

Dear Ray,

Many thanks for our chat in the week and for agreeing to try to run this matter at your July meeting.. I write as promised setting out the latest position although for the avid reader our e mail of 12<sup>th</sup> April remains still relevant and that is also set out below.

To be honest Rural areas and towns must come together more if we are to alter trends. The attachment here shows how difficult the position has become. There is also benefit from an operational viewpoint for rural communities to be working together nationally and exchanging views and learning from one another.

Further to our correspondence back in early 2021 we have, given the circumstances we have all been through, extended the free service given to those joining us at that time until now. However, at this time, as we mentioned originally, we must ask those joining us in 2020/2021 if they would consider a small subscription because we operate dependent upon on that form of support. Subscriptions are necessary for our own continuance! But we try to keep them small and manageable. The subscription we are asking Beaudesert and Henley to consider is one of £72 + VAT for membership for the remainder of the 22/23 year from July onward. We have therefore kept our requests as low as is possible. However, we also made it clear, back in early 2021, that no obligation was created by the free membership for continuance on a subscription basis. It is for market towns and parishes to now decide whether they continue with us on this subscription basis. We hope we have shown that we provide a very comprehensive and useful service that constitutes value for money. We look however to strengthen service still further.

We want to make the special two RMTG monthly bulletins both informative and as useful as they possibly can be. Here is a recent copy of that.  
<https://mailchi.mp/rsnonline/rural-market-town-group-roundup-june-2022?e=888b6f3044> covering forthcoming rural events and general news, grant opportunities, net zero updates and news in relation to rural financial matters.

We have achieved a membership of c 200 Rural Towns and Parishes throughout England, some of whom like yourselves are currently on free service, and we need of course now to maintain that level of membership. Rurals' sole advantage in national terms in the number of smaller communities spun across rural England and we need backing from as many of them as is possible in all quarters of the country. We are very strictly non political. The only way however we can make things for rural more equitable from the national perspective is by setting up a network that demonstrates a collective rural togetherness and the consequential wish to be listened to. The stronger this network the stronger the case.

We wrote to you back on 12<sup>th</sup> of April this year about this and as said our e mail is set out below. We have not heard back from you yet. Whilst we are strictly non political, we strongly argue the rural services case. In our April e mail, we set out as an attachment the pdf attached showing the variance between how rural areas get treated by Government as compared with urban areas. This position is many years in the making and has involved many governments. It is very unfair and if anything, that gap between cities and rural area support

threatens to widen still further. There is every need for this ( and RSN's other groupings ) to continue to grow and for the rural case to be clearly presented and evidenced through the backing of rural towns, parishes and of rural areas. We very much hope Beaudesert and Henley both of whom have royal charters for market activity and the consequential historical backing that goes with that will agree to remain with us on the low subscription basis offered to the joint parish council and to assist us further.

We look forward to hearing from you after your July meeting.

Kindest regards,

David

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