

Rural Matters

August 2007

Newsletter of the Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Affairs Forum

Welcome to the **August** 2007 issue of Rural Matters. The aim of the Y&H RAF, which comprises a wide and representative range of rural interests, is to provide an opportunity to influence policy-making and delivery affecting rural parts of the region and to further the implementation of the Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Framework (see: [Rural Framework](#)).

The Humber
Yorkshire and
Rural Affairs Forum



Rural Affairs Forum News

Next RAF meeting is being held on Tuesday 25th September in York and will focus on City Regions and the impact on rural areas. Guest speakers for this will be Prof Neil Ward from Newcastle University's Centre for Rural Economy and Yorkshire Forward's Chief Economist, Simon Foy. There will also be a discussion on the Y&H Assembly's scrutiny review on the Rural Economy. RAF members have been contacted via email and are requested to confirm their attendance and suggest further agenda items by 31st August.

Steering Group Meeting: The first meeting of the new Steering Group was held on 9th July (see group members' profiles [here](#)). Agenda items included the Post Office restructuring process (with the Northern Postwatch Chair as a guest speaker); development of RAF climate change action points following the April RAF meeting; secretariat restructuring; who is to do what on the Steering Group (against Framework priorities) and RAF involvement on RDPE and housing matters. [Minutes](#) have recently been added to the website including a comprehensive set of action points. The next meeting will take place on 4th September to finalise the agenda for the 25th September meeting.

RDPE Business Improvement Panel: The RAF have nominated two members to sit on the panel. Yorkshire Forward will lead the selection process and a decision as to who should make up the four to six member panel should be made by end of August.

RDPE LEADER events: Yorkshire Forward are organising a series of sub-regional information events on the LEADER programme in August which RAF members are invited to. See overleaf on the notice board.

RAF Chair meets Defra Secretary for State:

Graham Ward met the Defra Secretary of State, Hilary Benn, at the Great Yorkshire Show. Along with Rebecca Roberts from 'Feast' (a newly registered RAF member), he presented Hilary with a well received basket of locally sourced salad produce.



Ministers Meeting: The next quarterly regional RAF Chair's meeting with the new rural minister, [Jonathan Shaw](#), is on 6th September and will focus on 'Rural Skills'. As always there is a chance for Forums to put forward their own 'hot topics' on this theme for discussion and RAF members are invited to send these to yhraf@goyh.gsi.gov.uk by 30th August. If non-RAF members have a particular issue on the theme of rural skills they would like to discuss they are also welcome to respond.

Secretariat Tendering: Following the announcement that RAF secretariat functions will be put out for tender, eight expressions of interest have been received. The announcement was featured in the Yorkshire Post and on the RAF website. An email was also sent to RAF members. The interested parties have now been sent the formal tender specification, with tenders due by 30th August. For information please see [RAF Secretariat Tendering](#).

Chair's monthly update: The August update has now been added to the website. It draws members' attention to the Treasury review of sub-national economic development and regeneration and provides more detail on the development of the RAF climate change project. See [here](#)

Year of Food and Farming

The Year of Food and Farming is a national scheme aimed at helping children learn more about their food and where it comes from. It will be officially launched by its Patron, HRH The Prince of Wales, on the 12th September at Highgrove, with a regional launch on the 26th September. This will take place in York Museum Gardens to coincide with the York Food Festival and will include a mini farm, with numerous 'food experiences'. Over 180 children will be taking part. For full launch details see [here](#).

The Year will provide an opportunity for the food and farming industries to educate children and help them make informed choices about their food to sustain a healthy diet. It also provides learning opportunities through creating and strengthening existing links between schools and those in the food and farming sectors. Throughout the year schools will be encouraged to get involved in local visits as well as growing and cooking food.

Regionally there will be a number of activities such as following the story from 'field to fork' where children can experience what happens on a farm and in the countryside. Children will also be acting as 'Dinnertime Detectives', discovering what goes into their meals and how food can contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

For more details visit www.yearoffoodandfarming.org.uk or phone 07702 598108 for details on how you can engage locally.

RAF members are asked to help spread the word and try to ensure good networking and support. One of the Chair's business interests, Stockbridge Technology Centre at Cawood, will be very actively involved in both hosting children as well as coordinating wider activities in the York area (see [STC events](#)). Steering Group member Richard Ellison from the NFU is also a contact for information.



Post Offices Closure update

This update is based on direct information received from Post Office Ltd's Northern England & Scotland Regional Development Manager and the Northern Chair of Postwatch (postal services watchdog).

Following the DTI consultation earlier this year, the Post Office (PO) closure procedure will run over the next 18 months (co-ordinated by Post Office Ltd). Of the current 14,000 branches in England, 2,500, are due to close across rural and urban areas; however, with 500 new outreach branches, the net closure will be 2,000. The new network of POs will be established 'where they are needed', based on standardised evidence on 'area plans' (constituency groupings). Each area plan will be open to a six week public consultation period, which in Yorkshire and The Humber are planned as follows:

Area Plan Name	Y&H Constituencies Included	Start Date
East Yorkshire with Bassetlaw & North Lincolnshire	Beverley & Holderness; Brigg & Goole; Cleethorpes; Doncaster Central, Doncaster N; Don Valley; Great Grimsby; Haltemprice & Holden; Hull E; Hull N; Hull W & Hessel; Scunthorpe.	Oct 2007
North Yorkshire with Yorkshire East & Keighley	City of York; East Yorkshire; Harrogate & Knaresborough; Keighley; Ryedale; Scarborough & Whitby; Selby; Skipton and Ripon; Vale of York.	Nov 2007
Cleveland with South Durham and Richmond	Richmond (Yorks).	Feb 2008
West Yorkshire	Batley & Spen; Bradford N, Bradford S, Bradford W; Calder Valley; Dewsbury; Elmet; Halifax; Leeds Central; Leeds E; Leeds NE; Leeds W; Morley and Rothwell; Normanton; Pontefract & Castleford; Pudsey; Shipley; Wakefield.	April 2008
South Yorkshire with Huddersfield, Colne Valley and North Derbyshire	Barnsley E & Mexborough; Barnsley Central; Barnsley W & Penistone; Colne Valley; Hemsworth; Huddersfield; Rotherham; Rother Valley; Sheffield Attercliffe; Sheffield Brightside; Sheffield Cen; Sheffield Hallam; Sheffield Heeley; Sheffield Hillsborough; Wentworth;	July 2008

NB: GOYH have prepared a map of this information available from yhraf@goyh.gsi.gov.uk

Postwatch will make sure the evidence on which proposed closures are based is accurate and that agreed criteria is adhered to. The consultation web-pages will go live in the near future - Rural Matters will keep readers up-to-date with these arrangements.

Outreach Services: Post Office Ltd is responsible for where and how the 500 outreach services will operate. Regional Manager, Mark Wright, advises that this will largely be established through consultation with sub-postmasters; however they will continue to seek the input of Local Authorities and other stakeholder groups. If an authority wants to contribute to an outreach service Mark would be happy to discuss further. He can be contacted via the main programme office: 0207 3547233 or network.change@postoffice.co.uk. For more general information on the process see [Postwatch website](#)

RDPE Update

Following from previous update in [June Rural Matters](#)

Initial feedback received by Defra from the European Commission on the Rural Development Programme for England has been positive and it is still expected to be approved later this year.

The latest version of the Regional Implementation Plan (RIP) was presented to the Rural Practitioners' Group and Rural Board in June. Both groups were happy with the document, but the Board has yet to sign off the document as small alterations may need to be made to the England programme by the Commission. Once the national documents have been agreed the RIP will be signed off.

News In Brief

Headings are web-links to further details

[Assembly Rural Economy Scrutiny Review:](#) The Y&H Assembly Scrutiny Board is currently looking at the Rural Economy in its next review. Initial work involves gathering information to identify key areas to focus on. The consultation is live and RAF members have been invited to contribute. On 11th October partners and stakeholders are invited to attend a public discussion on the review where there will be an opportunity to put questions to a Yorkshire Forward panel.

[Big Lottery Funding: Rural Theme:](#) The second round of the Big Lottery Fund's BASIS programme is due to launch Spring 2008. Strengthening support to rural groups is a key theme in Y&H and there will be a consultation on regional proposals over the next 3 months. Details of how you can take part will be on their website mid August.

[Local Government Performance Framework: views sought](#)
The Local Government White Paper (published October 06) set out a new performance framework for local government. The backbone of the Framework will be around 200 indicators covering all Government's priorities for local delivery to be reported against from April 2008. Defra is seeking views on their proposed indicators by 16th August.

[Village CORE Programme:](#) This joint venture programme offers a financial start-up package for new community-owned village shops in England. The programme continues until July 2009 and further applications are welcome.

[SITA Community Challenge Fund:](#) The SITA Trust is offering £250,000 of project funding under its Community Challenge Fund. There are three project categories: Heritage; Community and Sport. The application deadline is 27th September and further details, including applicant criteria, are available through the link.

Yorkshire Forward Activity

[Support for Flood Affected Farms:](#) Yorkshire Forward is the country's first RDA to agree to extend their small business flood recovery scheme to include farm businesses, providing up to £2,000 to assist with immediate recovery needs.

[Farexchange:](#) Farmers and growers in the region are urged to sign up to Farexchange, a pioneering project to help them understand the needs of food manufacturers and consumers by building strong working partnerships and links with the Regional Food Strategy.

[Car Parking in Market Towns:](#) YF has funded research into issues surrounding car parking in market towns and how its effective management can assist in town regeneration. The Executive Summary is available via the link, whilst the full report will be available shortly.

NOTICE BOARD

- **[LEADER information events](#)** (click sub-region for details)
[West Yorkshire:](#) Saltaire, 15th August, afternoon
[North Yorkshire:](#) Harrogate, 22nd August, early evening
[North Yorkshire:](#) Pickering, 23rd August, early evening
[South Yorkshire:](#) Meadowhall, 24th August, morning
To register or for more information contact yrcc@yrcc.org.uk
[The Humber:](#) Hessle, 21st August, early evening
For this event contact: info@hwrcc.org.uk or 01430 430904
- **[Heritage open days 6th-9th September](#)** offering free access to properties that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission. See [Heritage Open Days](#)
- **[National Fairtrade Towns Conference](#)** hosted by Rotherham MBC, Thursday 13th September. For further information contact Kate.Taylor@rotherham.gov.uk
- **[Institute of Chartered Foresters National Field Tour 2007](#)** 19th-21st September, North York Moors: For details see [here](#)
- **[Stockbridge Technology Centre open day](#)**, 23rd September, as part of British Food Fortnight, Cawood. To include local food stalls and children's corner. See [STC events](#)
- **[Plunkett Foundation Rural Social Enterprise Conference](#)**, 28th-29th November in Cambridgeshire. For more details contact mike.perry@plunkett.co.uk

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