



## **YORKSHIRE RURAL SUPPORT NETWORK.**

### **PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN FOR NOVEMBER 2015 TO NOVEMBER 2018.**

Yorkshire Rural Support Network has been established for a good number of 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.

Since the last Business Plan, the Network has not only maintained its strong and proactive membership but its development of The Farming Ladder event concept, including succession and opportunities for new entrants have proved popular. Targeted funding is being sought for the printing of further copies of the new edition of 'Fit for Farming' and recent successes have included a commission of the booklet for a major rural health conference held at York Racecourse in November 2014.

To remain relevant and effective, key practical activities planned are:

- Continuing our work on 'The Farming Ladder' with further mini events around the County.
- Addressing rural isolation (particularly for women) with some social events to foster mutual support and to encourage enterprise.
- We plan to expand the promotion of improving health in our farming communities through farmer health checks where business and training support are also offered for those who need it.

The Steering Group has now become a Not for Profit organisation, which has helped to formalise the group and aid any appropriate funding applications.

## **The aims of the network are as follows:**

- 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 with practical action.

## **The objectives of the Network are detailed below, with proposed business activity for the period November 2015 to November 2018 grouped under each objective.**

### **1.0 To arrange Network meetings on a regular basis to share information and good practice, to inform members of matters of current concern through presentations and invited speakers, and to progress the work of the Network.**

- 1.1 Network meetings to be organised at least quarterly, with relevant speakers, whether they be Network members or from other organisations to increase knowledge, understanding and share best practice. Regular e-mail contact between formal Meetings where appropriate.
- 1.2 An Annual Review of the Network's Activities to be given at The September Network Meeting each year. This to be in the form of a printed report.

**Lead: The YRSN coordinator, with support from the YRSN steering group**

### **2.0 To further support 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 boost the rural economy.**

- 2.1 Support Network Members with events and encourage them to publicise YRSN at independent events to widen coverage of information available.

**Lead: YRSN coordinator, with support from the YRSN steering group and other network members.**

2.2 Further YRSN branded mini farming ladder/succession events and other business training to be held where there is need and demand (some can be facilitated at The Regional Agricultural Centre (RAC) and others at appropriate farmer-friendly venues around the County). To expand on our current levels of engagement with groups like Yorkshire Farmstay, WIRE (women in rural enterprise) and The Freshstart Plus Project to facilitate training opportunities and space for small groups which seems an eminently appropriate use of Meeting space at The Regional Agricultural Centre, subject to room availability. Develop a more permanent structure of farmer health checks for early detection of potentially serious conditions whilst providing an opportunity to seek advice about any physical or mental health concerns.

**Lead: YRSN coordinator, with support from other network members.**

2.3 YRSN branded informal training for industry professionals dealing with farmers/farming families in difficult situations including Banks and health professionals.

2.4 The further development of YRSN branded support/information events for women living and working within farming businesses to meet up for networking. This would build on the success of one main 'Women in Farming' Conference held at Pavilions and four satellite events in Ripon, York x 2 and Wykeham, near Scarborough.

**Lead: All Steering Group, with additional expertise to reflect the breadth of the subjects.**

**3.0 Be a vehicle for Network members to have a collective voice drawing attention to issues facing farming and rural communities.**

3.1 Incorporating an information sharing slot on each Network Meeting Agenda and articulating messages from other members unable to attend Meetings.

3.2 Project a positive attitude to changes in both health and business issues, by joint working wherever possible and appropriate and particularly when running Network events.

3.3 Promoting appropriate PR through The Yorkshire Agricultural Society's PR Manager on behalf The Network through social media channels and in particular, The Yorkshire Post, Country Week and Darlington & Stockton Times.

**Lead: Steering group/ Coordinator.**

3.4 Engaging with Rural Action Yorkshire and The Yorkshire Food Farming & Rural Network as a source of information and evidence gathering to help to inform/influence policy makers, through Network members. Feed into DEFRA's Rural Networks where appropriate.

**Lead: Steering Group/Coordinator.**

**4.0 Provide a database of organisations concerned with rural health and well being.**

4.1 This to be reviewed **yearly** and **Steering Group members** to offer contact details where appropriate. **Network members** to ensure contact details are up to date, on an on-going basis.

**Lead: Steering Group/Coordinator.**

**5.0 Produce resource material, and maintain a website dedicated to promoting sources of help for rural and farming communities.**

5.1 Leaflets to be kept updated and their use to be targeted to specific outlets where most appropriate, with maximum coverage. An electronic version of the leaflet to be available for download from the website.

**Lead: Steering Group/Coordinator.**

5.2 Targeted information dissemination re farming and rural support, through Network members, Network events, Livestock marts and other appropriate outlet/events.

**Lead: YRSN coordinator.**

5.3 Review of the most effective types of publicity on an ongoing basis depending on demand. Making efficient use of appropriate social media from a well established platform based at The RAC.

**Lead: Steering Group/Coordinator.**

5.4 Presentations given to the Network to be available on the YRSN webpage.

**Lead: YRSN coordinator.**

5.5 To seek targeted funding for further copies of The Fit for Farming booklet.

**Lead: YRSN coordinator, with support from the YRSN steering group and other network members.**

**6.0 Have a YRSN presence at rural shows and events.**

6.1 Network members/Network Coordinator to attend appropriate/relevant events.

**Lead: YRSN Coordinator and members.**

**7.0 Funds to be sought on an ongoing basis to ensure the Network aims are fulfilled.**

7.1 Steering Group to address funding on a regular basis.

**This Business Plan to be reviewed annually by the Steering Group on behalf of Network members and adjusted accordingly.**