



Frequently Asked Questions

Most Frequently Asked Questions about Rural Services Network and the Rural/Market Towns Group

What is our mission statement? In other words, why are we here and why we are doing this?

The Rural Services Network is the national champion for rural services, ensuring that people in rural areas have a strong voice. We are fighting for a fair deal for rural communities to maintain their social and economic viability for the benefit of the nation.

The Defra definition of rural dwellers includes those living in market towns (below a population of 30,000) and other centres serving rural areas.

We believe that rural areas in England have frequently been overlooked in a policy environment dominated by urban thinking and policy concerns. This often means that rural communities, and their towns either miss out on the benefits or experience unintended consequences from policies which are poorly thought through from a rural perspective.

The Rural Market Town Group plays an important role in ensuring that the Rural Services Network can effectively represent rural areas.

Is Rural Services Network a quango?

Definitely not! RSN is an independent and completely non-political organisation that has been operating for more than 18 years. We get no government funding whatsoever nor do we want any because government funding can restrict the ability to argue a case that government may not wish to encourage. RSN is a membership organisation, and a Special Interest Group of the Local Government

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

Rural Services Network

PO Box 101, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 7AL

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Association, and because we handle money, we are a legal entity – a not for profit company limited by guarantee.

Why should Town Councils join the Rural/Market Towns Group?

RSN is the national champion for rural services and we can only effectively represent rural areas by giving town councils a voice in the national debate and enable them to have their voice heard. By coming together the rural towns will have a stronger voice on issues that matter to them.

Why is this initiative important for every rural resident?

Rural areas and their intricate network of rural communities have the potential to play a much more important part of the national economy and need to be appropriately recognised and supported in government thinking and actions. We want to help our rural communities to reach their potential, and we think that by working together, it provides all those in rural areas with a collective voice to raise issues.

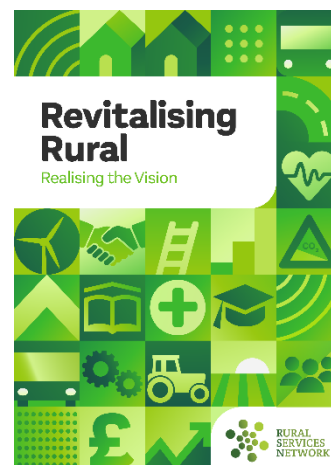
What are the benefits of membership?

There are a wide range of benefits to membership and the latest list of services provided can be accessed at this link: [RMTG Service Agreement](#)

What is RSN intending to do?

Our Revitalising Rural Campaign:

We want a fairer distribution of national resources to rural areas and for more nuanced national policies that reflect rural circumstances.



Our representational work focuses on our Revitalising Rural Campaign which sets out 14 key policy areas, each with a number of asks of Government, designed to 'Revitalise Rural' and ensure that policy reflects rural circumstances. These 14

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areas include subjects such as the Rural Economies, Access to Health and Care Services, Affordable Rural Housing, Transport and Digital Rural Connectivity.

The Rural Market Town Group can help us to understand these key issues within rural communities and ensure that our 'ASKS' of Government are relevant and up to date.

Will there be additional cost above the small subscription?

No additional income other than the subscription will be requested.

Why have we contacted your parish/town council?

Rural areas are all very different as England is a particularly diverse country. We have selected 200 places with seemingly varying rural characteristic to initially invite, with a view to ensuring input can be fairly claimed to be cross national. We have largely so far generally avoided using neighbouring parishes/towns for that reason. However, having established such an initial operating platform we do plan to incrementally grow the grouping out from there and all rural parishes towns will in time be involved.

Towns are often members of organisations like NALC and Market Operation Associations. Is there an overlap with other organisations?

No, our role is very different. NALC deal with Local Council representation and Market Operation Associations deal with the operation of Markets. Their work is across rural and urban authorities. We work solely on rural issues – rural representation and the spread of rural best practice.

Has there been a Market Towns initiative before?

Yes, there has, and some good work was done but it was for a time limited period. It was grant and project based, and it included all English Towns. The essential difference is that this initiative is subscription based from the start to seek continuity and is solely rurally based. It seeks to find commonality of argument across rural town and their rural hinterland to mutual advantage. We are aware that a collective grouping clearly cannot carry out local projects, but it can enhance the importance of these needs.

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