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| Community and Governance Committee Meeting |  Market Drayton Town Council |
| Agenda Item: 7.CG Rural Services Network | |
| Date: 10 November 2022 | |
| Appendix: CG86 | |

The information below and attached has been provided by David Inman, Director, Rural Services Network.

We do think market towns can benefit by working together both in terms of exchange of information and arguing the rural and rural town case. The Rural Services Network with its groups, in England, are now the sole organisation undertaking the argument of the national rural service case on a full-time basis. It is imperative for rural areas and their towns that this continues and expands.

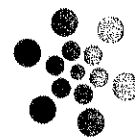
Our operation must be based on subscription because we obviously have no other income flow, but we look to keep that subscription level manageable. We work with NALC and if your Council are members of their local council association (ALC) in Shropshire, you achieve a 15% discount so for your town population banding it would be £130 per annum plus (recoverable VAT); if you are not such members of your ALC it would be £ 153 p.a. (again plus VAT). The good news is that we offer free membership for an initial trial period with us allowing people to see what we offer free of charge for this a 6-month initial period. Coming in now therefore would allow Market Drayton to be a temporary member for that period then you would then let us know whether the Council have established value and wish to continue on a subscription basis.

Here is a link to the Rural Market Town Group pages
<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/page/rural-market-town-group>

Here are a couple of our recent newsletters. We try to cover a fair range of issues to assist members. RMTG Round Up. <https://mailchi.mp/rsnonline/rural-market-town-group-roundup-august-2022> and <https://mailchi.mp/rsnonline/rural-market-town-group-roundup-october-2022>



RURAL MARKET TOWN GROUP



RSN working with **nalc** in support of Rural Market Towns

Rural/ Market Town Group (RMTG)

WORKING TO ASSIST THE COUNCIL, AND THE RURAL SERVICES IN RESPECT OF YOUR RESIDENTS.

THE SERVICES WE WILL PROVIDE:

Town Promotion

- Promotion to relevant national organisations and policy makers of the importance of members Market and Rural Towns. Their history, their traditions, their markets, and their facilities are important features of the rural economies.
- Support an increased national profile of market towns.
- Work to persuade government that Market Towns are hub centres that provide key services to a wide rural hinterland area and therefore towns in rural areas should not be discounted from being eligible for specific funding pots because of their size.
- **Area Working** – The pattern of local area Market Town meetings is mixed across England. The group could explore this to see if there is any improvement in areas where meetings / joint working is not taking place currently and look at how liaison can take place between this national facing group and existing area arrangements.

Services Focused on Vulnerable People

- **Young People** – To facilitate work in key areas, members are encouraged to nominate a representative interested in young people in their area, who may be contacted to gather specific consultation throughout the year to support national campaigning.
- **The Elderly** – Again if you have a Councillor or staff member who works in or particular interest in this area of activity, we will welcome a nomination of a person with your Council who we can liaise with in relation to work in this area. We seek where we can, to outline the opportunities for people who are in vulnerable situations in Rural Towns.

Economic Development

- **Facilitating Member Networking on a National Economic Level** – through more joint working, networking with the goal of tackling most relevant rural challenges, seeking solutions and improvement.
- **Working with the National Centre for Rural Enterprise**. Annually the Centre will address Councillor Representatives about their work. This session will include exploring whether the RMTG can contribute to work and research of the National Centre.
- **Area Profiles** – an Area Profile of your Principal County/Unitary Council issued once a year setting out key statistics in relation to the rural area. This will help to give the overall picture of their local area to help plan services and understand local issues. (February)

Information & Involvement

- **A Weekly Rural RSN Bulletin** which includes Rural News, Member Insight, Economic Profiling, Spotlights on Economy & Housing, Hinterland, Analysis & Commentary Pieces, Week in Parliament – Politics Roundup and more.
- **A Monthly RSN Funding Digest & Government Consultations** – with funding and grant opportunities, along with relevant Government Consultations related to rural areas.
- **A Rural/Market Town Group (RMTG) Newsletter** – specific newsletter every other month ('Market Town Round Up') highlighting latest relevant policy developments, showcasing useful member good practice examples, net zero information, and signposting members to relevant initiatives and funding opportunities.
- **Involvement in the RSN Consultation Programme** – this includes responding to Government Consultations, White Papers, Calls for Evidence and Select Committee Inquiries. In addition, the Group will help to develop the rural voice at a national level to ensure rural are properly represented. This would be in the form of our own surveys, calls for evidence and case studies. Some surveys will be on the most important topics that were highlighted by RMTG. (Various times throughout the year.)

RMTG Meetings and Joint Working

- **Meetings** – There will be a meeting for RMTG elected representatives twice a year, dedicated for best practice sharing, networking, and group discussions on most relevant rural topics. The Clerks Advisory Panel will also be invited to the Autumn meeting. (April, October) **RMTG Clerks Advisory Panel Meeting** – once a year a meeting for RMTG clerks dedicated for best practice sharing, networking, and group discussions on most relevant rural topics. (March). Possible annual meetings on Charter and Market Promotion.
- **Free Access to the full annual RSN Seminar Programme**. We run 9 seminars throughout the year and access is open to any Councillor Member - not just the nominated member. (Just one or two per member authority please.)
- Members of the RMTG will be able to purchase discounted access to sessions at the **National Rural Conference** subject to places being available.
- **Information Exchange** – A special RMTG Facebook area to facilitate

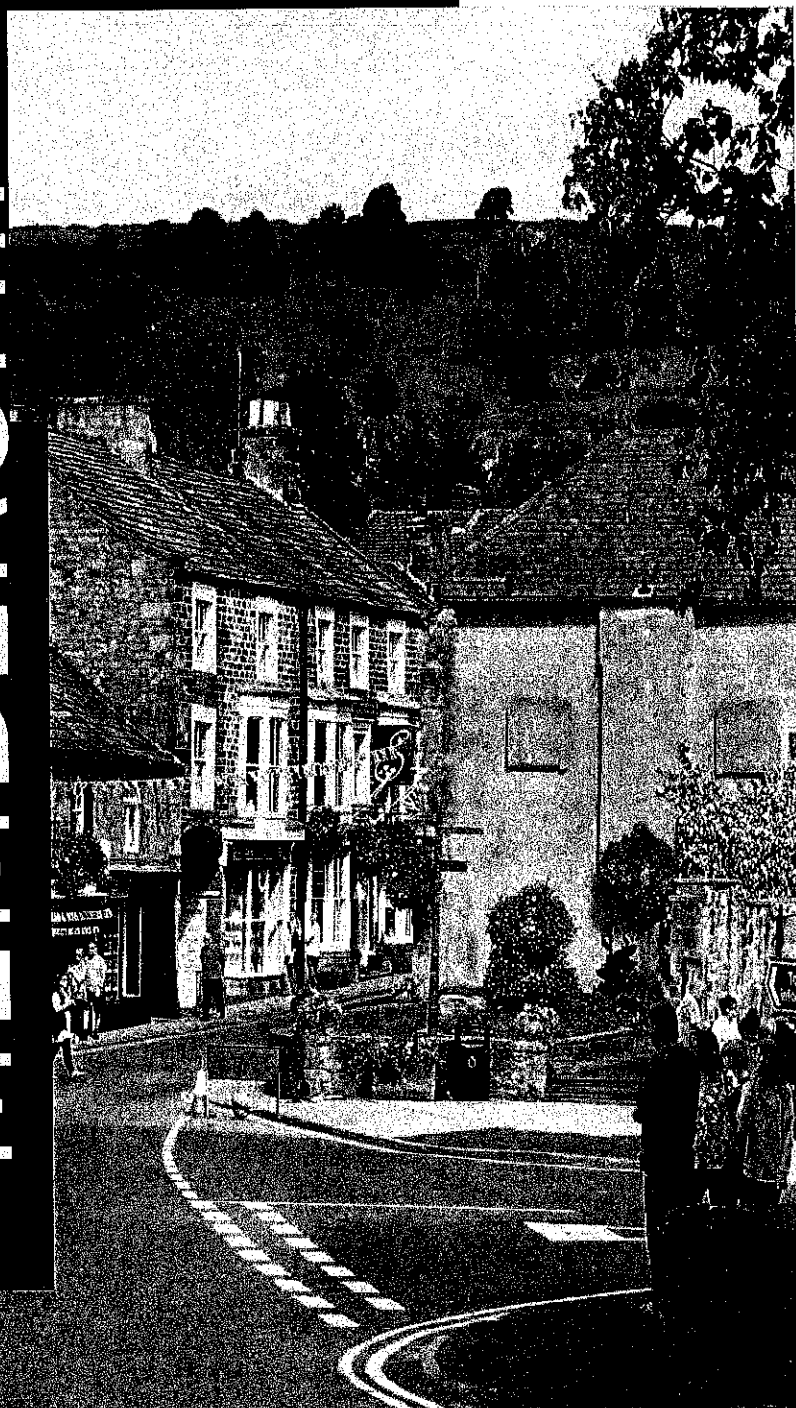
information exchange on a virtual basis.

Good Practice

- **RMTG Good Practice** – collecting, signposting, and informing members on good practice, relevant learning material on key policy areas, delivery challenges and opportunities for rural/market towns. We will operate an Information Exchange to allow members to do this across a series of areas.
- **Engagement and direct involvement in RSN Campaigns.**



Rural Market Towns Group + MEMBERSHIP



Working Together
for a Brighter Tomorrow

RSN working with **nalc**
in support of Rural Market Towns

A SHARED
COLLECTIVE
VOICE

ABOUT



In increasingly uncertain times ensuring that your communities are given the chance to thrive must be one of the key objectives of any successful Town Council.



The Rural Market Towns Group - which is supported by NALC and is part of the Rural Services Network, will provide you with resources, connections, knowledge, and experience, that enables the representation of your Town to inform policy and generate improved outcomes for your residents and business communities.

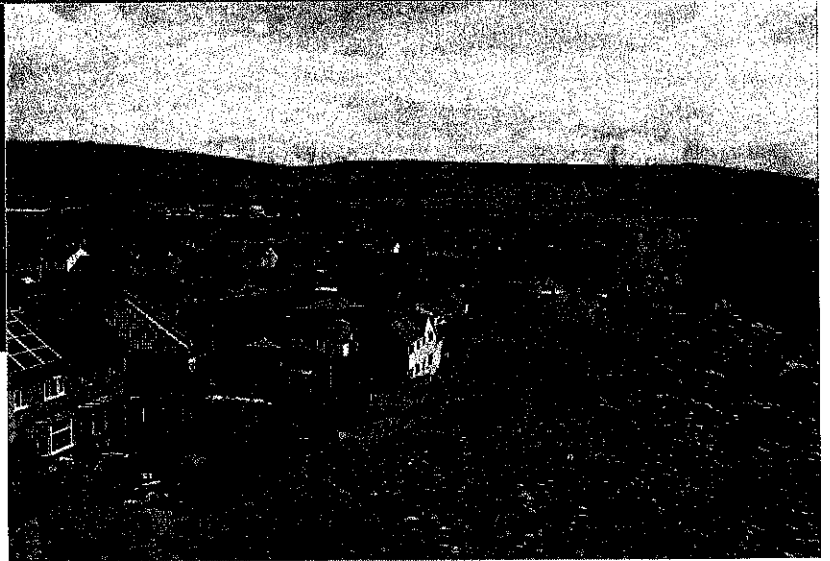
Our Rural Market Towns are not afforded equal access to services and opportunities that are provided to our urban counterparts, and it is more important than ever that Rural Market Towns as a collective, have a voice to express the challenges that our constituents face every day simply by choosing a more rural location in which to live.

RSN working with **nalc** in support of Rural Market Towns

LEVELLING UP

a vision for the future that will see public spending on R&D increased in every part of the country; transport connectivity improving; faster broadband in every community; life expectancies rising; violent crime falling; schools improving; and private sector investment being unleashed.

“without a strong collective voice we risk
being left behind...”



Many of the challenges which government seek to address through levelling up are compounded by being rurally located.

Many of our rural market towns have historic royal charters and have played a pivotal role in the economic prosperity of our country – combined with a wealth of natural capital, cultural vibrancy and stunning architecture – there is incredible potential to once again become centres of economic prosperity in a time where now more than ever we are beginning to value ‘locality’ and a devolution of decision making to impact the communities which we directly serve.

SO WHY DO WE NEED A RURAL MARKET TOWNS GROUP?

“Many small voices speaking individually simply creates a cacophony of noise – these small voices combined in a cultural choir can create a strong, consistent, and harmonious collective voice....”



Membership is simple and you can engage as little or as much as time and resource allow, whilst we ensure that you get the best value from the work we undertake for the Group, essentially providing you with valuable additional resource and tools.

If we are to access opportunities for funding, influence policy decisions and shine a light on the impact that our Rural Market Towns have on economic prosperity and quality of life we need to combine the voices of Rural Market Towns across England.

The successful track record of the RSN in influencing Government policy decisions and improving fairer funding demonstrates how a collective voice can improve outcomes and create impact.

The Rural Market Towns Group will provide you with resources, connections, knowledge, and experience, that enables the representation of your Town to inform policy and generate improved outcomes for your communities.

Our Rural specific resources – such as our bespoke research, newsletters, infographics, comparative data, round up of funding opportunities as well as online events can be used to facilitate better communication with your constituents, and be repurposed to increase awareness of the valuable work that the Town Council undertakes in collaboration with the Rural Market Towns Group.

VISION

The Rural Market Town Group aims to empower you to help influence the national agenda to create a more equitable distribution of funding, with the associated acknowledgement of the importance of our historic rural market towns.

Ultimately delivering impact that is felt right across your rural communities in the form of improved economic prosperity, quality of life and unrivalled community spirit.

Economic
Prosperity

Cultural
Vibrancy

Influence

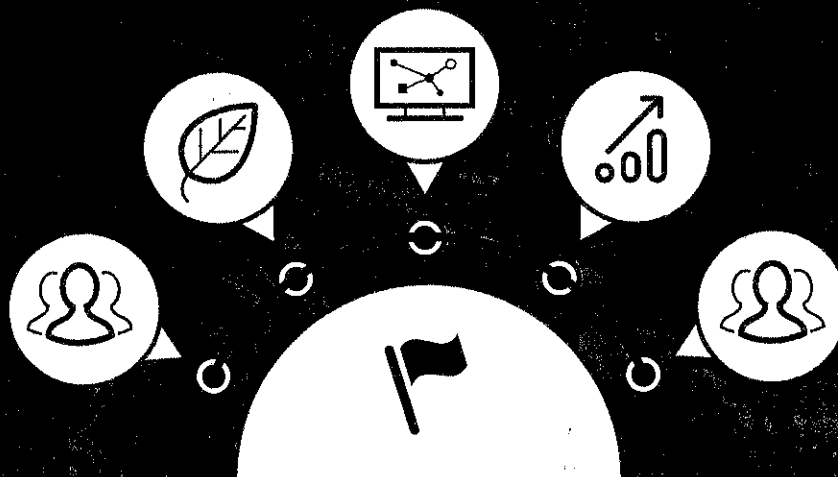
Community

Without a strong collective consistent voice, we risk
being left behind



MEMBERSHIP

- FREE six-month trial period - see website for details and low cost fees beyond trial period
- Access to shared knowledge of over 200 Rural Market Towns
- Peer to peer networking opportunities
- Access to research and resources to aid planning
- Access to resources including, white papers, reports, statistical summaries and rural analysis
- Newsletter six times a year highlighting relevant policy developments, case studies and funding opportunities
- Opportunity to share your events and news with the Group and wider RSN
- Collective campaigning for improved rural recognition and service improvement through RSN national campaigns
- FREE attendance at any of nine online seminars held Annually
- Discounted tickets for RSN National Rural Conference
- Two bespoke meetings a year for Councillors and one for Clerks
- Weekly Rural Bulletin and Monthly RSN Funding Digest





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