

**Subject:** Growing a Rural Community

**From:** Julie Bending (julie.bending@sparse.gov.uk)

**To:** julie.bending@sparse.gov.uk;

**Date:** Tuesday, 29 December 2015, 15:40

Dear Colleague

We are the national organisation that seeks to speak for rural areas across England. We fervently believe in community input and think that networking across all rural areas is massively important at this really difficult time. We cannot take the current difficulties away but we can all work together to seek to help each other and to establish the rural consensus view nationwide. You can see how we are structured and what we see to do, by going on [www.rsonline.org.uk](http://www.rsonline.org.uk)

Rural areas are disparate across the country and getting consensus rural views is therefore more difficult but with email networking systems it is now achievable. At the present time we believe we communicate and work with some 50,000 people each week. We seek in 2016 to quintuple the number of contacts we have across the rural areas of England. We want to achieve a network of **250,000 rural residents** so that the clear consensus rural response system can be established to matters of the day. We will also set up a system of specific Sounding Boards and a Rural Panel to allow who-ever is interested in rural issues to input three times a year in a little more detail. If we want government to listen to what rural areas have to say collectively, we need to demonstrate we can work together and set up a system that communicates with that number of rural residents.

We are writing to you asking for your help. We are also writing to the other 10,000 Parish/Town contacts in a similar way. If we can get all the information sought in the questionnaire from each rural parish we will have the information to be able to put together that network of a quarter of a million people.

Please can you help us?

Could you please discuss with your Parish/Town Councillors and complete the online survey here:-  
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/growing-a-rural-community>

Thank you for your help. This is a really important issue.

Kind Regards and Happy New Year,

David Inman  
Director  
Rural Services Network  
[www.rsonline.org.uk](http://www.rsonline.org.uk)

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The Rural Services Network seeks to provide a voice for rural communities by representing rural services, networking between rural service organisations and establishing and broadcasting best practice in rural service provision.