc but the current format is working extremely well and has a great reach.

There are a number of key issues for the next twelve months and we will continue to pull together the correlation between different areas/regions of membership and provide that national voice to influence decision makers and encourage them to think about rural. It's very much about what is "bothering" people.

Action: NH asked the membership to let RSP know if there was something they would like considered that we are not covering currently or want to see less of.

Action: RSP needs qualitative data of people's lived experiences ie what is making them vulnerable, isolated etc. Please send your [case studies](#) through.

GB noted that we have a Net Zero Rural Lens due out ([please see link to this](#)) and that, in conjunction with Rural England CIC, there are two launches of the State of Rural Services 2021 Report and also a report funded by utility organisations on the Priority Services Register and client vulnerabilities. The [Revitalising Rural campaign](#) is updated in "real time" so reflects any policy changes etc and reiterated NH's call for Case Studies, and the APPG for Rural Services hopes to meet with the Care Minister, Gillian Keegan MP, in January to discuss the Social Care White paper

10. Future on-line meeting dates and seminars 2022

[Link to Events page on RSN Website](#)

11. Any Other Business

Action: BA to email the presentations and confirmation of RSP Chair to attendees immediately after the meeting today.

Action: GB reminded the meeting that there are vacancies for Directors of RSP. If anyone is interested, then please contact GB via admin@sparse.gov.uk

Action: Please do share the Rural Lens documents.

Meeting closed at 2:43pm

Date of Next meeting:

Monday 25th April 2022 at 2pm

Registered number: 06960646

**THE RURAL SERVICES PARTNERSHIP LIMITED
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022**

**The Rural Services Partnership Limited
Unaudited Financial Statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022**

Attachment 3

Contents

	Page
Company Information	1
Accountant's Report	2
Statement of Income and Expenditure	3
Balance Sheet	4
The following pages do not form part of the statutory accounts:	
Detailed Income and Expenditure Report	5–6

**The Rural Services Partnership Limited
Company Information
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022**

Attachment 3

Directors

Mr Graham Biggs
Mr John Birtwistle
Mr David Inman
Mrs Cecilia Motley
Mrs Anna Price
Mr Martin Collett
Mr Nicholas Harwood

Secretary

Mr Graham Biggs

Company Number

06960646

Registered Office

1 Aldon View
Craven Arms
Shropshire
SY7 9EQ

Accountants

TaxAssist Accountants
114b Corve Street
Ludlow
SY8 1DJ

**The Rural Services Partnership Limited
Accountant's Report
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022**

Attachment 3

In accordance with the engagement letter dated 27 September 2018, and in order to assist you to fulfil your duties under the Companies Act 2006, we have compiled the financial statements of the company from the accounting records and information and explanations you have given to us.

This report is made to the directors in accordance with the terms of our engagement. Our work has been undertaken to prepare for approval by the directors the financial statements that we have been engaged to compile, to report to the directors that we have done so, and to state those matters that we have agreed to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Company and the Company's directors for our work or for this report.

You have acknowledged on the balance sheet as at year ended 31 March 2022 your duty to ensure that the company has kept proper accounting records and to prepare financial statements that give a true and fair view under the Companies Act 2006. You consider that the company is exempt from the statutory requirement for an audit for the year.

We have not been instructed to carry out an audit of the financial statements. For this reason, we have not verified the accuracy or completeness of the accounting records or information and explanations you have given to us and we do not, therefore, express any opinion on the financial statements.

Signed

Date

TaxAssist Accountants
114b Corve Street
Ludlow
SY8 1DJ

**The Rural Services Partnership Limited
Statement of Income and Expenditure
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022**

Attachment 3

	2022	2021
	£	£
TURNOVER	395,143	395,151
Other income	200	-
Staff costs	(253,680)	(243,762)
Depreciation and other amounts written off assets	(2,180)	(1,638)
Other charges	(122,678)	(101,557)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
SURPLUS BEFORE TAXATION	16,805	48,194
Tax	(2,667)	(8,207)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
NET TRADING SURPLUS	14,138	39,987
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

**The Rural Services Partnership Limited
Balance Sheet
As at 31 March 2022**

Attachment 3

	2022	2021
	£	£
Fixed assets	6,539	4,914
Current assets	91,819	77,201
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year	(35,467)	(33,380)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	56,352	43,821
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	62,891	48,735
Accruals and deferred income	(621)	(603)
NET ASSETS	62,270	48,132
CAPITAL AND RESERVES	62,270	48,132

Notes

1. Average Number of Employees

Average number of employees, including directors, during the year was as follows: 15 (2021: 15)

2. General Information

The Rural Services Partnership Limited is a private company, limited by shares, incorporated in England & Wales, registered number 06960646 . The registered office is 1 Aldon View, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 9EQ.

For the year ending 31 March 2022 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the micro-entity provisions.

On behalf of the board

Mr Graham Biggs
Director
Date

**The Rural Services Partnership Limited
Detailed Income and Expenditure Report
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022**

Attachment 3

	2022	2021
	£	£
TURNOVER		
Membership subscriptions	23,012	19,272
SPARSE - Rural general grant	296,776	309,918
Coastal communities contract income	4,714	5,645
Strategic partnering arrangements	10,000	10,000
Rural housing group website	4,250	915
Rural market town group membership	11,979	10,160
Rural housing group subscriptions	6,812	6,400
Rural fire and rescue	3,989	3,917
Rural England re-charges	4,595	5,106
National rural conference	3,650	2,608
Rural England project support	1,280	600
Rural HCA subscriptions	21,586	8,762
Rural strategy	2,500	11,848
	395,143	395,151
OTHER INCOME		
Other operating income	200	-
	395,343	395,151
STAFF COSTS		
Wages and salaries	170,114	157,669
Employers NI	11,763	10,238
Employers pensions - defined contributions scheme	5,019	4,383
Subcontractor costs	66,535	71,438
Travel and subsistence	249	34
	(253,680)	(243,762)
DEPRECIATION AND OTHER AMOUNTS WRITTEN OFF ASSETS		
Depreciation	1,804	1,137
Amortisation	376	501
	(2,180)	(1,638)
OTHER CHARGES		
Premises expenses:		
Rent and service charge	22,206	7,968
General administration costs:		
RSN online - website	888	-
Coastal communities contract	-	3,854
Databases	6,713	6,322
Rural England service	7,280	7,000
Rural housing group website costs	161	463
Insurance	807	1,018
Rural strategy costs	13,500	28,613
Printing, postage and stationery	3,148	3,489
National centre for Rural Health and Care	12,599	-
Fairer funding costs	22,334	9,875

...CONTINUED

The Rural Services Partnership Limited
Detailed Income and Expenditure Report (continued)
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

Attachment 3

Research and communications	30,940	29,170
IT support	110	329
Accountancy fees	828	804
Professional fees	565	2,067
Subscriptions	482	482
Bank charges	119	103
Sundry expenses	(2)	-
	100,472	93,589
	(122,678)	(101,557)
SURPLUS BEFORE TAXATION	16,805	48,194
Tax on Surplus		
Corporation tax charge	2,667	8,207
	(2,667)	(8,207)
NET TRADING SURPLUS	14,138	39,987



**Minutes for the Rural Services Partnership
Partner Group Online via Zoom Monday
25th April 2022
2pm-3pm**

Present:

Graham Biggs MBE (Chief Executive, Rural Services Network & Company Secretary RSP) (GB)
Kerry Booth (Deputy Chief Executive, Rural Services Network) (KB)
Duncan Carter (Corporate Affairs Manager, Calor) (DC)
Andy Clowes (Head of Customer Experience & Strategy) (AC)
Nora Corkery (CEO, Devon Communities Together) (NC)
Connor Finch (Anglian Water) (CF)
Rachael Fullwood (Chief Executive, Lincolnshire Rural Housing Association) (RF)
Jo Giles (Customer Safeguarding Senior Manager, Cadent Ltd) (JG)
Nik Harwood (Chief Executive, Young Somerset & Director RSP) (NH)
David Inman (Corporate Director of Rural Services Network & Director RSP) (DI)
Jo Martin (Founder, Rural Business Network) (JM)
Fay Morris (SMP Net Zero Engagement Manager, SP Energy Networks) (FM)
Amanda Phillips (Priority Services Partnership & Engagement Lead, United Utilities) (AP)
Nadine Trout (Member Development & Support Manager, Rural Services Network) (NT)

Bethan Aldridge (minute-taker) (BA)

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Lydia Allen (Policy & Advocacy Manager, National Youth Agency)
John Birtwistle (Head of Policy, First Bus)
Ian Cass (Managing Director, Form of British Pubs)
Sophia Haywood (Director of Public Affairs, Liquid Gas UK)
Beth Kennedy (CS Partnership Manager, Anglian Water)
Rev Richard Kirlew (Chairman of the Agricultural Chaplaincy Association)
Christine Lally (County Officer, Oxfordshire Assoc. of Local Councils)
Rita Lawson (Chief Executive, Tees Valley Rural Action)
Shelagh Meldrum (Chief Officer, Yeovil District Hospital)
David Rogers (Executive Cttee member, Oxfordshire Assoc. of Local Councils)
Kay Sentence (Trustee, Thame CLT)
Ian Sherriff (Academic Partnership lead for Dementia, University of Plymouth)
Elizabeth Warwick (Stakeholder Engagement Manager, West & Wales Utilities)
Hastoe Housing Association (whole team)
Pub is the Hub (whole team)
Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service (whole team)

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

Minutes of the previous meeting 06.12.21 were accepted as a true record.

3. Matters arising:

None were raised.

4. RSP Plans for the year ahead ([see Presentation](#))

NH gave a presentation on behalf of the Rural Services Partnership Ltd.

NH discussed the key core fundamentals that the RSP strives to achieve and deliver on to members. There are a number of [seminars and events](#) this year that RSP members can attend. NH also emphasised the importance and relevance of the information in the weekly Rural Bulletin and to share it around members' organisations. Click on the link to find out more about the RSP's [policy research](#).

He also stressed that it was important too for Partners to engage with RSP so that it can improve and amplify the rural voice. The breadth and diversity of membership is really important too and NH asked Partners to share their stories/research with the RSP. The power of the story is just as important as the stats, data, research etc.

Action: If Partners have case studies etc. on what it's like to "be rural" in 2022, coming out of the pandemic and its impact, cost-of living crisis etc. then please email: admin@sparse.gov.uk

For those members who would like to attend the conference in September, it will be on-line again and [tickets are available on Eventbrite here](#).

GB further expanded on some of the items in NH's presentation. These included:

a) Local Government Finance settlement, there is some doubt as to when a review will take place so is still potentially a major piece of work for us.

b) Adult Social Care Reform White Paper, some discussions have already taken place with Ministers. The DHSC is trying to understand the cost of delivering care and has a questionnaire out with County and Unitary authorities to capture data on the costs they are facing in their care responsibilities. There has been some extra money for social care but not enough to keep pace with increased numbers of clients etc.

c) Levelling up White Paper with technical appendix, RSN has produced a [Rural Lens review](#) on this and is working with economic consultants, Pragmatix, on the metrics in the White Paper from a rural perspective and they are looking into the challenge points and whether they are the right ones or don't show the true rural picture.

d) UK Shared Prosperity Fund, at first glance, the allocations are not looking too bad from a rural perspective. RSN produced a [Rural Lens review on the fund](#) (early May) and appointed another firm of consultants to do a study on the cost-of-living from a rural context.

e) Off-grid gas network conversion to non-fossil fuels, the RSN provides the secretariat for the [APPG on Rural Services](#), and we are hoping to have a minister attend our next meeting in June to discuss the impact on rural homes or the unfairness of converting boilers to non-fossil fuel nine years earlier than on-grid areas.

f) Planning proposals, waiting to see what they will be. There was a brief reference in the Levelling up White Paper that in effect the government acknowledged it still needed to do those.

5. Networking/Discussion on topics impacting on RSP members currently.

NC – looking at developing a whole society approach to resilience and setting up a working group across Devon, Plymouth, and Torbay. GB commented that the RSN would be interested in the work output and be very happy to promote it across the network.

JG - is working on a safeguarding innovation approach and Cadent and Northern Gas Networks have awarded a contract to Catapult for some Innovation Research which links across the different approaches that are needed to be successful when it comes to people who are classed as digitally excluded. Hoping to create a matrix of best communication routes and methods for different situations and scenarios re digital exclusion. There's a big overlap with rural as well when looking at broadband, isolation, and loneliness. Would like to come back to the group to ask for support to possibly extend that research/test the research but ultimately will have some exacting outcomes on how we can collectively respond to digital exclusion with a national approach.

FM – interested in JG's research work as these feed into the joint PSR work SP Energy Networks is undertaking with other utility companies in the Plas Madoc, Wrexham community area. Looking to pull together communal information and again working with people who don't have access to the internet etc. FM happy to share their learning points with JG and others. JG agreed and offered the opportunity to chat this through. AP is also working with Cadent and Northern Gas and would be very happy to work with SP Energy Networks too on this joint approach.

Also, FM would like to hear from anyone who is working on any projects etc that will have a capacity/demand impact on the SP Energy Network as the sooner her network is aware of it the better they can plan capacity eg EV charging for local communities etc.

AP - wanted to discuss if the RSN could offer some help in getting the Utility Companies' message across through its different networks e.g. parish councils. There is currently a big emphasis on getting more of the right type of customers on the Priorities Service Register (PSR) - it's not just a case of customers who want their bills in a different format etc. anymore. Utility companies are working more with Local Resilience Forums e.g. drought/floods etc. but they lose time getting to customers because they don't know who those priority customers are and they don't know about the PSR or consider themselves as vulnerable. Looking at preventative strategies or at the very least getting ready to support these customers. JG agreed that it would be good to promote the fact that the utility companies can be proactive and supportive.

GB commented that he thought it would be better if there was direct communication from the utility company to the parish and town councils in their areas as the best option and RSN would add its name to that. These are very good routes to getting the information out into the communities as they are a trusted local organisation. RSN has recently done some work for South East Water on how engagement can take place and

what works best in rural areas. AC agreed that he had put a few articles into the weekly newsletter about the PSR. AC also noted that from the work done with RSN there was no “cookie-cutter” way of engagement, so the challenge is to find different ways of engaging with local communities as well e.g. sponsorship with local town councils – seed money to help them to get the message out and provided access from a vulnerability, affordability, and water efficiency perspective. NC suggested producing a generic message and then asking other rural organisations to use their communication channels/networks to cascade that message across e.g. part of a regular newsletters and so it’s not another random email.

Action: GB agreed to discuss this further and how to send a generic message/special bulletin to RSN’s distribution list on behalf of the utility companies and that if anyone was having problems, to contact their water/gas/electricity company directly etc. It could also include the power cut number 105 as it doesn’t matter which DNO you are with.

RF – noted that her organisation has appointed a resident engagement assistant to work on various project work to engage with residents. One of these projects is to contact all residents and identify who their utilities providers are, raise awareness of price increases, meter readings and affordability concerns etc. The majority of residents on electric heating, so monitoring when contracts are due to finish and building this into a future contract plan by being proactive. RF would like a co-ordinated approach with other organisations to support their residents.

DC – working with some rural MPs to organise a Parliamentary Debate to raise awareness that the deal for rural people must be fair and that low carbon heating solutions are available for all homes and are affordable. Commissioned work to look at the impact on fuel poverty on some of the current proposals. Also aware that the early experiences of consumers converting to other heating solutions must be positive otherwise the transition to net zero will become much harder. GB agreed that RSN is using the parliamentary process, backbench debates, questions to ministers etc. but it all depends on whatever has happened on that day in the news etc. on whether it gets picked up.

6. Any Other Business

No items were brought forward.

7. Close

NH thanked everyone for attending the meeting today which closed at 3pm.