



AN INSIGHT INTO THE WORK OF THE

YORKSHIRE RURAL SUPPORT NETWORK

BUSINESS PLAN FOR OCTOBER 2013 TO NOVEMBER 2015

Executive Summary

Our aim is to bring together a network of support organisations to promote wellbeing and reduce distress for those living and working in rural communities in Yorkshire, enabling their services to be as timely and effective as possible in reaching those in need of help through regularly exchanging knowledge, sharing resources, contacts and practical support.

This business plan builds on the previous work of the network to further the geographical spread of the work of the organisation to cover as much of Yorkshire as possible through a wide range of useful contacts. Also working closely with the individual organisations to identify themes and topics for inclusion in meetings and to specifically involve relevant parties and organisations to foster better understanding of the issues which can then be fed back where appropriate as representing the voice of the people who work at 'grass roots level' with people in agriculture and horticulture

There are many charitable organisations and support services involved in the farming and horticultural industries and related communities but they all work in isolation and there is no other network bringing them all together which can have a very positive impact in bringing effective and timely support when it is most needed, especially in times of crises. Prompt action can save lives. When people are in dire circumstances being shunted from 'pillar to post' may push them 'over the edge'.

The aims of the network:

- Supporting members in the effective delivery of services
- Bringing Network members together to exchange resources, share knowledge & contacts
- Encouraging a positive attitude in challenging times and reduce the level of rural distress

Background

Yorkshire Rural Support Network has been established for almost 20 years, during which time it has built up a strong network of organisations which are dedicated to helping rural and farming communities. These include public sector, voluntary sector and charitable organisations and joint working between the sectors is actively encouraged through the Network.

The Network has developed and evolved to ensure it remains responsive to the current needs and concerns of its members and those they support and has served the communities well in times of crises in the past bringing together those who were able to offer help.

The Network has not only maintained its strong and proactive membership representing virtually all of the organisations involved in crisis situations but its development of a number of other initiatives have won acclaim.

The 'Farming Ladder' event concept brought together young people interested in a career in farming with ambassadors and educational establishments to promote land-based industries as an excellent career choice for the future of farming and horticulture.

Other successful events have related to 'Succession Planning' bringing people together with local professionals to offer advice and support.

A revised edition of the award-winning 'Fit for Farming' booklet has been produced in conjunction with The Farming Life Centre in Derbyshire and The Men's Health Forum including new material relating to mental health and other topics often considered too personal to talk about. The response has been extremely positive and specific funding has been attracted from The Livestock Auctioneers Association and NFU Mutual ensuring this potentially life-saving information is now freely available in all auction marts in Yorkshire.

The Network has had input into a report into the challenges of Youth unemployment. The Report is available at

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/crc/files/Barriers-to-education-employment-and-training-for-young-people-in-rural-areas.pdf>

As a new departure the Network delivered some ground-breaking training for Agricultural Business Advisers for one of the major banks to enable them to recognise when someone is seriously distressed and to know what support is available for them to be signposted to.

Future plans

Specific target topics relate to:

- **organising further events in conjunction with the Yorkshire colleges to encourage more young people into land-based industries and trades to support the rural economy**
- **bringing Network members together to facilitate exchanging resources, contacts and information and provide practical support continuing to meet on a regular basis**
- **further support for the farming and rural communities in a practical way by identifying and initiating new areas of work to enable these communities to improve their mental and physical wellbeing and thus help support sustainability and boost the rural economy, including addressing rural isolation through farmer healthchecks and social opportunities for women living on farms.**
- **being a vehicle for Network members to have a collective voice drawing attention to issues facing farming and rural communities and to inform and influence policy through Rural Action Yorkshire, The Yorkshire Food, Farming and Rural Network and potentially the Local Enterprise Partnerships across Yorkshire**
- **providing a database of organisations concerned with rural health and well-being; produce resource material and maintain a website dedicated to promoting sources of help for rural and farming communities**
- **seeking funding in order to enable subsequent reprints of the Fit for Farming booklet for distribution through various networks**
- **having a YRSN presence at rural shows and events which is really important to reach target clientele and to prepare an 'event pack' for distribution**
- **broadening the reach of the Network and increasing awareness of its purpose through creating new links with more organisations across Yorkshire**
- **seeking funded support to enable the continued work of the Network in being the only organisation seeking to work collaboratively alongside the various members**

Current collaboration partners

Farming Community Network

Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution

The Addington Fund

Perennial

NFU

Yorkshire Livestock Marts

Involve Yorkshire & Humber

Yorkshire Food, Farming and Rural Network

Yorkshire Rural Churches Support Network & other church organisations

Men's Health Forum

Health and Safety Executive

Yorkshire Agricultural Society

Country Landowners and Business Association

Rural Action Yorkshire

Nidderdale Plus

Yorkshire Agricultural Colleges

Young Farmer's Clubs

Freshstart Uplands Academy North Yorkshire

Potential collaboration partners

We wish to improve the existing links with the following groups to enable them to make referrals:

NFU Mutual

Citizens Advice Bureaux in rural areas

Breed societies, other livestock associations and veterinary practises

Agricultural and Horticultural Show secretaries

Tenant Farmers' Association

Banks

Rural Health Centres