

# SPOTLIGHT ON HEART OF THE VILLAGE

**A roundup of our news, research and work provided by the Rural Services Network, highlighting issues for the heart of the village and its services in the last 12 months.**



## NEWS

News stories that have been featured on our website

### [Rural group speaks out on rural housing](#)

A focus on meeting market demand is failing to provide homes people need, say rural campaigners. The government's failure to prioritise genuine local needs will perpetuate the housing crisis, says the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

### [£23Million for Neighbourhood Plans](#)

Almost £23m in funding aims to give local communities more say in the

[Rural Survey 2017](#) Rural residents are more concerned about declining healthcare services than any other issue, according to the preliminary results of a wide-ranging survey.

Health topped the list of the topics of most concern to rural residents – ahead of public transport, rural housing and rural crime.

The survey of 1901 people was conducted on behalf of Rural England Community Interest Company by researchers from the Countryside and Community Research Institute, based at the University of Gloucestershire, and in partnership with the Rural Services Network.

The survey – believed to be the largest of its kind for many years –

development of their area. Communities across England would receive a share of £22.8m to develop neighbourhood plans, said the government. Housing minister Alok Sharma said the money would help determine where homes, shops, green spaces and offices should be built. It will also help decide what they will look like, he said. The funding—about £5.5m per year until 2022—would provide communities with specialist support to help develop a neighbourhood plan.

#### [£645 Million to help speed up rural broadband](#)

The government says up to £645m will help bring superfast broadband to the UK's most remote areas. Digital minister Matt Hancock said more than 900,000 extra UK homes and businesses could gain access to superfast speeds after the end of this year. This would take superfast coverage to 98% of the nation over the next few years, he said.

highlighted a range of issues with health services of most concern to respondents. Full findings are due to be published later this autumn.

RSN chair Cecilia Motley said:

“This early evidence of concern about healthcare provision comes at a time when many countryside communities face the withdrawal of vital GP services, NHS Service re-configurations and general recruitment difficulties. NHS Providers are already expressing grave concerns about what they are describing as the worse winter in recent history.

“Although rural residents have other concerns – such as lack of affordable housing, poor public transport, often non-existent mobile and broadband connectivity and fears over the future of rural schools – health provision, social care and accessibility has risen sharply up the rural agenda.”

The aim of the survey was to canvass rural opinion with a view to creating, for the first time it is believed, a statistically valid



### **Rural Conference 2017**

We were delighted to welcome Alice Grimes of the Big Lottery to our Rural Conference held in Cheltenham at the University of Gloucestershire in early September. She shared with delegates the ways that Big Lottery are looking to develop more local ways of working with :

- \* More localised assessment
- \* More localised grant management
- \* Increased levels of local stakeholder relations

[To see all of the presentations from the conference including the one given by Alice, click here for more information.](#)



## **RESEARCH AND COMMENT**

We highlight relevant research on rural

representative panel of people to highlight the need for the adequate provision of rural public services and other policy issues affecting rural areas.



## **RSN OBSERVATORY**

The RSN Observatory provides a statistical overview of rural life. It provides analyses and comment on key service provision and issues affecting rural communities.

### **Neighbourhood Planning**

A successful neighbourhood plan must be based on evidence and an understanding of the place they relate to. Communities need to gather a range of evidence and local knowledge before writing their plan. We have collated a selection of evidence, which may be useful to communities in starting to shape their evidence base.

Click this section to view your local information if you are a member of the Rural Services Network.

issues and regularly provide comment on issues pertinent to rural communities.

### [Including communities in service delivery](#)

Many rural communities feel “stuck in the middle” - schools, health centres, social care, leisure and so on aren't quite delivering what they want but they're not quite sure what to do about it. Some residents feel this has resulted in things being done 'to them' rather than 'with them' or 'for them'. And yet it is by communities working together with policy and decision-makers that better local services can result. How can we involve communities in the design, planning and delivery of rural services in meaningful ways? Jessica Sellick investigates.

### [The value of rural convenience stores](#)

**Selling a wide variety of products, staying open long hours and keeping up with the times are all key to surviving as a rural shop, finds Brian Wilson.** The Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) regularly publishes The Local Shop

### Top 5 rural broadband questions

Broadband expert Daniel Heery answers the top 5 questions about rural broadband he gets asked at rural events.

[Click here to view his responses.](#)



### Heart of the Village in the news

Good Neighbour Scheme strengthens community ties (13 September 2017)  
A new strategy to improve the lives of older people living in Daventry District is already paying dividends. ([Daventry District Council](#))

### Backlash over plans to close down the village surgery (4 August 2017)

A campaign has been launched to save a village GP surgery which is under threat of closure. ([Wakefield Express](#))

**Delight as Post Office services return to Llandinam (11 August**

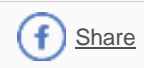
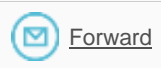
Report and has recently released a spin-off document called The Rural Shop Report\_2017. This latter document – full of charts, graphics and statistics – is largely based upon survey responses last summer from 802 UK convenience stores who described themselves as trading from a rural location.

2017)

Post Office services have returned to Llandinam, two years on from the closure of the village’s branch. ([County Times](#))

**Plan to relocate services gets council backing (13 July 2017)**

Cambridgeshire County Council is planning to house the village’s library, youth centre, children’s centre and early help services under one roof. ([Hunts Post](#))



The Rural Services Network is an organisation comprising over 100 local authorities and 120 other public service providers seeking to establish links across public service, identifying and broadcasting best practise and making representations on rural service issues. For details please visit our website [www.rsnonline.org.uk](http://www.rsnonline.org.uk)

If you would like to find out more about our services or to join, please contact us on 01822 851370 or [admin@sparse.gov.uk](mailto:admin@sparse.gov.uk)

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