



**MEETING OF THE RURAL ENGLAND CIC  
RURAL VULNERABILITY RESEARCH PANEL  
AND RURAL ENGLAND DIRECTORS**

**On-line via Zoom  
Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021 10:00am – 10:30am**

**NOTES**

**Present:**

Graham Biggs (Company Secretary) (GB)  
Fred Dunwoodie-Stirton (FDS)  
Professor Janet Dwyer (RE Director) (JD)  
Jo Giles (Cadent Gas Ltd) (JG)  
David Inman (RE Director) (DI)  
Elizabeth Warwick (Wales & West Utilities) (EW)  
Brian Wilson (RE Director) (BW)  
Bethan Aldridge (minute-taker) (BA)

**Welcome and introduction**

BW welcomed everyone to the meeting and quick introductions were given by those present.  
BW to Chair this meeting.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Richard Allcock, (Western Power Distribution), Nicki Johnson (Western Power Distribution), Andy Parker (Calor), Rachel Ryan-Crisp (Southern Water), Nigel Winnan (Wales & West Utilities)

**2. Progress Report and Discussion**

**Overview:** JD explained that good progress has been made on the project as a whole. FDS has completed a number of interviews with the voluntary and community sectors. A short interim progress report has been sent to DeFRA who have released further funds.

There has been less progress in respect of recruiting PSR registered people in some communities, particularly in the Western Power Distribution area. JD is conscious that due to GDPR considerations this has created extra work for Nicki Johnson and she is grateful for her perseverance and support.

Southern Water has been able to engage with it's PSR customers directly and FDS has been able to progress those interviews.

JG commented that Cadent has a Customer Forum Database and consent but needs to find people in the appropriate case study areas. EW noted that Wales & West Utilities do not have this type of database and does not have the case study areas either.

**Action:** FDS to send EW the post codes for the case study areas.

JG asked how we could create more engagement from PSR customers and to respond to emails requesting their assistance. EW commented that recognition of gas networks is very low with the public but that they do know who supplies their electricity when there is a power cut.

**Action:** JG to discuss various approaches with Nicki.

**"Purdah":** JD explained that as the project is co-funded by DeFRA and we are about to enter into a Local Government pre-election period, known as Purdah, it means that the interviews will have to be suspended from 15<sup>th</sup> April until the elections on 6<sup>th</sup> May. It has been hoped that as the survey is non-political that it would not apply in this instance but unfortunately it has. The current deadline for completing the work is 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

BW advised that once we have reached the 15<sup>th</sup> April that all the evidence/data is looked and then decide whether to stop the study and report the findings or carry on after Purdah.

**Action:** A further meeting of the Research Panel to take place shortly after the 15<sup>th</sup> April to discuss the finding to date.

Meeting closed at 10:30am