

**TOWN CLERK'S REPORT TO A MEETING OF FAVERSHAM TOWN  
COUNCIL held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

**To report on correspondence received or forwarded.**

1. RURAL/MARKET TOWNS GROUP

To consider the invitation to join the Rural/Market Towns Group - If you are one of the 200 rural centres we have selected we very much wish to work with you.

Rural Services Network (RSN) is seeking to establish a Rural/Market Towns Grouping to sit within its network. The towns approached they feel all serve as the centre or market place for the rural area surrounding them. They are approaching over 200 centres in seemingly diverse rural locations across England with the intention of setting up both a more comprehensive national rural network and a separate grouping.

They hope all councils approached are acting as key service and employment centres for their surrounding rural hinterland. The town (or large village in some cases) will have a population itself of between 3,000 and 30,000. (The vagaries of whether or not the Councils approached have adopted s245 of the Local Government Act and put the name Town in their Council's title or whether they remain under the title 'Parish' is not important from our perspective.)

2. PARISH SEMINAR

To agree two Members to attend the Parish Seminar on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November at Ditton Community Centre, between 09:50 and 13:00. A range of topics will be discussed, including:

- Highways input into the development planning process
- Joint working with Parishes on highway plans
- HGV management issues
- Major projects
- Road Safety Education
- Updates from Cabinet Member and Director and KALC

3. FRONT BRENTS ROAD REPAIRS

To consider the report and request for funding from Swale Borough Councillor Benjamin A Martin.



Dear Faversham Town Clerk and Councillors,

**Rural Services Network (RSN)** is seeking to establish a Rural/Market Towns Grouping to sit within its network. The towns approached we feel all serve as the centre or market place for the rural area surrounding them. We are approaching over 200 centres in seemingly diverse rural locations across England with the intention of setting up both a more comprehensive national rural network and a separate grouping.

All councils approached we hope are acting as key service and employment centres for their surrounding rural hinterland. The town (or large village in some cases) will have a population itself of between 3,000 and 30,000. *(The vagaries of whether or not the Councils approached have adopted s245 of the Local Government Act and put the name Town in their Council's title or whether they remain under the title 'Parish' is not important from our perspective.)* If you are one of the 200 rural centres we have selected we very much wish to work with you.

RSN is an organisation seeking to establish and present the rural view as well as evidencing and sharing best practice. We are concerned that, whilst treating other home countries differently, Government is often tempted to consider English issues through an urban looking glass and too frequently consider urban facing situations without giving any particular consideration to rural areas. We would like to change that and we think the right operational networks, such as the one proposed here, will very much assist. We attach diagrams showing how the new group would work as part of our extensive and growing network.

We feel at a time of material change, there needs to be some special consideration of rural matters and therefore our current call on Government is for a Rural Strategy  
<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/time-for-a-rural-strategy>

We also feel that Government needs to return to giving special attention to rural/ market towns as shopping habits change. It is absolutely vital to the national economy that 'market' towns remain buoyant and lively places and support their wider rural hinterlands.

We wish therefore to establish as part of our development as a Network, and as part of our current Call for a Rural Strategy from Government, a Rural/Market Towns Grouping that is representative of rural and towns and markets across the many rural areas of England. These are of course spread across very many diverse areas and are also spread across 200 Local Authorities. That statistic of 200 authorities has given us our starting point for this search so that a local council representing a town or large village in each of those authorities rural area is being approached. To establish successfully a Rural/Towns Group involving a rurally based centre serving each of those 200 differing hinterlands would constitute a really forceful message that rural areas are working together at a difficult time. This is why we are sending out this invitation at this time.

As you are acting as a council at the centre of one of those 200 rural areas we have selected, we wish to work with you. We hope to progress to an even wider ring of Rural/Market Towns over time however you are getting the first opportunity to be an inaugural member..... It is time for the local councils serving as centres of rural hinterlands to once again be properly acknowledged by government for the role they play nationally.

We have to charge a small fee as that is the only way we can operate as a Network but we hope this is low enough for it not to be too much of an issue. The fee will reflect your population size.



Towns with over 10,000 population - £150 per annum



Towns with over 5,000 population but with less than 10,000 people - £ 130 per annum



Towns with less than 5,000 population - £110 per annum

*(All subs incur VAT)*

The important question is can you make a difference by joining? We think that you can. Collectively we are sure we can get rural centres across England and their challenges given considerably more recognition.

At a time of material change we think it is vital that rural areas in England are provided with a national profile. As said we are calling on the Government to undertake and fund a Rural Strategy. There has been no exercise focusing on the rural aspects of England for many decades and given the current situation relating to rural areas it is really important a strategic approach is taken. We think the establishment of this Rural /Market Towns grouping is an important element in this national call. We attach our initial report in relation to this 'Call', 'Time for a Rural Strategy' which sets out why we think Government should develop a Rural Strategy which we hope your members will find helpful.

It is intended there will be 2 Meetings of the Group each year but we also seek to work remotely so attendance is not necessary to successful inputting. As we move forward it will be for the member local councils to set the agenda and the direction. The rural agenda and emphasis here is a very different one to other membership groups currently covering town and parish matters.

We need to know where we stand by the end of November on the approaches being made. Please could you let us know whether it's a yes or a no by responding to us before that date? To assist we will send this invitation by e mail and through the post.

We very much look forward to hearing from you.

Kindest Regards

David

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David Inman', with a flourish at the end.

David Inman  
Director  
Rural Services Network  
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01822 851370

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## **Proposed repairs to road surface of Front Brents**

Front Brents is an unadopted private road. It is therefore not kept in good repair by KCC. It is the responsibility of the frontagers to pay for any repairs needed.

The frontagers are as follows:

Faversham Town Council 50% (the whole frontage adjacent to Faversham Creek), Swale Borough Council 24% (just under half of the Upper Brents side of the road, Shepherd Neame 5% (10% of the Upper Brents side of the road), residents 21% (which is approximately 1% per house). This makes the full 100% of frontagers. It has been accepted also for many years that Swale Borough Council pays for occasional maintenance of the gate and the turning area adjacent to it, and for maintenance of the recently erected flood bund.

Some 5 years or so ago the then Swale Councillor Mike Henderson sought to raise some funds to repair at least the worst of the potholes along Front Brents. None of this money came from his Councillor's grant pot. It was agreed that Faversham Town Council, Swale Borough Council and Shepherd Neame would share the cost, which I believe was approximately £3000. As far as I recall the cost was split 50% FTC, 40% SBC and 10% Shepherd Neame. It was not thought worthwhile to try to obtain the very small share of about 1% from each household along Front Brents as this would have been very difficult to achieve and because several of the householders would not have been able to afford to contribute.

We are again in a similar situation. Estimates I have obtained indicate that the worst of the potholes, mostly towards the Crab Island end of Front Brents can be repaired for approximately £1500. On the basis of the same split as before this would mean FTC paying £750, SBC 600, and Shepherd Neame £150. Again it is not believed to be practical to seek a £15 contribution from each householder.

There is no legal doubt that responsibility lies with the 3 organisations named. The sum required is very modest. May I propose simply that SBC takes responsibility for obtaining the above sum of money from each of the 3 organisations and contracts one of the contractors I have already contacted to get the work done. I am happy to meet on site to itemise the areas which should be repaired.

CLlr Ben A Martin – Priory Ward

23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019

October 2019 Amendment:

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. BAM QUOTE | £1240.00 +VAT |
| 2. BAM QUOTE | £1425.52 +VAT |
| 3. FTC QUOTE | £795.00 +VAT  |

