

Countryside COP Uniting Rural Communities to Tackle Climate Change Rural Services Network

Date: 12th October 2021

Host: Online Event via Zoom

Speakers

Speaker 1: Kerry Booth, Deputy Chief Executive Rural Services Network

Speaker 2: John Birtwistle, Head of Policy, First Bus

Speaker 3: Duncan Carter, Corporate Affairs Manager, Calor

Key Learning Points

Setting the scene for rural areas and decarbonisation

- Rural areas must be included in policy solutions for decarbonisation, an approach focussed solely on urban alone would fail
- There are particular characteristics of rural areas which can make decarbonisation challenging
 - Distances required to travel to access services, employment and education/training
 - Transport options
 - State of Rural Housing Stock
 - Fuel Poverty gap is large in rural areas
 - Lower incomes earned in rural areas
- Opportunities for rural areas in relation to the green economy and diversification of land use, changes in the way we live with less travel, and focus on local food and support for local businesses
- Revitalising Rural Campaign sets out asks of Government in relation to [Decarbonising Rural Communities and Economies](#)

Challenges facing the transport sector in rural areas moving towards net zero

- The option of all moving to electric cars, is not the overall solution to moving towards net zero, it still causes congestion and is currently expensive option.
- Need a modal shift of transport away from car to public transport
- Issues remain for rural communities:
 - Public transport is not a statutory service and there have been cuts in services where they are not financially viable in rural areas and councils have been unable to provide ongoing financial support due to reduced government grants.
 - Electrifying the bus network has its own challenges – electric buses are significantly more expensive, range of electric buses not suitable for average rural route, concerns over capacity of the national grid in rural areas

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

Rural Services Network

Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon, PL19 0BZ

Tel: 01822 851370

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

- Hydrogen fuel cells are an alternative although the buses are significantly more expensive
- Important to educate the public about the choices they make in relation to transport and encourage the shift to public transport to support decarbonisation and realise wider benefits.

The challenges of net zero heating in rural homes

- Around 2 million homes in rural areas off gas grid high proportion are hard to treat for example it's hard to move to high levels of energy efficiency without significant disruption and cost.
- Rural homes will need alternatives to heat pumps which require high levels of energy efficiency and insulation in to be effective.
- Green GasBio LPG could be an alternative – same molecules as conventional LPG but derived not from fossil fuel but instead renewable sources, mixture waste and crop residues. Suitable for use in normal boilers.
- Government is pursuing 'rural first' approach to fossil fuel phase out however rural households won't benefit from economies of scale, high costs and absence of consumer testing in that technology in rural homes.
- Need for regulatory and policy support from Government to recognise benefits of Bio LPG
- Future of heat in off-gas grid UK should be diverse and decarbonised, and choices made dependent on options suitable for homeowners situation.

Useful Links from discussions

[World Wildlife Fund tool to calculate your carbon footprint](#)

[Impact Community Carbon Calculator](#) - Impact, the parish-level carbon emission estimator, gives parishes and small communities usable data on their carbon emissions that is easy to interpret and easy to share.

[Great Collaboration – local actions for a healthy planet](#) – track and capture carbon reduction actions that individuals, businesses and community groups are doing. Platform can inform Parish Carbon Reduction Action Plans

[Cheshire Net Zero Carbon Conference](#)

[Biomethane Powered Buses launched in Bristol](#)

[CPRE report into Every Village Every Hour Buses](#)

[Low Emission Car Hire Service in South West](#)

[Driverless Pods on roads 'within two years'](#)

[Driverless Pod Trial in Lake District](#)

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

Rural Services Network

Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon, PL19 0BZ

Tel: 01822 851370

www.rsonline.org.uk email: events@rsn.gov.uk twitter: [@rsnonline](https://twitter.com/rsnonline)

[How renewable liquid fuels can deliver a low carbon future for rural households](#)

Rural Services Network Useful Links

RSN's Revitalising Rural Campaign Specific Policy Asks of the Government is for fairer distribution of national resources to rural areas and more nuanced national policies.

The full campaign can be accessed at www.rsnonline.org.uk/revitalising-rural

The chapter on [Rural Transport](#) can be accessed at here.

The chapter on [Decarbonising Rural Communities](#) can be accessed at here.

The chapter on [Rural Housing](#) can be accessed at here.

As new Government strategies are announced, RSN puts them through a “**Rural Lens Review**” which adds depth and texture to the Policy Asks

[All Rural Lens Review Documents](#)

[Rural Lens Review of Sustainable Warmth Policy](#)

[Rural Lens Review of National Bus Strategy](#)

RSN Member Insights produced by Dan Worth, Research & Performance Analyst, RSN.
[Please click on the link to access the data analysis](#)

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: events@sparse.gov.uk twitter: [@rsnonline](https://twitter.com/rsnonline)