

RE: Rural/Market Town Group - Northstowe , Cambridgeshire

From: David Inman <david.inman@sparse.gov.uk>

Sent: Wed, 12 Apr, 2023 at 11:39

To: townclerk@northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk

Hi Mark,

Thanks for your e mail. I appreciate Northstowe is a new Town in and is a relatively fast growing one. It continues however to be in a semi rural or rural area in S Cambridgeshire and that dictates the Town's circumstance.

The funding formulae not only in terms of Local Government but across all services tends in England to be pro urban and as we are the rural services advocate that is a major area of our work. People living in such areas encounter largely the same problems in relation to services where-ever they live in rural Districts whether they live in the countryside or a town like Northstowe.

As a group we want to represent the DEFRA definition of rural (which is also in fact the worldwide definition) 'anywhere that is not urban'. Urban tends to be restricted to cities and the suburbs of cities so rural spans a wide range of varying characteristic and is actually far from the green, green, grass version that many imagine it to be..

In England, as there are more cities than in the other home countries, they can tend to dictate the policy position for the rest of the country. This is different to the Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland where rural and semi rural considerations receive stronger recognition. Advocacy on behalf of rural, wherever its residents reside is therefore vital. We unfortunately are the only group working on rural services on a fulltime basis,

The English view of the importance of city lead means that successive government of different political persuasion have tended to bow to urban or the populated argument. For instance, if look at the Towns Fund it is rare that any town with a population of less than 50,000 population gets any consideration at all and it is structured at the moment to largely do that. Across all services semi rural and rural areas on a pound per residents receive less per head of population than their equivalent living in urban areas and the gap involved threatens to widen still further. In a rural area that position for a rural resident is the same whether they live in a hamlet, a village or a town like Northstowe. They are in danger of being treated relatively poorly in terms of their available services and as technological assumption by government grows so can the risk of people becoming isolated even in towns .

It is essential in our view that all communities get some special recognition and opportunity and to us semi rural is as important as rural otherwise it will simply sit outside of all definitions. It is a fact that semi rural get the lower funding allocation just like isolated rural areas.

Currently we have c200 Towns in membership and as we move forward, we would like to use the different type of town that inevitably will occur to establish groupings of themselves. New towns we are happy to see learning from each other by a group within a group maybe coming together if that is felt to be a good idea by the towns involved.

I hope this e mail assists your council and that we can work further with you and your members.

Kindest regards,

David

David Inman

Director

[Rural Services Network](#)

[Twitter @RSNonline](#)

Email: david.inman@sparse.gov.uk

Mob: 07792 106 133 (Best number to currently reach me on)

Tel: 01822 851 370

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. It comprises SPARSE Rural, the Rural Assembly, the wider Rural Services Partnership and the Rural Market Town Group. The organisation works with Rural England, a stand-alone CIC research group.

The Rural Services Partnership Limited is a registered company (0696 0646) in England & Wales.

From: townclerk@northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk <townclerk@northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 2:52 PM
To: David Inman <david.inman@sparse.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Rural/Market Town Group - Northstowe , Cambridgeshire

Dear David,

Thank you for your email and information provided.

This was discussed by Northstowe Town Council at its most recent Full Council meeting. The Council, however, considered it not clear enough what benefits the membership would bring to Northstowe Town Council, with the messaging being around rural issues not necessarily a focus on towns.

Just wondered whether you may be able to provide me with some more information that I could then present back to the Council so they can make a final decision in this, please?
Thanks in advance.

Kind regards,

Mark

Mark Nokkert

Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Northstowe Town Council

Email: townclerk@northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk Tel.: 07724588949

Website: northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk

Facebook: [@NorthstoweTownCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/NorthstoweTownCouncil) Twitter: [@NorthstoweTC](https://twitter.com/NorthstoweTC)

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Have you looked at our [News Items](#) on the Town Council website? Tell us what you would like to see included via the [Contact](#) page.

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townclerk@northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk.

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-----Original Message-----

From: "David Inman" <david.inman@sparse.gov.uk>

Sent: Monday, 13 March, 2023 10:56

To: "townclerk@northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk"

<townclerk@northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk>

Subject: Rural/Market Town Group - Northstowe , Cambridgeshire

Hi Mark,

Northstowe Town Council took free membership of the Rural Market Towns Group in 2022 and are now approaching the six- month+ period of that free membership to establish working experience of the group. The free period runs to the end of April, but it would be good if you could consult your Council and tell us after your April or May meeting whether you are able to remain with us on a normal subscription basis. To remain with us onward for the remainder of the financial year 23/24 your subscription would for that year be £105.64 + normally recoverable VAT. Subscriptions are our sole source of operating income.

We are strictly non political. RSN themselves are a Special Interest Group of the LGA specialising on rural services and the RMTG are one of the Groupings we run to ensure the rural voice is represented from all angles. We attach statistics showing the direct comparison between rural areas, including their towns, and the urban areas of England. They demonstrate the current problem in relation to services.

We have the following five goals at the heart of running the Rural/Market Town Group:-

~ To bring together 400 rural towns from across England to work together to argue that their historic townships spun across the whole country should receive greater national recognition; allowing them, at the very spine of England, to be properly recognised as important elements in both their local area and of the national economy.

~ To seek to tackle the inequitable system relating to government grants. Under the present systems operating in England, normally people living in most rural towns receive markedly less financial grant assistance per head of population for service support from government than in the rest of the country in terms of grant to their principal councils to assist their services; whilst most rural towns under the current system local councils are not eligible for grant assistance through the Towns Fund and their like. Accordingly, people in rural areas and their councils are doubly penalised. These anomalies need to be significantly reviewed. Currently **every individual rural resident receives back in grant support over £110 a year less** than their urban equivalent. That's over **£250 less for each household in your town**. You can therefore establish for yourselves the likely service consequence in relation to your town. That in overall rural economic terms, produces a very significant variation as to what can happen in urban areas and what can't happen in rural areas. It is essential we continue to press governments in relation to this critical grant imbalance. The numbers of councils in membership in the groups representing rural concern are totally key here, thus our 400 Rural Town target.

~ That there should be stronger recognition of the unique needs of older people and younger people living in rural areas and in rural towns where services affecting both groups are being incrementally reduced.

~ That the rural economy should be given specific focus as an important element of the national economy instead of simply being considered a side component.

~ to allow surveys to be undertaken which allow local councillors to have collectively their say on national issues as they see them affecting them.

We must clearly demonstrate to government that rural areas and their towns cannot continue to be ignored as has increasingly been happened. Rural area and rural towns must however come together and work together nationally if we are show ourselves and to be listened to. **100 Principal Councils in RSN and 400 Towns in RMTG would, we feel, demonstrate that depth of feeling existing in both rural areas and rural towns. It is an essential pre-cursor to going forward. We must work together.**

As well as the benefits from this cohesive work, for your subscription we will provide through our services to your councillors:- the opportunity for free attendance at eight virtual topic seminars a year providing the rural perspective; a weekly rural bulletin, a monthly publications on grant opportunities, and a bimestrial round up of market town news: together with the five-day National Rural Conference each September. We are determined to provide you with service value for your subscription.

The amount we look for from local councils is kept relatively small. We are the only group who solely argue the rural area and the rural town case.

We are obviously very keen for the 100 or so new towns who have joined us over the last year on free trial to all remain with us to support and work with fellow rural towns from across the country. Together we can go forward. Rural people across England require deserve better services than they currently are being given.

We do hope we can continue working for and with you..

Kindest regards,

David

David Inman

Director

[Rural Services Network](#)

[Twitter @RSNonline](#)

Email: david.inman@sparse.gov.uk

Mob: 07792 106 133 (Best number to currently reach me on)

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From: David Inman

Sent: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 2:36 PM

To: townclerk@northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk

Subject: Rural/Market Town Group - Northstowe , Cambridgeshire

Hi Mark,

We are grateful to you agreeing for the Town Council to come on board, on trial, with the Rural Market Towns Group. I confirm this is a free trial without any form of commitment longer term. We will ask the Council in about March 2023 about continuance in a role involving a small subscription.

Here is a link to our introduction survey. It ticks the box for us re the GDPR legislation and gives us some useful base information to work from. I would be grateful if this could be completed when there is a chance.

[Rural/Market Town Group Member Survey](#)

We send out a Market Towns Round Up every second month across our membership.

Here is a link to recent distributions. <https://mailchi.mp/rsnonline/rural-market-town-group-roundup-august-2022> and <https://mailchi.mp/rsnonline/rural-market-town-group-roundup-october-2022> We do seek to give useful information through these. There will be a further issue of this in December.

We also attach a link to the form of Funding Digest RSN, in whose Grouping RMTG is. We issue this every month <https://mailchi.mp/rsnonline/rsn-rural-funding-digest-october-2022> This has proved very popular with all RSN members. It is important to Towns and the Larger Market Parish Councils as it provided details of funding opportunities and about government consultations.

We very much look forward to working with you all at Northstowe T.C. . Any queries do give me a ring.

Kindest regards,

David

David Inman

Director

[Rural Services Network](#)

[Twitter @RSNonline](#)

Email: david.inman@sparse.gov.uk

Mob: 07792 106 133

From: David Inman
Sent: 24 November 2022 11:31
To: townclerk@northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk
Subject: RE: Rural/Market Town Group - Northstowe , Cambridgeshire

Cheers Mark. That's brilliant news. Thanks for that. We will drop you a line with a short Survey Monkey thing. It is honestly short. !

Thanks again.

David.

From: townclerk@northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk
<townclerk@northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk>
Sent: 24 November 2022 11:24
To: David Inman <david.inman@sparse.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Rural/Market Town Group - Northstowe , Cambridgeshire

Dear David,

Thank you; also for voicemail message which I just picked up.

Yes, the Town Council would indeed wish to take up on the offer for a free trial membership, as decided at its Council meeting Tuesday night.

please advise what paperwork etc I may need to process next - thank you!

Kind regards,
Mark

Mark Nokkert

Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Northstowe Town Council

Email: townclerk@northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk Tel.: 07724588949

Website: northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk

Facebook: [@NorthstoweTownCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/NorthstoweTownCouncil) Twitter: [@NorthstoweTC](https://twitter.com/NorthstoweTC)

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townclerk@northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk.

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-----Original Message-----

From: "David Inman" <david.inman@sparse.gov.uk>

Sent: Thursday, 22 September, 2022 11:02

To: "townclerk@northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk"
<townclerk@northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk>

Subject: Rural/Market Town Group - Northstowe , Cambridgeshire

Dear Mark,

Further to previous correspondence just to tell you we have now extended that free trial period to the **31st of March 2023** to give many new Town Councils the opportunity to work with us. It is vital that we achieve as many localities as possible backing the national Rural / Market Town case. The number of Towns involved and their spread across England is very important.

A reminder of what we are about:-

[Please click here to view the Rural Market Town Group leaflet which sets out more information about the group.](#)

The current free offer is around for you to take advantage of and decide, now in March 2023, whether you wish after that to continue on a low subscription basis in the 23/234 financial year. Please be assured there is no future commitment involved in trying the Group out now and then next March you will freely decide whether you wish to remain involved.

Please can Northstowe, a 'new' Cambridgeshire Market Town, and therefore important to us because it brings a different dimension to the Group, please experience our service and what we seek to do. As said no money at all is payable during this trial, and you have absolutely nothing to lose by doing this, but much to gain. Rural communities and rurally based towns deserve a higher national profile. Please drop us an e mail by return and agree to try us out and we will commence your service forthwith.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Market Towns need to work together.

Kindest regards,

David

David Inman

Director

[Rural Services Network](#)

[Twitter @RSOnline](#)

Email: david.inman@sparse.gov.uk

Mob: 07792 106 133 (Best number to currently reach me on)

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