

The Roles, Responsibilities and Resources of Rural Officers - 2007

Revd Jonathan Still

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Summary

This report into the roles, responsibilities and resources of rural officers is the outcome of a sabbatical study carried out in 2007 by Revd Jonathan Still, of Guildford Diocese. The study was initiated at the request of the network of Rural Officers and carried out in conjunction with the National Rural Officers at the Arthur Rank Centre. Rural Officers in England, from the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church were asked to complete a survey questionnaire and 24 personal interviews were carried out.

The analysis of the range and type of work undertaken shows that Rural Officers deal with the very large agenda of rural issues, often in great detail. The lead priority is that of rural social and community issues; followed by work with churches, as adviser, trainer, resource and contact person. There remains an important and strong commitment to the farming community and agricultural issues. Different Rural Officers work at a strategic / regional level, others are focused on local and /or pastoral concerns.

Strong emphasis is put on the need for continuity in the commitment to the post by a sponsoring church body. This is a long term mission requiring consistency, good oversight and monitoring.

The investigation found a great variety in time allocation and job title. Also revealed was a poor level of accountability, support and appreciation of what is achieved. Few had adequate job descriptions.

There is evidence of successful ecumenical working in different parts of the country. Working regionally also has a significant benefit, so that there is broader coverage of issues and more effective support of each other. It also allows personal expertise and the time available for each post to be used most effectively.

35 recommendations have been made relating to appointments, regional working, communications, resources and the work of a Rural Officer.

1 Introduction

1:1 Project rationale

This report has been made possible by an extended study leave project for a sabbatical awarded for May, June and July 2007 by the Diocese of Guildford to the Revd Jonathan Still, Vicar of Bourne and Rural Dean of Farnham in Surrey.

The author was from 1988-93 full-time agricultural chaplain to the Bishop of Hereford, covering the Welsh Marches of Herefordshire and South Shropshire. He found himself completely suited to the work, having grown up in a small agricultural Dorset village, and having read “Economics with Agricultural Economics” at Exeter University before going on to Cambridge for Theology and theological college. Being full time, he had a tremendous opportunity to follow up the contacts and networks in areas of usefulness and interest. Over five years that grew into a considerable web.

Through a friend and contact from that time, Canon Jeremy Martineau, the author contacted Dr Jill Hopkinson and the Revd Graham Jones, the National Rural Officers for the Church of England and the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. They are based at the Arthur Rank Centre at the Royal Agricultural Society of England showground at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire.

The Arthur Rank Centre (ARC) was established in 1972 to be a permanent presence in the midst of the National Agricultural Centre at Stoneleigh Park. It is a partnership between the Royal Agricultural Society of England, the Rank Foundation and the Churches. Its aim is to serve rural communities and their churches. It was from the outset a natural focus and resource for rural officers and agricultural chaplains.

The author offered his time and experience to the National Rural Officers for his sabbatical project. Happily the offer met with a waiting need. The national network of Rural Officers (ROs) had expressed a wish for a clearer understanding of their role, responsibilities and resourcing. The RO job description included 93 individuals spread across England from three denominations: Church of England (Anglican), the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church.

After discussion it was decided to combine a questionnaire sent to all ROs with a selection of face to face interviews. This would give an overall view of the scope of the work done combined with an intimate conversation with individuals. What inspired these people? Who listened to their experiences? What were they able to achieve? Who gave them encouragement and direction?

1:2 The origins of Rural Officer posts

In times past rural clergy would be presumed to relate closely to all aspects of rural life. As parishes and churches became clustered under the care of one minister the contact with the issues of rural community development and agriculture declined. In the late 1960s recognition began to grow that changes in rural society and economy merited attention from the Church. Lincoln Diocese appointed a Countryside Officer and in 1973 the Diocese of Carlisle appointed an Agricultural Chaplain. The Diocese of Canterbury followed soon after and by the mid 1970s there was a group of about six chaplains who worked from a theological

base which had been developed in industrial mission - to relate to a sector of society and work to the agenda set by that sector while retaining a critical reflective faith base.

Inevitably such chaplains came to be called on to be involved in a range of rural issues such as housing, environment, young people and the future of the rural economy. As other dioceses came to see the benefit of moving out of a church base into engaging with the wider world friendly tension grew as to the priority for these posts - to be Agricultural Chaplains or Rural Officers. Further tensions arose as to whether the post holder was there to advise the Bishop and the churches or to serve the proper needs of the industry or rural society; adviser or officer? The expertise gained by these clergy came to be called on by dioceses which were struggling to provide sufficient professional support to the parishes and their clergy which were being re-organised. These tensions remain and are clearly seen in the wide diversity of job titles, listed at Appendix B.

The Archbishops' Commission on Rural Areas recommended in 1990 that each diocese should have someone specializing in rural affairs and that there should be a National Rural Officer based at the Arthur Rank Centre. A surge of interest and appointments followed and most dioceses have retained someone with that responsibility, albeit with a varying amount of time to carry out the role. Then the Methodist Church also came to appoint rural officers with similarly varying degrees of time available. This was followed by the United Reformed Church making Synodical appointments, aware that it had a good number of rural congregations.

1:3 The context for the rural Church

ROs work is in a context that is continually changing. Whilst it is not appropriate here to discuss the current state of the countryside, it is helpful to explore the major trends which affect the work of an RO.

The State of the Countryside 2007 (Commission for Rural Communities, 2007) illustrates the major trends taking place within rural communities. Over the last 20 years the population of rural England has increased by up to 100,000 people each year with the current population around 9.4M people (2001 Census figures), 20% of the English population. Many rural residents now commute to jobs in large towns and cities and household incomes have continued to increase in the more accessible (less sparsely populated) rural areas. Sparsely populated parts of rural England do less well economically but still command high house prices. In spite of this affluence, there are 900,000 households in rural England that live in income poverty. Many services are being withdrawn from rural areas with the closure of post offices, which will contribute to further closures of village shops and other businesses. There are now significant numbers of rural primary schools identified for closure. The lack of affordable housing causes significant problems for young families and those without significant sources of income, as local rural jobs tend to be low income. Agricultural incomes continue to vary with challenging market conditions, and following serious outbreaks of animal disease, many livestock farmers continue to experience high levels of uncertainty and stress.

Almost every rural settlement has a church or chapel. The numbers of churches in the countryside for the three denominations in the study are shown below.

Denomination	Number of rural churches	Number of members
Church of England	9,639	497,000
Methodist Church	3,500	60,000
United Reformed Church	373	8,702

The Church of England has some 60% of its 16,196 churches in rural areas, the Methodist Church around 50%. The 'membership' numbers for the Church of England are based on Electoral Roll figures from 2005 and comprise around 40% of the Church of England at that time. The estimated figures for the Methodist Church comprise around 20% of the denomination. The URC figure is also estimated.

Congregations and buildings in rural communities therefore make up an important part of the three denominations.

2 Methodology- Questionnaire and Interviews

The research aim was to explore the roles, responsibilities and resources of ROs and to make recommendations for good practice working. The method was to combine both extensive coverage of the RO network and detailed and personal contact with individual ROs. Therefore a two pronged approach was adopted. Firstly a questionnaire was sent to the entire network of ROs to give the breadth of coverage. Secondly a series of face to face hour long interviews was conducted with a sample of ROs (about 1:4) who were chosen by the National Rural Officers to achieve balance and representation from all three denominations, from full and part time appointments, from both well known and less well known individuals and from various parts of England.

2:1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is attached at Appendix A. The work the author had established when a full time RO and the current rural and agricultural context provided a pattern against which to compare the experience of others. This range of work has varied little, with some contemporary RO involvement being reported in mining, forestry and fishing which are other important rural industries.

It is important to relate the work done by ROs to the time allocated to the task by the sponsoring Church body. Therefore ROs were asked the proportion of work time given to the RO role.

ROs were asked to indicate the areas of their work under the headings of:

- Church
- Rural Social issues
- Agriculture
- Statutory bodies
- Voluntary organisations

Questions were also asked about resourcing and support.

Of the 93 questionnaires sent out, 42 (45%) were returned. These have enabled a tabulation of contacts which provide a reality-derived job description for what ROs actually achieve in post.

2:2 Interviews

The hour long face to face individual interviews, of which 24 were completed, necessitated five separate itineraries across 2,810 miles of England, covering Wessex, the Welsh Marches, the North West, the West Country and the Midlands. The purpose of these interviews was to get behind the statistics to the person. The interviews show something of the inner motivations, satisfactions and pains experienced by these individuals.

The interviews therefore began with a section on vocation asking how the individual came to be in this post. Discussion ranged over personal life history, background, relevant academic or work experience as well as calling.

Secondly the interview explored the specific local issues engaging the RO. These could be agricultural or rural/social but also included the concerns they carried in their heart, i.e. their inner motivation.

As church officers, ROs should also have an intellectual theological basis for their work, and so the interview explored questions around "Where do you go in scripture or Christian tradition to justify your work, your concerns and your opinions?".

Finally, ROs were given opportunity for the expression of frustrations and the things which constrain their work.

3 The Work of a Rural Officer

3:1 Denominational balance

The complete network of 93 ROs comprises:

9 URC (10%), 28 Methodist (30%), 56 Anglican (60%).

The 42 respondents to the questionnaire were:

3 URC, 4 Methodist, 35 Anglican.

However, many of these 42 posts are part time; only four are full time. If the percentages of working time allocated to RO work for each of these 42 ROs are added together, the total comes to the equivalent of just under 14.5 full time posts.

If this time allocation were to be analysed by denomination, then the contribution is:

3.8% URC, 5.8% Methodist, 90% Anglican.

The 24 interviews completed were with:

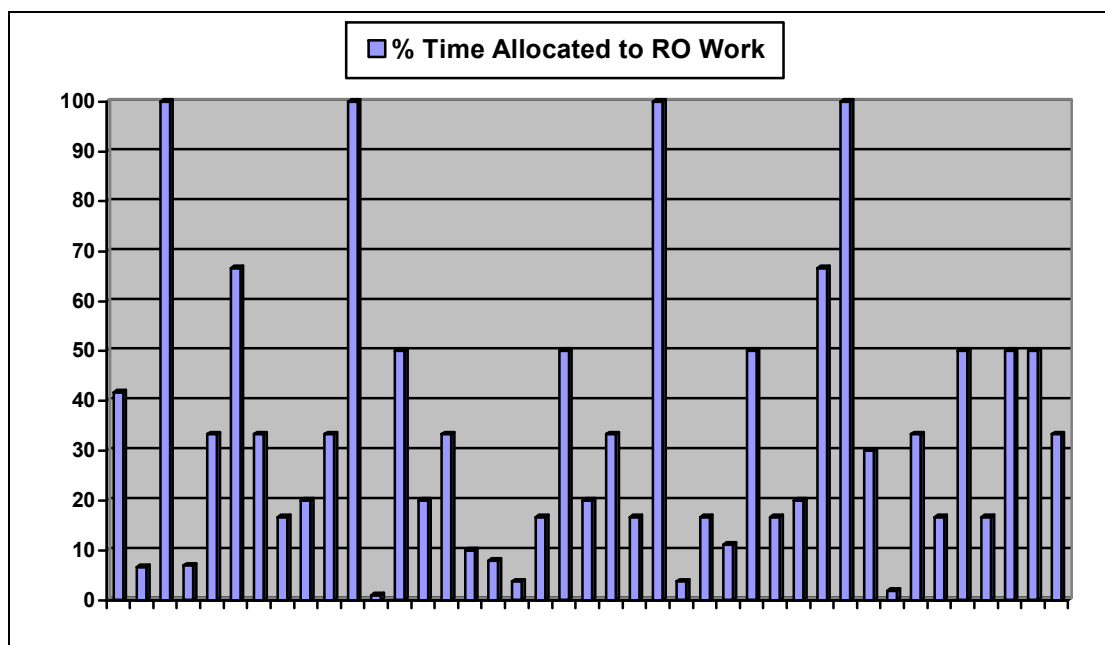
4 URC, 8 Methodist, 12 Anglican.

3:2 Time allocation and Job Descriptions

Though requested with the questionnaires, only seven job descriptions were received. These were extremely variable in content and format. Some are less than one side of A4, others are documents of several pages. It is obvious that there is no conformity or shared understanding of the role among the various appointing bodies, although there are common themes running through the job descriptions which broadly reflect rural community and agricultural issues. Given the necessity of ROs working as a network, this is most unhelpful, especially for those who work together on a regional or sub-regional basis. However, some variation is inevitable, to reflect the needs of the local area.

The huge variety of the job titles given in Appendix B reflects the fact that appointments are made at local level without sufficient reference to the National Rural Officers. There is a re-invention of the wheel at each appointment. It is good that RO appointments are grounded in their context, but the churches are appointing individual members of a national network who become publicly known representatives. ROs will be working with local and regional representatives of other national organisations. A generic and nationally uniform job title would be a great help in recognition and understanding which should be the key aim of the churches.

The percentage of time allocated to Rural Officer work by the 42 respondents is shown below:



Within the group of 42 respondents, there were four full-time posts, two two-thirds posts, six half-time posts, seven third time and four fifth-time. All but the full timers have additional local church responsibilities. ROs are currently mostly stipendiary clergy, with some self-supporting ministers and a few paid lay workers. There is opportunity to expand the number of lay people engaged in this important ministry.

Visiting ROs around the country reveals that more is done than is paid for. If ROs stuck rigidly to their time allocation or their working hours, the task would not be done so well. This is especially the case in recurring periods of emergency such as

the BSE or foot and mouth epidemics, when, of necessity, ROs may have to suspend other parts of their work and their lives for the duration. This innate flexibility which ROs offer is of great value to the churches. However, it comes at the expense of individual ROs, their other responsibilities and families. If not remunerated, it should at the very least be recognised and appreciated, and the ROs themselves should be warned and prepared for these sudden demands beforehand, not least in the job description before appointment.

3:3 Analysis of work by sector

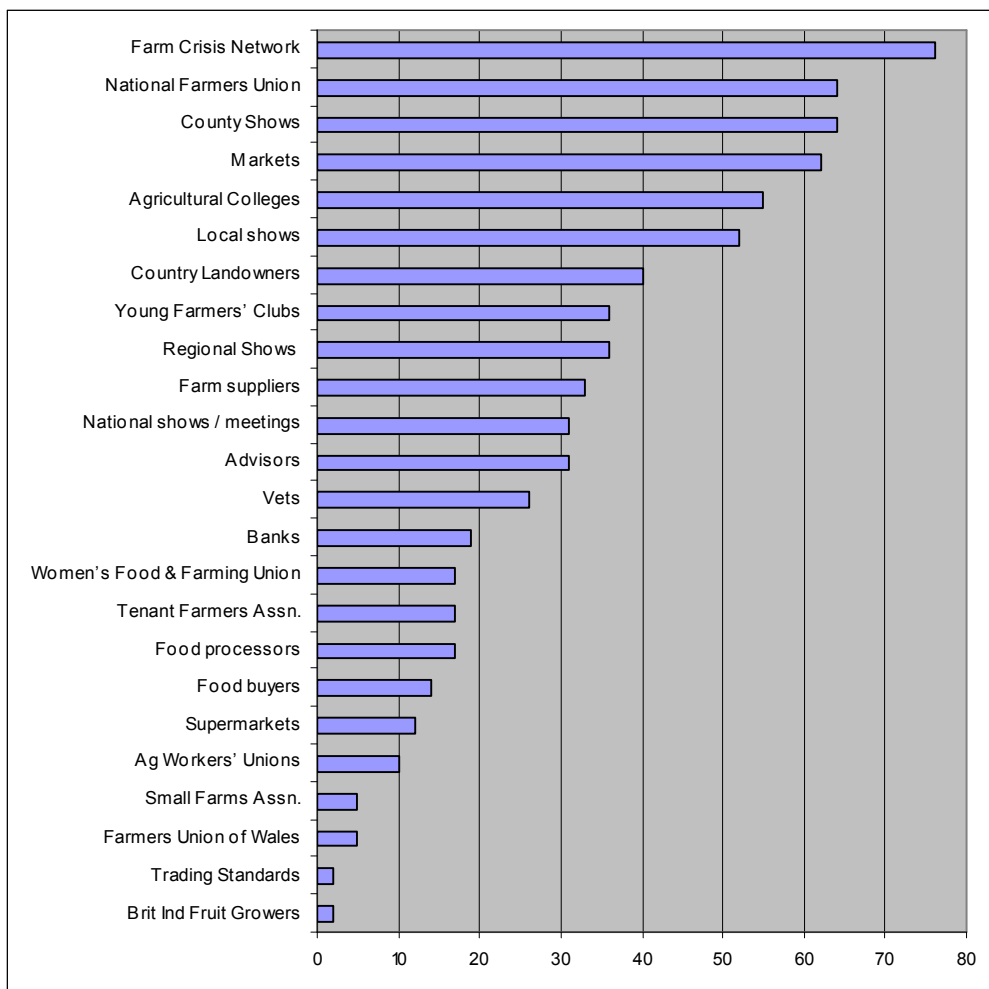
39 respondents were able to analyse their work according to its focus on agriculture, rural social issues, church work or other. Contrary to some expectations, 24% of time was focused in agriculture, 33% in rural social issues, 26% on church issues and 17% on other. While analysis of individuals varied greatly from one whose entire time was spent in agriculture and another whose whole time was spent on church issues, the totals suggest a healthy balance across the range of potential responsibilities. If greater emphasis were to be placed on team working across denominations and within regions, this network could form a missionary team of great power and influence.

3:4 Length in Post

Five ROs have been in post more than 7 years. These individuals are very valuable as reference points for more recently appointed ROs and have the opportunity to contribute their significant expertise to the network. There is another grouping which has been in post around 4 years and the remainder around one year or less. Induction to role will continue to be very important. The induction provided by the National Rural Officers at ARC is valuable and needs to be supplemented by a regional induction provided by existing ROs in that area.

3:5 Contact with the agricultural industry

The chart below shows the percentages of ROs reporting contact with different aspects of the agricultural industry.



The greatest contact ROs had with the agricultural industry was through Farm Crisis Network (FCN) - 76%. FCN achieved a very high profile and status through the churches' pastoral and practical response to the foot and mouth epidemic of 2001. Substantial church credibility was earned with the agricultural community in 2001 through the pastoral work of ROs, local clergy and the national network of FCN volunteers. This network includes many rural officers and agricultural chaplains and is maintained by part time co-ordinators. New RO appointments can and should be linked into FCN as a matter of course.

ROs often commented on the social standing and credibility the churches had achieved through RO ministry in the 2001 foot and mouth epidemic and how it might be built upon. With the effects of foot and mouth restrictions joined by bluetongue in 2007, FCN's workload is increasing and must be regarded as a core concern for RO ministry and as a gateway into the credibility of the entire rural ministry of the churches. This is because it effects a real and down to earth connection to the rural community through the demonstrated concern of the churches. It is a key to the churches' mission strategy to the agricultural community.

64% of responding ROs were in touch with their local NFU giving both business information and pastoral opportunity.

The interviews gave instances of the connection between the farm business environment and pastoral concern and care:

“Traditional diversity (within agriculture) gave some protection from losses in any one sector, but recent specialisation brings vulnerability” Methodist RO

“all things lead back to the basic lack of profit in the face of the power of the supermarkets” Anglican RO

“TB is worse than foot and mouth because it is endemic and has no resolution- a “cancer in farming” leading to widespread frustration and despair” Anglican RO

“When a local estate agent leafleted farms, touting for business and boasting how much they could make selling up through that agent, the chaplains challenged them with the pain and suffering involved in these sales.” Methodist RO

These statements show the extent to which ROs have a good and effective working knowledge of agriculture.

55% of ROs were in contact with their county or regional agricultural college. This may involve a specifically designated role as a Further Education chaplain, or in one case a role as governor. The colleges and the Young Farmers’ Clubs (36%) are a gateway to contact with the young incomers to agriculture and rural employment and are the place where the churches may have an ear to the ground on new developments in land use; for example in environmental or recreational use. However it is also important that this information is fed back through diocesan structures and through the national network of ROs.

3:6 Contact via shows and markets

Shows and markets are the shop windows of the agricultural community. For years the job of organising the church tent at the show naturally fell into the lap of ROs. Mercifully, more is being done by local Churches Together ecumenically as found at Corbridge.

For the RO the county show (64%) is a key networking opportunity to tread the grass and meet the representatives of other networks and organisations in the same field. In many places other clergy are drafted in wearing their clerical collars to expand the uniformed presence- briefed and organised by the RO. This is following the same tactic as the county constabulary- to the same end and good PR! For some years the prize winning cattle at the Three Counties Show at Malvern were led around the ring by clergy with agricultural backgrounds leading to favourable publicity in the press and local radio. However, it must not solely be the job of the RO to organise the church presence at these sorts of events and the most effective presence is an ecumenical one.

Shows are annual affairs and it is the markets and marts which are the bread and butter places of meeting. They are much fewer in number than they used to be and are concentrated gatherings of livestock producers; 62% of ROs attended. This is an area where continuity is essential. Markets will be held weekly and some ROs

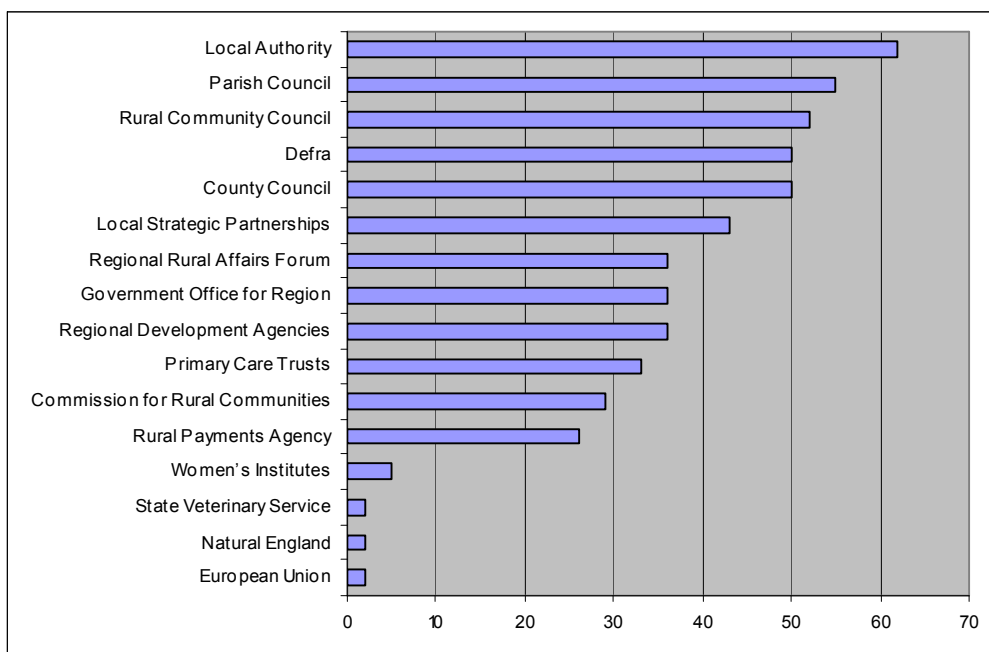
have as their only regular commitment an hour spent at the mart every week. If kept to regularly, over time this can build into a whole ministry to the hinterland the market serves. This was apparent in Bishop’s Castle, Shropshire and in Thirsk. In both cases this began with a small portion of time given with regularity and total commitment over an extended period until trust and relationships grew, ministry was born and God’s mission was enabled. In several instances clergy were invited back to bless the markets when they had been re-opened after Foot and Mouth and this visible connection has been maintained by annual carol and other services including harvest, in the market ring.

3:7 Contact with other bodies relating to agriculture

Fewer ROs have contact with the less identifiable and more diverse suppliers, buyers, banks, advisers and vets who operate within the rural economy. 33% ROs were in touch with suppliers, 31% with agricultural advisers and 26% with vets. These more intricate networks will be far more difficult for ROs with small time allocation to reach. For full time ROs the contacts will happen more easily over time.

3:8 Statutory and Other Bodies

The chart below shows the percentage of ROs who are in contact with statutory and other bodies:



Several ROs commented on the ease with which one gains a place on committees and the difficulty of relinquishing the same. The major county or district organised bodies all scored over 50% representation: Local Authorities, Rural Community Councils and Defra in the regions. Some questioned the value of this time. Others, especially the regional groupings who work ecumenically, share this out efficiently among them. In Devon, the Methodist RO based at Okehampton is the “faith” representative on the Devon Rural Network and the Anglican RO is the voluntary sector representative to the same body. Similar task sharing and regional working takes place around Thirsk and in Somerset.

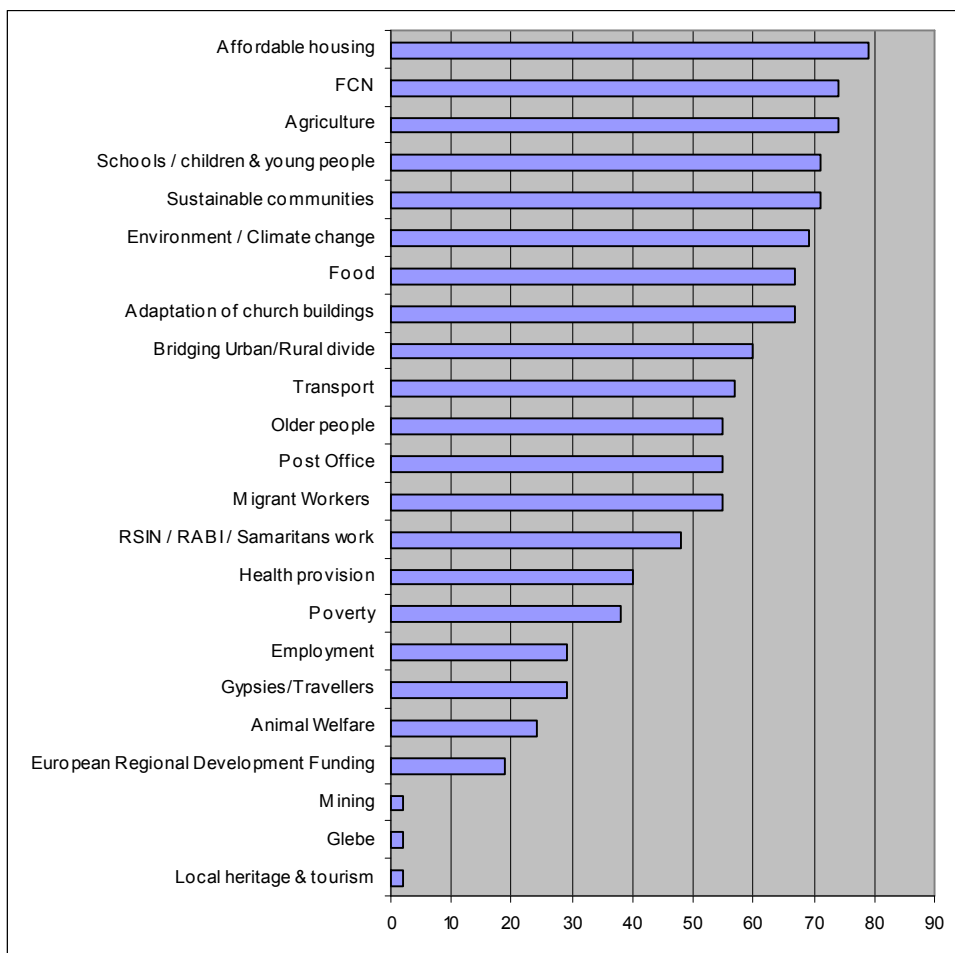
These groups and committees are where contacts are made with non-agricultural interest groups. Through the RO the churches may here have contact with rural

mental health, or transport, environmental issues, migrant workers or housing policy. Some of these bodies are opposed to aspects of farming such as animal rights organisations and the RO must tread carefully in these areas of potential conflict.

These issues reflect the wider rural population. Such representation cannot be done in short regular slices of time and generally will require a greater RO time allocation to penetrate. In this area the RO agenda may overlap with the churches' social responsibility agenda and collaborative working between church departments is essential.

3:9 Engagement with rural social issues

The chart below shows the percentage of ROs who engage with a wide range of rural community and social issues:



Affordable housing was the issue raised by most ROs (79%). It contains within it not just the economic reality of agriculture- one RO said that it all leads back to a “basic lack of profit” - but also the social reality of indigenous rural people being displaced by “wealthy incomers” and the social tension that engenders in individual settlements.

“Government policy is alien to the rural. It sometimes feels as if the “rural bits” are to be treated like game reserves in Africa, where the local inhabitants are a problem to be removed if they are not park-keepers themselves.” URC RO

ROs are intimately concerned with the social health of communities which is at the centre of the mission of the rural Church. 71% selected sustainable community issues- linked to the same percentage for schools, children and young people. ROs were also engaged with transport (57%), migrant workers, post office provision and older people-(all 55%). When discussing the future of the Church in an isolated part of northern England, one RO told me that it is not the survival of the churches that is the central issue, but the survival of the place as a living community in these remote places. Individuals retire to the area, but there will be no indigenous younger people to provide the services these older folk will require. Who will deliver goods, repair and maintain domestic systems or provide nursing or home care? There is nowhere left for those who would provide these services to live.

In the interviews the ROs reflected on the changes facing rural communities.

“By 2020, 50% of the population will be over 50 years old in this county.”
Anglican RO

“the only true holiness is social holiness” Methodist RO quoting John Wesley

“All rural service provision is more costly than urban. The income stream is never quite adequate. Centralising services cuts central costs but only by shifting them from the provider onto the user.” Methodist RO

“I feel that I am witnessing the death of a culture” URC RO

“There is isolation in the farming sector, but also for those who move in, build their electric gates on the drive, and then find they have created a prison for themselves.” Anglican RO

“we are to create community by being inclusive and open to the neighbour and the stranger in our midst” Anglican RO

“the pressure on agriculture depresses the ability of the rural economy to sustain community life in rural areas” Anglican RO

“There is a strong temptation for institutional churches to pull out of small communities to save money, but there is a priestly duty to maintain prayer in each community.” Methodist RO

In this selection of statements, the ROs are accurately reflecting on problems facing rural communities and the opportunities for rural churches to engage with these issues. ROs are therefore uniquely placed to help rural congregations to do this.

3:10 Environmental issues

Environment and climate change were selected by 69%. There was variation among ROs as to the significance and reality of climate change, as is reflected in the wider community. One RO pointed out that one local farmer referred to his father’s diaries to show that there had been three Aprils as warm and dry as 2007 in the last 33 years. Another, wondering at barley being in ear three weeks earlier than ever known, was convinced that change is here.

“Bio-fuel crops are coming in, particularly oil-seed rape which brings new issues of complaints of respiratory difficulties from elderly neighbours. Increased winter rain has led to severe run-off deluging (valley) homes in chalk spoil and water” URC RO

Some ROs are now also Environment Officer. The majority regard climate change and responses to it as a key issue which will revolutionise farming.

“The use of grains for bio-fuel production combined both with increased demand from China and India for meat and dairy produce and reduced harvests from drought (Australia and Argentina) or floods (UK) has led to a surge in grain prices which will knock on to raised dairy and meat prices. This will raise the economic and political profile of agriculture.” Anglican RO

3:11 Food and urban-rural links

Food issues (67%) is a particularly fruitful area to link urban and rural areas. In Dorset, *Dorset Direct* links church communities with local producers to ensure that the meat on the parish barbeque is locally sourced with minimal food miles and maximum social capital.

“The issues [of food] link around the world.” URC RO

“There are enormous ethical issues around food...farmers have made an overall loss on food production for the last seven years. They are carrying the loss and we are still eating cheaply. There are growing pressures on land as bio-fuels become a new demand. The starkness of these issues receives surprisingly little attention” Methodist RO

“Concern for fair trade for local farmers led to a leaflet campaign around the local churches last Christmas ‘How far has your turkey travelled?’”. Methodist RO

Bridging the rural/urban divide (60% of all ROs are involved in this work) was almost a mission statement among the URC ROs. They were outstanding in the vastness of the regions they were appointed to, for example:

“Lands End to Swindon, but excluding Dorset”

or

“Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Derbyshire.”

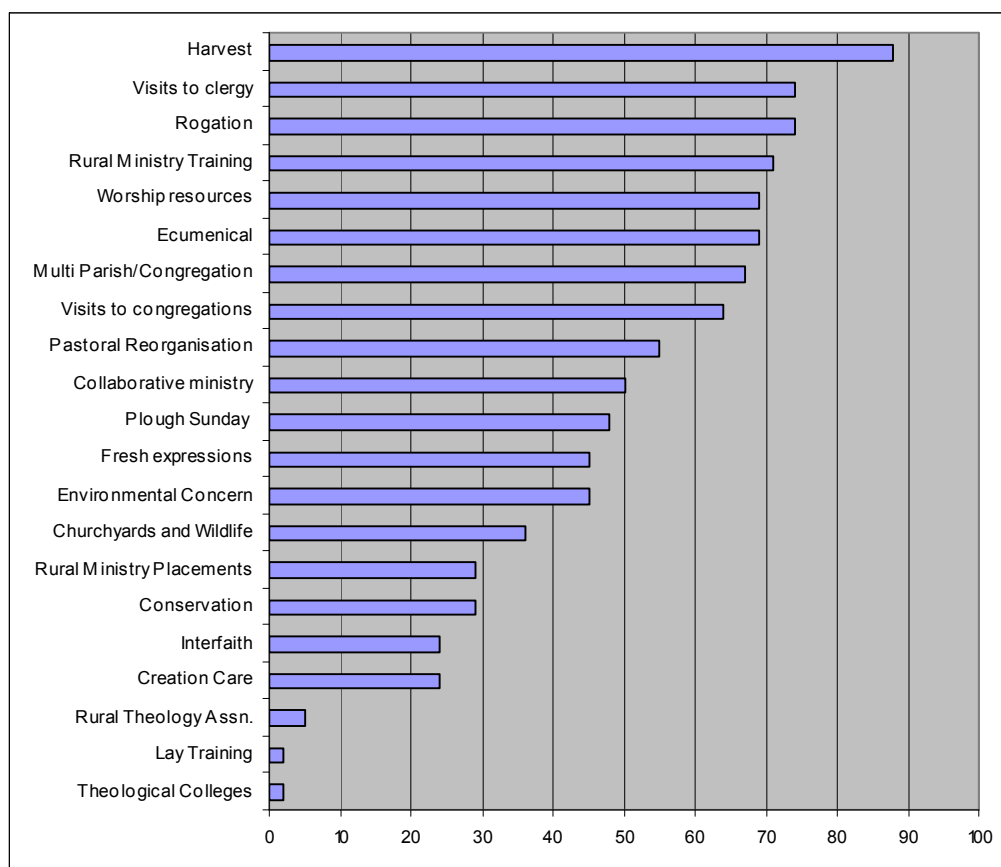
A large part of the concern of all ROs was to act as interpreters of the rural to the urban centres within their regions. They see a link between UK urban attitudes to the UK agricultural community, and UK urban attitudes to developing world producers. The ethical issues in linking urban consumers with food and food producers both home and abroad, are the same. The wide geographical stretch given to the URC ROs gave a particular insight into the difficulty of presenting rural issues to an increasingly urban political majority. These communication links giving ethical insight within the wider church community are precious and should be valued.

3:12 Work with the Churches

88% was the highest involvement in any one activity in the entire questionnaire. It is the figure relating to harvest festivals. It is closely followed by 74% for Rogation Sunday. A lesser amount (48%) were involved in Plough Sunday. The vast majority of ROs combine their role with care of church congregations. This involvement in the seasonal agricultural services may therefore be on their own patch. However this research suggests that both in a preaching and advisory role ROs are involved widely at these times as a major link into the church congregations of their area.

We saw earlier that the shows and markets are the shop window for the RO into the rural context and community. The seasonal agricultural services, rooted so surely into the natural cycle of the year and the great biblical feasts of the Judaeo-Christian liturgical year are the shop window for the RO into the Christian congregations of the area.

The chart below shows the percentage of ROs involved with particular aspects of church life:



The RO both represents the Church to the rural community and the rural/agricultural community to the Church. It was commented in interviews that the traditional prominence of the agricultural community in rural church representation both in attendance and in lay leadership as church wardens and elders has declined as financial and time pressure has weighed heavily on agricultural producers. The decline in the involvement of the agricultural community in wider society has therefore affected the church too. In some places the local church is now run by retired incomers with the time and resources which working residents lack. If local congregations are losing touch with their rural

location and becoming islands of suburban or urban culture in a rural context, then the work of the RO in linking rural and agricultural networks with congregations and ensuring a mutuality between them becomes a key mission task in rural situations.

“The church hierarchy are not seeing the rural, being pre-occupied with urban politically correct issues” URC RO

“Isolation is a major concern. The isolation is linked to the lack of self worth and self valuing in individuals, communities and chapels. It is the sense of living in a world which is run by those who don’t understand your context or problems.” Methodist RO

It is impressive how many ROs were engaged with adaptation, renewal and growth strategy in the rural Church. 74% were visiting clergy as advisers and 71% were involved in rural ministry training. 69% indicated production of worship resources. 29% were involved in rural ministry placements where ministers in training are given work experience in a rural context. This indicated a high priority being given to training and developing the resources needed for mission in rural areas.

3:13 Working ecumenically

Ecumenism scored highly with 69% response. It is a key issue in rural areas where ministry resources are thin on the ground.

“Denominations are ignoring each other so that work is duplicated i.e. child protection procedures. Each denomination is concerned with its own network. Ecumenism has gone quiet, yet it is essential in rural areas.” URC RO

Working together ecumenically is of great benefit to ROs. It enables mutual support and sharing of tasks. This form of ecumenical cooperation was evident in Northumberland, the East Midlands, Ripon and York, Somerset and Wiltshire, Hereford, Devon and Cornwall. It appeared that the close geographical proximity of the dwellings of ROs could itself be a significant factor in enabling ecumenical regional working, as was a close overlap of geographical areas, where the RO work can become a collaborative regional response.

Significantly, great differences of time allocation and styles of working were no impediment. There are several examples of full or half time Anglican ROs, working at regional or national level on issues, who are complemented locally by one day a week or one day a month URC or Methodist colleague with whom they share specific local representation. For instance, at one local market this is to their mutual benefit and to the overall gain of the Church’s mission. It is important for ROs who may have been longer in post to realise how effective many of them can be as door openers to new arrivals: passing on specific representation on certain committees or issues which the new arrival will not have the networks to penetrate themselves, and thereby releasing their own time more effectively.

3:14 Other Church issues

67% indicated adaptation of church buildings and multi-parish/congregational ministry as an important part of their work. 55% were involved in Pastoral reorganisation, 50% in collaborative ministry. The involvement of ROs in the

management of change in church plant and pastoral organisation is impressive. It is also absolutely necessary if we are to have the resources and information to enable others to be proactive in mission in rural communities. ROs are helping to adapt the organisational and built structures of the Church for future mission.

Concern for church buildings received strong support in interviews:

“Small churches are just seen as less important than large ones and get palmed off. They come to think of themselves as failures. I encourage building projects because they raise morale so significantly” Methodist RO

“I believe in dealing with the specific characteristics of “hinterland” rather than the centralising tendencies of the “Minster” model”. Anglican RO

“however small a church or chapel is, it is as important to its place as larger churches in larger communities. Sometimes its relative importance is far greater because it is “owned” by the whole community. Small is beautiful in the Kingdom of God, and the giving of worth blessed.” Methodist RO

“In our pastorate, the URC church building, which was overlarge, is to be sold and new premises rented with key requirements of sustainable energy use and suitability for community outreach through a non-alcoholic youth bar and hopefully a farm shop to enable the whole LOAF thing- Local Organic and Fairly traded.” URC RO

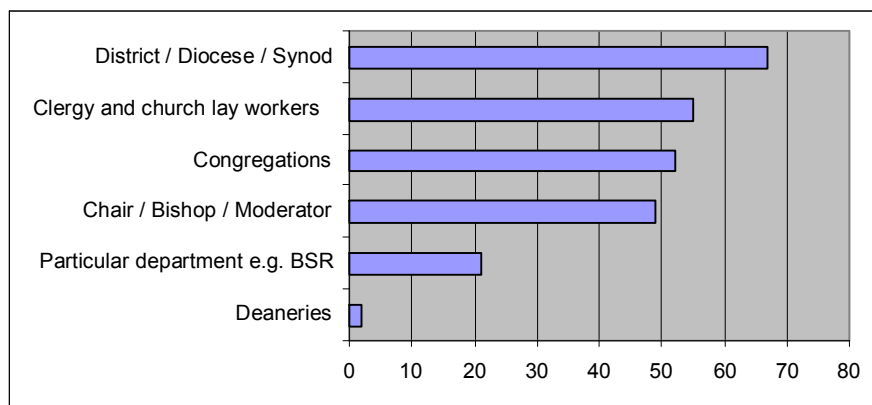
“I believe in small chapels and see my work in supporting them and keeping them open while they have three members and a roof... buildings are important as they mark public space and public ministry as opposed to a private faith association.” Methodist RO

These non-conformist ROs quoted above saw the maintenance of bricks and mortar church buildings as a powerful public mission statement which could not be matched by gatherings in private homes. There does exist a middle way by which public worship is conducted in public buildings which are neither churches nor chapels.

Through the ROs the churches are in touch with the major changes in rural society. Their experience and wide-ranging contacts can be of great importance for the Church as it seeks to engage in God’s mission to the world. The experience and work of ROs therefore needs to be used more creatively by local and regional church structures, particularly those concerned with social responsibility, mission and ministry.

3:15 Whom do you primarily resource?

The chart below shows the bodies resourced by ROs (more than one body may be resourced). The figures show the percentage of ROs resourcing each body.



ROs mostly resource their synodical body (67%) whether that be the District, Diocese or URC Synod. This may be because these are the bodies to which they on occasion report. 55% resource their peers working in ministry at parish or district level. 52% resource congregations and 49% the Chair, Bishop or Moderator.

Through the interviews it is in these relationships that ROs have contact with other church structures and bodies and do their reporting. There is for some ROs no clear arrangement of line management and a strong desire to feel more listened to. When the Chair, Bishop or Moderator makes time to listen to the RO directly, or asks advice it is immensely appreciated.

“When the Bishop speaks in the House of Lords on rural issues he will contact me to ask for specific verifiable examples to give human interest to his presentation.” Anglican RO

This opportunity to bring the voice from the real experience of local people to the ear of Government and the nation is of inestimable value.

Conversely:

“Rural issues are still marginalised and the (church) hierarchy wish to be seen as non-rural overall, as to be rural carries connotations of bucolic, unsophisticated, non-metropolitan.” Anglican RO

This view raises important concerns that are likely to be reflected in several, if not many parts of the church and emphasises the importance of ROs having clear and effective structures to which to report.

3:16 Security and Support in Role

The vast majority of ROs (74%) felt secure in their role as RO, although that leaves one quarter feeling to some degree insecure. This may be through insecure funding or lack of appreciation.

ROs were also asked how appreciated they felt by those they have contact with in rural organisations, and by their sponsoring church bodies.

I feel appreciated by the Church	55%
I feel greatly appreciated by the Church	12%
I feel ignored by the Church	28%

I feel appreciated by the wider community	60%
I feel greatly appreciated by the wider community	19%
I feel ignored by the rural context in which I work	14%

The scores for appreciation were more positive from the wider (rural) community than from the churches. Roughly similar numbers felt appreciated by community (60%) and church (55%). Nearly one third of respondents (28%) felt ignored by the church. Only 19% of ROs felt greatly appreciated by the community and only 12% felt greatly appreciated by the churches. This indicates that ROs feel that those they work *with* appreciate them more than those they work *for*. This may be because RO work is its own reward. One RO explicitly stated that:

“It is so good being paid to do your hobby!” Anglican RO

However, it may also reflect a feeling of not being supported by the sponsoring church and being a “token representative” or “badge wearer” both of which terms were used. To be effective the post of RO must be taken seriously by the churches and appropriately supported.

Only 14% felt ignored by the wider (rural) community compared to 28% who felt ignored by the church. Support for ROs from the churches is therefore an important issue. Churches can fall into the habit of feeling that they just have to shout their message to the rural world louder, using the RO as a megaphone. Through the ROs the churches also have the opportunity to listen to the rural context, and learn from it, something which rarely happens.

ROs reported back to a bewildering array of officials and committees. It may be a Bishop or Archdeacon, a Churches Together group, a Social Responsibility Board or a specific rural group. Contact with a line manager varied from twice a week through to the most common 3-6 times a year. One gave “occasionally” and one “I am not sure that I have a line manager”. There is no regular procedure.

The majority (60%) of ROs reported that they worked alone rather than in teams, though team working was enjoyed in other contexts and seen as desirable.

3:17 The Arthur Rank Centre and the National Rural Officers

The Arthur Rank Centre was rated as very important by 60% and quite important by a further 29%. There was much praise for:

“a high level of professionalism” and “excellent communications”

“good networking and sharing of ideas”

“an ability to tap into a wealth of knowledge and experience”

The only area for improvement regarded face to face contact with the National Rural Officers: “more contact” and “more local visits”. These requests reflect the value placed on the work of the ARC and the National Rural Officers. The

respondents did not distinguish between the ARC and the National Rural Officers. For many the National Rural Officers are the face and work of the ARC.

4 Vocation and Theology

4:1 Vocation

Where do ROs come from? What draws them to this ministry and where would the churches look for new recruits?

In interview it became apparent that for many the rural was part of their personal identity long before the concept of RO service came about. Of the 24 interviewees, 11 were related to farming through family. For instance: the son of a shepherd, two fruit growers, the wife of a farmer, the granddaughter, niece or nephew who spent long summer holidays helping on the land. One or two ROs themselves farm at present.

Equally strong is the experience of village life. Six spoke of village childhoods as a key formation, an equal number had come to RO ministry having been drawn in through pastoral ministry in village situations. Two received their vocation to ordained ministry through membership of village churches.

Four had an academic training in agriculture or had worked in agricultural further or higher education. One worked for the NFU as a researcher and one had been a land agent.

It appears that the rural itself generates its own specialist ministers. It is very important for rural dioceses, synods and districts to know who they have already who shares these characteristics of agricultural or village experience. They and the churches will be enriched if these seeds are enabled to fruit.

4:2 Theology

The RO network includes several mystics. Like Russian orthodox “starets” they stride the forests and green spaces of our land and see them alive with the Spirit. Others are much more practical and hands on people. Some are both, which is fittingly incarnational. When asked about theology, ROs became reticent: they spoke far less on this topic than any other. Some found it hard to speak about their theology which may be expressed more easily through practical action rather than in words alone. This is a pity as it is important for RO work that it can be justified in theological terms to the wider church. Two ROs mentioned opposition to their work from those who regarded the work of an RO as a distraction from mission. It therefore needs to be demonstrated to a wide audience that RO work is part of the mission of the Kingdom of God.

11 of the 24 interviewees mentioned creation and creation spirituality. This is most widely a sense of being inspired by the natural world. However, it is possible to focus a little more specifically.

“We can concentrate upon Jesus as Redeemer and Saviour to the exclusion of God as Creator and Sustainer... creation is not the stage on which the drama of salvation is played out. It is itself part of that drama... the renewal

of heaven and earth involves the renewal, refreshment and recreation of this very earth” Anglican RO

ROs are concerned about the emphasis the wider church places on the work of God in Christ crucified as Redeemer and Saviour, and would wish to assert that the rural emphasis needs to be on the work of God in Christ the Eternal Word as Creator and Sustainer.

In this direction, a quarter mentioned the Iona Community and its creation emphasis in liturgy and spirituality as a useful resource.

Eight mentioned the Hebrew prophets and the concern for social justice and ethics as their inspiration. Two work with ideas of exile and reconciliation between peoples and land. This is the area of RO work as social gospel. It leads again into a connected area of covenant.

Seven specified covenantal theology such as the Deuteronomic code for land relationships. ROs referred to the Sabbath and Jubilee regulations, the first fruits, and the recognition of covenant as a concept to be applied now between God and humankind and the planet.

Two referred to environmental spirituality, with regard to the spiritual malaise which is the root of humankind’s destructiveness. Two spoke of incarnational spirituality in just “being there” as in leaning over the rail at the mart.

One is a Benedictine oblate and one very well read on eastern orthodox Eucharistic, sacramental and priestly theology.

ROs don’t need to be shy of theology. They just need the courage, the opportunity and the language to talk about it.

The Rural Theology Association is one forum where these themes could be drawn together and developed.

4:3 Frustrations

ROs’ words speak for themselves:

“There is a degree of resistance to RO work as a distraction from church-centred “mission” from evangelical quarters.” Anglican RO

“Methodism is under review and it is hard to keep the rural in the centre, yet 50% of Methodist churches are rural! There is a failure of understanding of the rural, it is thought of as somewhere for holidays or retirement.” Methodist RO

“The URC [has an] obsession with committees, structures and officers. They are not important in comparison with the grass roots but there is a desperate attempt to remain a national denomination, leading to box ticking in imitation of the C of E.” URC RO

“I am part of a group of 20 advisers in the diocese in various areas of expertise, both full time and part time. It is absolutely astonishing that the

group has no direction given the talents gathered there... people are not being used, the diocese operates as a series of disconnected fiefdoms lacking a sense of the greater whole” Anglican RO

But for the vast majority the key frustration is lack of time.

These separate but related frustrations show that not every employing body knows how to effectively use its officers and / or sector ministers, either as individuals or as groups or team. It also illustrates (again) the reality that the work is not taken seriously by some and that rural can easily be perceived as failing.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

5:1 Conclusion

The key impression left by the survey has been one of diversity and variation. ROs form a richly diverse network scattered all across the country in areas with very different rural contexts. They work from a variety of experience with variable fractions of work-time for church bodies which in themselves vary not just between denominations but within them.

Individually the 93 ROs do not make one picture. When it is considered that between the 42 ROs who responded, there is divided the equivalent total working time of just under 14.5 full time posts, it is astonishing what is achieved. When they are brought together, as this research has done, they interrelate to form an extraordinary resource for the churches.

During the major crises of BSE and foot and mouth, individual ROs had to lay aside other aspects of their lives to give the time necessary to the situation. It is a wonderful gift to the churches that this network will willingly respond in this way to crisis episodes. ROs have, through this sacrificial giving, produced a legacy of gratitude and appreciation for churches which cared for rural communities in crisis. The churches in their turn must appreciate the work done by these ROs.

Central to their effectiveness as a network is the ARC. The value of the ARC is not just as a source of information, but as a clearing house or exchange for the talents of the ROs. The briefing papers which are sent out from ARC are sometimes themselves sent in to ARC from ROs.

In our culture it is common for the strategic level to be more valued than the local and specific. For this reason it is possible for an RO with half a day a month to feel that they might as well give up. But the strategic and the local are both complementary and essential. The RO network, through the work of the National Rural Officers at the ARC, can combine European overviews of rural policy from full time ROs working at the strategic level, with the support of the emotional needs of farmers leaning on the rail of Masham mart, and with the issues of rural community development. The network is a wonderful resource. It depends upon good communication, and should be seen creatively as a national, ecumenical network.

ROs can feel very exposed, especially in the full time posts in times of financial stringency. They are sometimes perceived by the sponsoring churches as loose cannons, loners or entrepreneurs roaming at will. They could be seen, and tend to

see themselves rather, as flagships representing the intelligent pastoral concern of the Church of Christ for the rural context. The churches more than ever need to be seen as facing out to God's world rather than falling in to their own internal concerns.

5:2 Recommendations

5:2:1 Appointments

1. The decision to appoint an RO lies with the sponsoring church body. The National Rural Officers are able to advise on the appointment process and help shape a clear job description. They need to be consulted at the earliest point in the decision making process.
2. Appointing bodies need to be very clear on the objectives set for each RO appointment and its job description and clearly relate this to:
 - the time allocated to the RO post and what it is possible to achieve in that time
 - realistic and achievable targets
 - the priority needs of the rural area and the appointing body
 - the geographical region to be covered
 - other ROs working in the local area and wider region, especially ecumenically, their work and length of time in post
 - whether the post is open to ordained and lay
 - location of the post, especially where it is combined with local church responsibilities
 - the reporting structures, line management and support bodies for the RO
3. The sponsoring body would benefit from discerning who among its existing personnel and members of congregations, might be potential ROs in terms of practical or academic agricultural, rural or village experience.
4. Upon appointment, the new RO should, in addition to national induction at the ARC by the National Rural Officers, be given an induction to that region's RO's network.
5. Every RO must have a clear job description with appropriate reporting structures.
6. Every RO should know to whom they are accountable in their sponsoring church body and have regular meetings with them. Too many are ignored after appointment and have insufficient supportive contact. There is a difficulty in the lack of rural knowledge among those conducting appraisals and this can compound RO's feelings that their work is not understood.
7. The sponsoring church bodies need to be encouraged to regard their individual appointments as contributions to a national ecumenical network. This collaborative requirement needs to be reflected in the job description.
8. There will be an expectation of flexible response in times of rural crisis such as foot and mouth, which will have implications for support, budget and job description.

9. There may be some value in exploring the possibility of a single generic job title for the RO role.

5:2:2 Regional working

The instances where groups of ROs work collaboratively in a region are impressive. They impress in terms of the coverage they achieve, the stability of the networks of contacts they maintain and in the mutual support they offer each other. The most fruitful examples contain one long term RO who acts as the 'memory', giving continuity and induction to new arrivals. In regions where all ROs are recent appointments it is very difficult to carry on contacts and maintain the networks by which RO ministry operates. It is also a great asset to have both intellectual - strategic ROs and hands on - practical ROs working together.

10. The National Rural Officers need to be pro-active in the creation and maintenance of regional groups of ROs, in consultation with the sponsoring church bodies and by giving more support where this is needed.
11. ROs themselves need to be encouraged (where this is not happening already) to work in regional groups of teams. Many ROs (60%) work alone, even though team working was enjoyed and seen as desirable.
12. Within regional groups, ROs need to be encouraged to play to their strengths, sharing tasks across the region and preventing duplication.
13. Effective communication is important in facilitating regional working.
14. ROs who have been in post for longer could be encouraged to share tasks and responsibilities with those who are new in post within a region.
15. There is a lack of conformity or shared understanding of the role among the various appointing bodies within the denominations. Given the necessity of ROs working regionally and as part of a national network, this is most unhelpful. A process of education of Bishops, Chairs and Moderators may aid this.

5:2:3 Communications

The concept of a national network of ROs depends upon communication. One RO who was not part of this flow said that he "didn't do e-mail". E-mail is essential to this mode of operating.

16. Appointing bodies must ensure that adequate training and equipment is available. If not, the effectiveness of the RO is compromised from the start. The smaller the time allocation and the greater the geographical isolation, the more important this is.
17. This communication should flow three ways, from ROs to the National Rural Officers at the ARC, from the ARC to ROs and among ROs themselves.
18. ROs offer the wider the church the opportunity to speak to and support the rural and agricultural community. The churches also need to listen to the voice of the rural context, through the medium of the RO.
19. The RO has a useful opportunity to resource the rural church with relevant information and to tell the stories of the rural church to a wider audience, for example through regular briefings and articles in church publications.

20. It would help the network if the National Rural Officers were able to make more local visits.

5:2:4 Resources

In general ROs report their travel expenses and the costs of gathering annually at the ARC being paid. However, sponsoring bodies should be reminded that the fixed costs of the ARC gathering, relevant conferences and agricultural or rural publications will be required however small the time allocation to the RO task. These are essential to the RO being informed, connected and stimulated in the task.

21. Every RO should have a subscription to *Country Way* and *Rural Theology* as part of their appointment.

22. In times of rural crisis such as Foot and Mouth, ROs have automatically raised their hours and workload to meet the challenge of the moment. It would be a strong affirmation if appointing bodies were to recognise this additional commitment, at the very minimum through letters of thanks.

23. Sponsoring bodies need to realise that many ROs feel that those they work *with* appreciate them more than those they work *for*. This discrepancy needs some attention from line managers.

5:2:5 The work of the RO

ROs have a significant and important role to play in the mission of the rural church in the local community.

24. ROs have far greater than expected experience and involvement as consultants in the introduction of new patterns of ministry and the adaptation of church plant. This is a potential of ROs which has emerged from this study and which could be applied more effectively within church structures.

25. ROs provide an important bridge to re-link rural congregations who have lost contact with the agricultural and rural networks around them.

26. The cycle of seasonal agricultural services gives an important opportunity for the RO to contact a wider range of churches in their area, through the provision of worship and other resources and information, or through speaking at services and other events.

27. Food issues are a particularly fruitful area for linking urban and rural concerns.

28. ROs are effective inductors of new church leaders in a rural context.

29. ROs have much to contribute to the induction of new rural clergy into post.

30. The work of the RO may overlap significantly with other departments, such as social responsibility, ministry and mission. Collaborative working is therefore essential in such circumstances. It is important that such departments are encouraged to proactively use the resources and expertise of the RO.

ROs play an essential part in the life and work of the agricultural community, often acting in a key role in support organisations such as FCN and the other Farming Help Charities.

31. New RO appointments should be encouraged to create an effective working relationship with the local FCN group early on in the appointment.
32. A regular RO presence at the local market creates valuable opportunities to offer high quality ministry and pastoral care to a wide group of people, who through the nature of their (mostly) isolated work, might not otherwise be able to access it.
33. Church leaders must realise that the building up of trust and contact in these situations depends upon continuity of commitment. This is not something which can be picked up and then dropped.

From section 4:3 it is evident that there is a resistance to the work of the RO from those who see it as a distraction from church-centred mission.

34. Church leaders should help the wider church appreciate the essential part that RO ministry plays in the churches' mission to rural communities.
35. It is important that the work of the RO can be justified theologically and a clear rationale would be helpful for both ROs and appointing bodies.

Appendix A

The Roles, Responsibilities and Resources of Rural Officers

There are about 100 Rural Officers or Agricultural Chaplains operating in the UK, working through at least three denominations. Rural Officers have a range of roles and responsibilities and are allocated different amounts of time and resources to fulfil the task.

The Rural Officers' Network has requested that some comparative work done in this area would be helpful to them, as well as for improving linkages and networks nationally.

I was Agricultural Chaplain myself from 1988 to 1993 in the Anglican Diocese of Hereford. Since then I have been in parish ministry in North Petherton, Somerset (1993 to 2000), and currently I am Vicar of St Thomas-on-the Bourne, Farnham and Tilford with four worship centres and am also Rural Dean of Farnham.

I have the opportunity of sabbatical leave this May, June and July, and have offered part of this time to the National Rural Officers, Jill Hopkinson and Graham Jones, to be of some usefulness to an area of ministry of which I have the happiest memories.

This study has been commissioned by the National Rural Officers and the Arthur Rank Centre and coincides with my area of interest for sabbatical study.

We are sending this questionnaire to all church authorised Rural Officers to form a database of the templates of various roles, responsibilities and resources. This will be used to compile a comparative study and report back to you all in due course.

In addition, I will be conducting a series of regional visits to interview individuals in different situations and locations. This material, used anonymously, will enable me to write a report around the survey results. In doing this I will be reliant upon the traditional hospitality of the Rural Officers' network for my bed and board!

Thank you for completing this short form. The boxes for text answers will expand to contain as much text as you want to type in to them. You are welcome to return the form by email to katrinas@rase.org.uk or print out and post to Katrina Sealey, The Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ.

Please complete by April 30 2007.

Rural Officer Survey 2007

1. Name

2. Diocese, District or Synod

3. Job Title

3a. How long have you been in post?

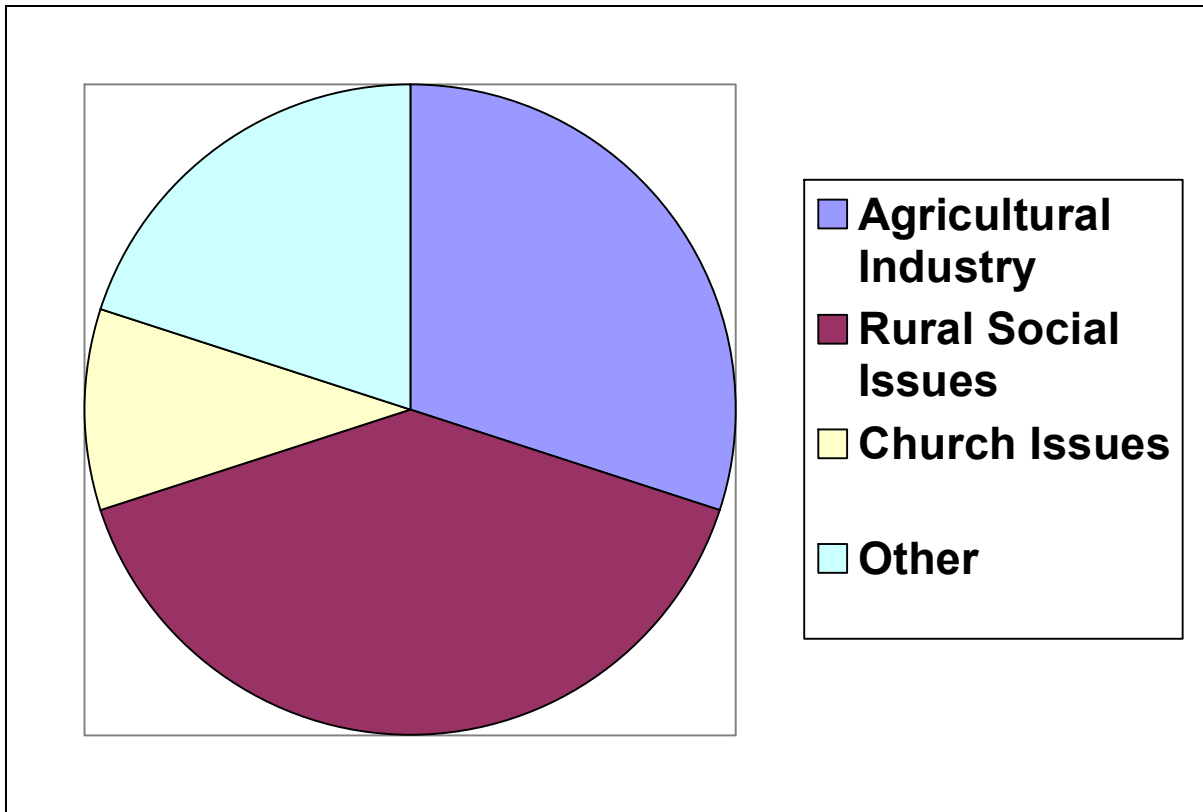
4. Proportion of work time given to this work in % or in day equivalents

5. Please enclose a copy of your Job Description. Yes No

6. Pie chart. Please use the pie chart to indicate the breakdown of your Rural Officer work between the Agricultural industry, Rural social issues and Church issues, or other (please specify).

How to alter the pie chart :-

1. Double click above the box [below the outside box and above the key box]
2. If the datasheet does not immediately appear :-
In the same place right click once.
Choose datasheet.
3. Alter the datasheet as necessary remembering to put % after each number and then close the datasheet. The information will be automatically saved.
Please contact Katrina Sealey on 024 76696460 if you need help!!



7. Please indicate which of these bodies or concerns you have contact with [put a tick or a cross in the box]:

Agricultural Industry

- National Farmers Union
- Women's Food & Farming Union
- Farmers Union of Wales
- Tenant Farmers Assn.
- Country Landowners
- Small Farms Assn.
- Ag Workers' Unions
- Young Farmers' Clubs
- Agricultural Colleges
- Farm Crisis Network
- Other – please name

Shows & Markets

- National shows / meetings
- Regional Shows
- County Shows
- Local shows
- Markets
- Other- please name

Peripheral Bodies

- Banks
- Farm suppliers
- Food buyers
- Food processors

- Supermarkets
- Advisers
- Vets
- Other – please name

Statutory and other bodies

- Defra
- Primary Care Trusts
- Local Strategic Partnerships
- Parish Council
- Local Authority
- County Council
- Regional Development Agencies
- Government Office for Region
- Regional Rural Affairs Forum
- Rural Payments Agency
- European Union
- Rural Community Council
- Commission for Rural Communities
- Others- please name

- Other national Government Departments / organisations (specify)

Issues

- European Regional Development Funding
- Affordable housing
- Agriculture
- Environment / Climate change
- Sustainable communities
- Transport
- Migrant Workers
- Gypsies/Travellers
- Employment
- Health provision
- Schools / children & young people
- Farm Crisis Network
- RSIN / RABI / Samaritans work
- Animal Welfare
- Poverty
- Food
- Post Office
- Adaptation of church buildings
- Bridging Urban/Rural divide
- Older people
- Other – please name

Who do you primarily resource?

- District / diocese / synod
- Chair / Bishop / Moderator
- Particular department e.g. BSR
- Clergy and church lay workers
- Congregations
- Other

Churches

- Visits to congregations
- Visits to clergy
- Creation Care
- Environmental Concern
- Churchyards and Wildlife
- Conservation
- Ecumenical
- Interfaith
- Rural Ministry Training
- Rural Ministry Placements
- Worship resources
- Plough Sunday
- Wassail
- Rogation
- Harvest
- Fresh expressions
- Pastoral Reorganisation
- Collaborative ministry
- Multi Parish/Congregation
- Other – please name

Resources

1. Of which Department, Committee or area of church work are you a part?

2. To whom do you report back?

3. How often do you have contact with your line manager?

4. Where does your professional support come from?

5. Do you have a support or reference group? If not would you like one?

6. What organisations / who is part of this group?

7. Do you work alone or as part of a team?

8. Do you meet regionally with your peers?

9. Are you linked to a specific worshipping congregation? If so how many congregations do you have responsibility for?

10. What other church groups or councils are you linked with?

11. What do you value from the work of the National Rural Officers?

12. What else would you like to see from the National Rural Officers?

13. How important to you is the Arthur Rank Centre?

Very quite not very not at all

14. Are you funded to attend relevant conferences?

15. Are your expenses fully funded?

16. Are there other financial resources you can draw upon? E.g. grants

17. How does information flow from and to you in your church organisation?

18. How vulnerable/secure do you feel in your role?

Very vulnerable vulnerable secure very secure

19. How appreciated or ignored do you feel by the church?

Greatly appreciated appreciated ignored sometimes

totally ignored

20. How appreciated or ignored do you feel by people in rural organisations?

Greatly appreciated appreciated ignored sometimes

totally ignored

Appendix B

In the table below where a number is not given total = 1

List of all Job Titles Given

Rural Officer/Diocesan Rural Officer	10
Archdeaconry Rural Officer	
Deanery Rural Officer	
Rural Officer & Rural Chaplain	
Rural Life Officer	2
Rural Link Officer	
Rural Adviser	
Rural Churches Adviser	
Bishop's Rural Issues Adviser	
Rural Affairs Adviser	
Bishop's Adviser on Rural Affairs	
Archbishop of York's Adviser for Rural Affairs	
Rural Life Adviser	2
Officer for Rural Affairs	
Rural Link	2
Agricultural Chaplain	3
Agricultural & Rural Chaplain	
Methodist Minister/District Agricultural Chaplain	
Chaplain for Agriculture & Rural Life	
College Chaplain	
Parish Priest and RO for N Yorkshire	
Bishop of Hull's Adviser on Rural Affairs for the Archdeaconry of the East Riding	
Lead Chaplain, Selby Communities & District Industrial Mission (SCADIM)	
Faith in the Countryside Officer	
Priest in Charge, Convenor of Diocesan Rural Group	
Bishop's Chaplain & Liaison Officer (about to become Bishop's Policy & Liaison Officer)	
Minister, with rural mission/research/teaching brief (SCM 50%)	
BSR: Manager of Challenging Poverty Department and Rural Officer	